

From assisted voluntary returns to assisted removal

Managing the ‘voluntary return’

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Abstract

Assisted voluntary return programmes and so-called policy on voluntary return in Western Europe has today becoming a part of single EU-wide removal policy. It function as a migration management tool that can enhance that aim to efficiency in the 'illegalized' migrants leave the territory as well as an attempt to make removal a more humane and dignified process.

This study seeks to give a further understanding how the programmes and policy how and why they have developed into its contemporary form in Western Europe and in particular Sweden. And conclude that the stated voluntariness of the programmes and policy has gradually blurred and shifted target groups. The reason to these gradual developments can understand as response to problematizations at different points in history.

Diverse actors are involved in the formulation, facilitation, and promotion of so called assisted voluntary return. The second aim of this paper is to state and non-state actors in Sweden understands their involvement, practices and role in assisting rejected asylum seeker in the process of leaving the territory and going to country of origin.

The states agents' role has become to persuade the rejected person to leave by using sticks and carrots. The non-state actors research, the Swedish Red Cross, Swedish Church and the IRARA, aim to improve or facilitate the practice it in desired way through information and support. These actors do not challenge the prevailing logics of the practices of removal. Instead they actors stress having a different motives for engaging and has having different designated roles. Overall, the policy and practices are converging vertically in EU and horizontally between state and non- state actors.

Key words: assisted voluntary return, migration management, deportations, liberal governmentality, return policy

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1 Introduction

Inside the reception room it is as if time has stopped. Ali is sitting in front of you. He is worried, disappointed and sad. The translator has just translated: "Your rejection of the asylum application was put into effect eight days ago. This means that the decision cannot be appealed any longer and that your time limit for voluntary departure began to run from that date. You must return to Iraq."

Twenty-three years old Ali Abed came to Sweden. He filed an asylum application without identity documents and there is little documented information about Ali and his family. In front of you, you have a decision for a person without identity documents and with a flawed identity- and residence investigation. You feel that your hands are tied. How do you execute and take on Ali's case without any direct support? How do you know it is Ali Abed who sits opposite you?

You try to reach him, make him understand that the best thing for him is to cooperate. He chooses not to answer. You know that it is the duty of the investigator, both upon application, asylum investigation, intelligence and follow-up talks, to get Ali to understand the process, the decision, his own responsibility while informing about return. Unfortunately, this has not happened and now the distance to Ali is far.

Ali's decision has come to power and he has to return to his home country. You must tell Ali what will happen if he chooses not to participate. What are you saying?

Ali continues to look through the window under silence. He has attended all the meetings. But does he participate? You continue the conversation by explaining that the decision is no longer possible to appeal. He is told that the Swedish Migration Board can contribute with individually adapted support measures, but to get it, Ali needs to help along more. He must show who he is. Ali shows no signs of hearing your question. You say that the Migration Board has made a decision based on the information that he has provided. It is Ali's responsibility to show who he is so that the Migration Board can make a legitimate assessment of his case. You also explain that he must be able to show who he is if he wants the Migration Board to help with travel documents and home travel.

Ali fidgets. He says he understands that he is involved - he comes to our callings. You say it's not enough to just come to our meetings, he needs to arrange travel documents. You ask him if he knows that he can apply for rehabilitation and reintegration support from the Swedish Migration Agency. He shakes his head....

.....

The above-presented story about Ali is fictive. It is part of the Swedish Migration Agency (*Migrationsverket*) interactive web-based education. The web-based education uses the fictive case about Ali to introduce staff members on how they can deal with people who received a rejection on their application. Moreover, it instructs staff on how they can motivate rejected

asylum seekers to take the steps to ‘voluntary depart’ to their country of origin within given time- limits. The rejected asylum seekers are to be motivated to ‘voluntary depart’ through a mix of incentives and disincentives. The key incentive, brought up in the case of Ali, is the assistance he can be provided if he goes to Iraq.

The assistance is called re-establishment (only cash grant) or reintegration, includes also in-kind provisions assistance, and can be applied for by rejected asylum seekers from a number of selected nationalities. The both forms of assistance are given after arrival in the country of origin under the promise of not returning to Sweden. The rejected asylum seeker is supposed to make a plan for the return together with the case officer. Subsequently, they are to be assisted by service-providing non-governmental organisation (NGO) such as Caritas or IRARA (International Return and Reintegration Assistance) if eligible for reintegration support. The NGOs can organise the travel arrangement and the in-kind support can be provided by one of their partner NGOs on the ground. In Sweden, the rejected asylum seeker can also be supported by NGOs like the Swedish Red Cross with pre-departure counselling or reintegration support. Other actors such as the parishes in the Swedish Church that are not involved in formalized programme might also assist rejected asylum seekers and possibly even try to assist post-departure.

Similar range of actors that assists rejected asylum seekers exist in more and less similar form in most Western Europe states. The states and EU mainly formulate the policy and fund the project and programmes, but other actors part of the larger migration industry (e.g. service-providers, security and rescue industry) are also partaken in formulating, but mainly executing programmes and projects. Initiative also comes from organisations or faith-based communities that assist and inform on the matter since they identify asylum seekers and other undocumented as being in a vulnerable position.

In Sweden and in Europe the project and programmes that assist persons that are going to leave the receiving state have steadily developed into today’s assemblage of actor and practices that assist or/and seek to promote the ‘voluntary departure’ of rejected asylum seekers (sometimes including undocumented migrants). The programmes and projects have throughout the years assisted returning refugees, labour migrants, and rejected asylum seekers. Moreover, they have engaged a vast array of providers that have ranged from humanitarian NGOs, to municipalities, state agency and IOs such IOM.

The idea to use incentives to get people to return has existed in a formalized form in Western Europe since the mid-1970s. Back then the assistance was given to labour migrants who would voluntary return to their country of origin. The following decade, the refugee regime engaged in encouraging voluntary repatriation as best solution and therefore concentrated more and more effort to assist repatriating refugees in their country of origin. The boom of assisted returns where to come another decade later following the large displacement of Bosnian in Europe. This was accompanied by the increasingly managerial approach to migration and policy interventions such as temporary protection regime and ‘safe returns’ that put great focus to promote assisted return. Around the millennia shift and in the in 2000s the EU started to harmonize the policy and programmes on so-called assisted returns, which had developed into an alternative to deportation. EU has today directive and funds that supports member states efforts to promote and inform on the ‘voluntary’ departure through incentives (assistance) and other disincentives.

Little academic attention has been given to policy development of assisted ‘voluntary’ return and reintegration programmes (Lietaert et al 2017: 962) and previous studies have been restricted to isolated cases and policy papers (Koch 2014: 908). In the following section, I will show how contemporary studies mainly concentrated on the study of the specific so-called assisted ‘voluntary’ return provided by IOM or other NGOs. These studies have generally critiqued the providers of the programmes for claiming that the return is voluntary, when it is essentially a re-packing to make the removal seemingly more humane.

1.1 Contemporary studies on assisted ‘voluntary’ return

Previous studies on contemporary so-called assisted voluntary return (AVR) programmes have pointed to the euphemism of the stated voluntariness of the programmes for rejected asylum seekers and other ‘illegalized’ migrants. That the rejected asylum seekers and other ‘illegalized’ migrants return voluntary when they in reality lack no other real options have been critiqued widely in the literature (Webber 2011; Dünnwald 2013; Koch 2014; Kalir 2017;). Black & Gent (2006) and it has been pointed out that it is chiefly the absence of physical violence that is the dividing line between the deportations and the assisted ‘voluntary’ returns. Meanwhile, Erdal & Oeppen (2017:44) means the voluntary –forced distinction is a policy invention and that the distinction rather lies in if the people return without assistance or the consent to receive it. Thus, the rejected asylum seekers “volunteer” to return as a “least-worst-scenario” (ibid. 46). Andrijasevic & Walters (2010: 996) describe the contemporary AVR-programmes as, “an alternative to state-enforced expulsions, ‘voluntary’ seems to designate an absence of viable options rather deliberate choice”.

Kalir (2017) coins the term “soft-deportation” to describe the AVR programmes for rejected asylum seekers and “illegalized” migrants. Thus, he means that the AVR programmes are part of a larger nexus of migration-deportation management and follows the same logics as deportation - a biopolitical scheme of territorial removal of illegalised subject (ibid.) Koch (2014) sees assisted ‘voluntary’ return as slightly different form of state-induced returns next to deportation. Lietaert et al (2017) regard the bureaucracy’s distinction between forced and ‘voluntary’ return as invented in order to enhance efficiency of ‘return management’. However, today it is part of a singular policy of expulsion of illegalized aliens (ibid.). Moreover, Dünnwald (2013:233) means that the so-called offer of assisted ‘voluntary’ return legitimate forced return as a last resort. Thus, the forced return deemed as necessary to make ‘voluntary’ return work and the ‘voluntariness’ is produced (ibid. 233).

In the literature, assisted ‘voluntary’ return is regarded as a governmental tool to managing and controlling migration flows. Koch (2014:918) “...government are torn between showcase control in the field of migration, and their desire to act in accordance with humanitarian consideration that forecloses the return of many immigrants who in purely legal terms would be expected to return”. Henceforth, the essential difference to the “regular” deportations is the “normative fit” (Koch 2014) soft components (Kalir 2017) that can make it seem as a humanitarian solution (Bendixsen & Lidén 2017).

Kalir (2017:63) argue in his study on NGOs in Spain involved in facilitating AVR programmes that they adopt a positive notion of return “home” that is associated with safety,

familiarity and comfort. State agents are also involved in describing AVR constitute a return to 'home', which naturalises and legitimizes the removal policy and does not take in aspect of temporalities of 'home' or the ambivalence that can be felt towards it (Bendixsen & Lidén 2017:27).

Lietaert et al (2017:973) mean that the AVR programmes is presented as a fair and rule-based system and this technical approach contributes to depoliticize the issue of inclusion and exclusion. The 'voluntary return' function as a governing techniques over the individual, similar to that of the welfare system whereby it dichotomize the prospect returnees, into the logic of "deserving" and "undeserving" where the former accepts to 'voluntary' return and the latter gets forcibly removed (ibid.). Andrijasevic & Walters (2010:997) argue that the present AVR programmes are following a neoliberal tactic, where the migrants are targeted at the level of the individual through economic incentive structures. Further, they mean that this is a form of 'targeted governance' (Valverde & Mopas 2004) a neoliberal tactics through which administration targets poverty and crime (Andrijasevic & Walters 2010:997).

Bendixsen and Lidén (2017:26) state that an essential component of AVR is that the prospect returnee shall "respect the decision" and thereby follow the "plight to return". Moreover, the authors' mean that the programmes are built on a certain politics of rationality, a given logic on how returnees are ought to respond to them (ibid. 2017:26). Kalir (2017) stipulates that this logic is neoliberal and follows its hegemonic ideas about free choice and preserved state sovereignty. Kalir (2017:68) concludes, that to 'voluntary' return has become constituted as "moral act".

The literature on AVR also highlights that there is uniformity in the formulation of programmes and projects. Lietaert et al (2017) mean that there is a construction and promotion of coherent policies by international organisations and state governments in attempt to increase efficiency on return. Moreover, Koch (2014) in her study on IOM's and UNHCR's work in the field of what she calls state-induced return, argue that the agencies are not competing, but formulate policy that involves a normative task sharing that complement and reinforces the roles of the respective agencies. Hence, there is an implicit division of labour at the international arena between these two agencies and a shared understanding of a need of coherent policy and the other actors' work. The convergence, collaboration and task sharing is not only taken place in the international arena, but also between actors at the national level, in what Kalir & Wissink (2015) call the deportation continuum.

1.2 Deportation Continuum

Kalir & Wissink (2015) illustrates this vertical and horizontal convergence of ideas, values and instruments between actors in the social field of return as deportation continuum. The continuum shows how the different actors within the field are not directly opposing one and another, but is seemingly in a process of convergence of ideas and practices. Instead of regarding state agents who tries to enforce deportation to be one side of a clearly demarcated line from civil-society organisations that works to contest the policies, they mean that the actors are placed on a continuum. Thus, the lens of the deportation continuum aims to look inwards on the actors in the social field that engages in the political space in order to negotiate and challenge understanding and ideas about citizenship (Kalir & Wissink 2015: 35). The

deportation continuum highlights how actors' worldviews on issues like deportations, borders and rights are placed on a continuum and divergent views exist within the respective group of actors and in agencies.

Kalir and Wissink (2015) suggest that the deportation continuum produces a collapse from above and below, where state actors and civil society move in to the centre and share prevailing logics. Thus, the actors share terminology, categories and vocabulary that reflect dominant discourses. These actors often imagined to be dichotomies in terms of their agenda are rather sharing logics and act under pre-agreed lines of political action. Activities who imagined political alternatives and who are directly opposing the deportation regime and its exclusionist basis are dismissed as radicals and closed of from joining the negotiation (ibid.).

The deportation continuum shed light on how the state fundamentally shapes the viewpoint of those who operates within and outside its formal institutions. Where civil society actors recognize its limitation in terms of challenging the dominant states discourses and have engaged in talks with state actors as to make an impact. Civil society actors are welcomed to join in on 'table talks' if they conform to basic shared understandings. Under negotiations one can see an adaption of values across the continuum such as attitudes and ethics regarding groups to be treated with respect, in line with liberal democratic values (ibid.).

1.3 Research gap and research questions

This walk-through of scholarly work on contemporary assisted 'voluntary' programmes reflects its governmental character. Certain rationales are understood to be guiding the programmes such as the humanitarianism in returning someone to a 'home'. Today's assisted 'voluntary' programmes can be understood as a form of softer deportation that follows the same logics and objectives as other more coercive forms of removal.

As briefly presented in the introduction to this chapter different forms of formalized assisted voluntary return or repatriation programmes have existed prior today's assisted removals. I mean that there is a gap in previous research, as no study has aimed to give a thorough historical account on how the policy and programmes of assisted voluntary return steadily developed into its contemporary form in the EU. Thus, I aim to look at the precedent rhetoric, policy on voluntary return and components of the so-called assisted voluntary return in Western Europe in order to try to give an increased understanding of today's formulation of policy and involvement of actors. To get a deeper understanding of what has driven the reasoning behind the state policy and the programmes on assisted voluntary return I will look closer to the development of Sweden.

So, today in Western Europe, IOs, the EU, state agents and NGOs has gotten involved in formulating the policy, assisting, informing, supporting, motivating or promoting (assisted) 'voluntary' return of rejected asylum seekers and other undocumented migrants. Therefore, in this thesis I intend to bring further knowledge on how actors involved in today's assisted 'voluntary' return or assisting rejected asylum seekers in the case of Sweden understand and see their role, engagement and practices. I have chosen to do a closer study of four different actors (Swedish Migration agency, Swedish church, Swedish Red Cross and IRARA)

involved in assisting and informing rejected asylum seekers and/or carrying out assisted 'voluntary' returns.

Thus, this thesis has a twofold aim. First, I will inquire, **how and why assisted (voluntary/ 'voluntary') return programmes and the policy on voluntary return have developed into its contemporary form in Western Europe and in particular in the case of Sweden?**

Subsequently, I will examine, **how the actors involved in formulating and facilitating assisted (voluntary/ 'voluntary') return and reintegration programmes and/or assisting asylum seekers whose application been rejected in Sweden understand their involvement, their roles and their practices?**

1.4 Managing migration

Assisted 'voluntary' returns studied in this thesis can be understood as a migration management practice. Migration management became a specific policy approach around the mid-1990s and thereby also an area of inquiry for researcher. However, in this study I will include earlier attempts to manage migration and migrants through governmental tactics of steering and guiding foreign populations.

Migration management are in literature referred to as a new (neoliberal) approach to migration involving a wide range of everyday managers (e.g. street-level bureaucrats, border guards, social workers, grant managers etcetera) that are formulating and affecting migration. However, the state actor has remained at the centre of policy-making (Pécoud 2013:34). As observed by Geiger (2013:21), the state has historically never been the single actor, there has always been a migration industry trying to shape and arrange mobility. Therefore, I will here argue that a steering and guiding through soft and hard regulations and incentive-making, a managing of foreign populations by a wide range of actors, have been around much longer than its contemporary neoliberal form of migration management.

So what is then migration management? And how can it be understood? Hence the term, migration is ought to be managed, dealt with and controlled. Yet, not always directly controlled but also indirect through for example incentive structures (Kalm 2010). Kalm (2010:26) argue for understanding migration management as a form of liberal governmentality. Governmentality refers to governmental mentalities, the link between power and knowledge. Governmentality is a modern form of exercising political power concerned with the statues of the population rather than the sovereign power over the population (Walters 2002:278). Such powers cannot be exercised without the production of truth, as Foucault articulated it (Kalm 2010:24). Liberal governmentality can be understood as governing at a distance, mobilizing and steering people free choice rather than directly rule (Kalm, 2010: 40)

Thus, managing migration and individual migrants can be understood as 'conduct of conduct', a more subtle way of governing through guiding and steering of individuals' actions and behaviour. According to Foucault governing power is here not exercised from a single centre, but by a range of actors such as religious organisation, the market and different associations. Secondly, governing is not taking place only directly by laws, regulations and force but also

indirectly through less visible techniques that aim to influence individual's self-regulations (Kalm, 2010:26). Pécoud (2013) argue that migration management actively encourage self-governance and self-discipline of people.

Political programmes and projects can be understood to be governmental when they find technologies capable of making them implementable. This could mean that in modern liberal regimes programmes and intervention of policing character need to find a way to be justified on liberal grounds (Rose 1999). Migration management offers a language that is legalistic and reassuring and can legitimize, tough, non-democratic and inhumane measures (Geiger & Pécoud 2010:12). Hence, migration management is presented as a softer and more liberal alternative to control measures (Kalm 2010: 26).

Geiger & Pécoud (2010: 3) describe migration management as an empty shell, an umbrella term under which very different activities can be re-grouped and re-negotiated and to appear coherent. Thus, it may facilitate cooperation between actors that otherwise have little in common (ibid. 3). The managerial approach to migration purport constant formulation and re-formulation of problems and solutions, it is about managing and not policing. Today, migration management serves as an “entrepreneurial field” for actors in the migration industry, a testing ground where new tools for regulating and controlling mobility could be shaped (Geiger 2013:15-17). At the centre are the state actors, but a range of actors such as international organisations and NGO are pivotal in the performing and doing the discourse (Geiger 2013: 30).

The way migration management is presented today reflects pragmatism and depoliticizing of mobility (Geiger & Pécoud 2010). The rhetoric of the proponents of managerial approach argue that if population movements are managed they can be beneficial, and if left unmanaged the movements can become exploitable (Kalm 2010:36). This argumentation suggests how policy makers of the managerial approach seek to what Noll (2000) describe as the balance between the liberal protective paradigm and the control paradigm. Henceforth, these policy-makers and other practitioners fine-tune policy and practices so it can lead to desirable outcome for all (Geiger 2013; Pécoud 2013).

The central actors in performing of this “balanced approach” are the everyday managers. However, it is the technocrats working in governments, international organisations and NGOs that through claimed expertise that construct such approach from above. These actors engage in construction of best practice models that appear neutral and objective, but in fact form powerful narratives (Geiger & Pécoud 2010). Actors that partake in producing the migration management discourse, also produces the knowledge about it, as described by Kalm (2010:28) as being “...not objective but implicated in relations of power, which enables a particular description of reality and attendant policy advice to appear rational”. Consequently, these actors are involved in a knowledge production - a production of truth.

This production of truth about migration, including return migration and removals, (productively) emphasizes the need for certain action to be taken by the actors. The actors explain and justify actions in a constant and self-perpetuating way. The actors have shaped a highly performative triangle of discourse, actors and practices (Geiger 2013: 31). In other words, the actors' on-going knowledge production is related to their perceived relevance. Thus, international organisation, NGOs, and state agencies have a chance to stay involved and remain significant in the production of the discourse if “conforming to new narratives and ‘truths’” (Geiger & Pécoud 2013:31).

One of these 'truths' presented as objective of migration management in the 1990s' is what Ghosh (2000c) calls *regulated openness*, were the freedom (of movement and individual) should be the basis, but also needing to be (hyper) regulated as to maintain claimed order and predictability. Henceforth, the managers' task is to produce and organize the limits of freedom. Freedoms are in need to be managed, overseen, circumscribed and limited. Programmes on migration are as according to Foucault's account of liberal governmentality, not about guaranteeing freedoms but about promoting freedoms for the purpose of reaching other governmental aims. Thus, it can be about (softly) steering and guiding the individual through for example market logics, certain motivations as for the individual to self-reach the objective of the programme.

The governing sought after in migration management can be understood as a governing through freedoms, a liberal governmentality that aims "to leave well enough alone" (Hindess 2001:96). Thus, efficiency of government is thought to be undermined if resorting to totalizing and policing governing. Maintenance of and promotion of certain individual liberties are seen as more effective (Hindess 2001:93). Instead the state is to be made up of several societal spheres of self-regulative domains such as the market and the workings of the civil society. Each of these domains are governed by its laws and developed in the interactions with others (ibid. 96). This does not mean that element of policing do not exist in the liberal regimes (including the global migration regime). Policing act are seen as fundamental for the workings of liberal government. Freedom is here joint with authoritarian measures (Hindess 2001). Yet, authoritarian measures are to be 'fine-tuned' in liberal government and often reflects what Valverde and Mopas (2004: 246) call 'targeted policing' where specific areas, groups or actions are targeted by state's policing acts.

Ultimately setting limits on individuals free will are constant in the liberal regimes and many state schemes aim to steer and guide individuals to desired behaviour. For example, incentives and disincentives can be used as to make individual most effectively act as desired. Moreover, in the managerial approach to migration certain populations are to be targeted through specific interventions, their actions are to be steered and guided, and if they are to be forcefully acted upon these actions are "re-packed" in a language of human rights and development.

In the programmes and projects that aim to remove, return and/or assist considered vulnerable (rejected) asylum-seekers, steer the behaviour of prospect returnees, or guide them to set out to prepare for leaving/returning. Great many terms are used in the discussions on so-called return policy. What does actually differ between the terms of repatriation and return? In the following section, I am going to define some of the key terms used in this thesis, in order to give a better understanding about what that may imply for policy.

1.5 Return, repatriation, removal and deportation – what are the differences?

Several terms are used, sometimes interchangeably, in the academic and policy discussions on migrants' return or removal. Academics, activists, NGOs and policy makers are using different terms for the same practice or same term for different practices.

Therefore, in this section, I aim to bring clarity in the terms; return, repatriation, (forced) removal and deportation that I will use in my analysis. Thus, I mean, that a fuller understanding of the word can give a suggestion of how and why actors' use different vocabulary for practices they are involved in or for a phenomenon they observe. Moreover, as I will later argue, vocabulary is part of re-pack of practices and the meaning of terms has been blurred and changed in the context they are used. For example, what is the difference between forced return and voluntary return today? And what are the difference between forced return and deportation? As already shown in the summary over contemporary literature on assisted 'voluntary' return these distinctions are not as clear-cut as they may appear.

Return is the most frequently used word in the policy discussions on so called assisted voluntary return from the European continent. In academia and in policy, there has been since long a lack of consensus about the definition of "return migration". According to the Oxford dictionary return (to) means to go or come back to a previous place or reoccur after period of absence. Hence, return migration denotes going back to a place where one has previously resided. King (2000:8) defines return migration as a process whereby people return to their country or place of origin after a significant amount of time. The time of stay in the country or place of origin in order to constitute return can vary; it can be temporal, seasonal, occasional and permanent (King 2000:10-11). Thus, the notion of "return migration" suffers from conceptual vagueness as it lacks a temporal and spatial precision. One can ask, for how long shall one be away to constitute at returnee? Moreover, to where shall the return take place to be defined as a return? This conceptual imprecision causes problems when wishing to measure return and evaluate returnees' experience (King 2000: 9).

Repatriation is another term often used by the actors who working with refugees to describe the process of return. In contrast to return, repatriation suggests a return to a spatially fixed and bounded entity of origin. Hence, the word comes from the Latin "re" meaning back and "patria" meaning the motherland. Moreover, repatriation means "to send or bring someone or something back to the country that he, she, or it came from", which reflects that a repatriated individual can be subjected to external actors executing the return.

State actors and other policy makers use the notion "forced return" and "forced removal" are utilized interchangeable to describe the rejected asylum seekers or other 'illegalized' migrants who have been ordered to leave the territory. The former terms implies being (forcibly) returned to a place where one has previously resided whilst the latter term puts the focus on the removal of the individual from the sovereign territory.

Policy makers seem to shun away from words such as deportation, and rather uses (forced) removal to imply the expulsion of individual from territory. Alternatively, they use the term "forced return" that lays focus on the re-territorialisation to a specific place. Activists and so called anti-deportation movements may use the word of deportation, to put into question the very practice and legitimacy of expelling foreign 'others' from the territory by governments.

Deportation can briefly be described as the (individualized) expulsion of a person from sovereign territory and is thereby essentially a forced removal. The Latin word "deportare" translates to "portare" (carry) "de" (away). It is the "carry away", the expulsion from a bounded territory and not to a spatially fixed place that is of significance, in contrast to "return migration" and "repatriation". Deportations as an individualized form of expulsion can involve violent and coercive measures by the state's actors with the monopoly on

violence (the police). A deportee can thereby be defined as a person that has been breaking the law or been 'illegalized'. Moreover, "deport" carries also carry the meaning, that of conducting oneself in a specific manner. Khosravi (2016:176) writes that the etymology of the word in Old French means "to bear" and "to be patient" something that reflect the situation of the detainee and individuals awaiting deportation.

As shown above, the different terms have different implication for the fundamentals of the practices e.g. is it essentially about leaving the territory or is it about to return back to a motherland? Cassarino (2004: 254) notes that the "...several definitional approaches to return migration, and to returnees that are playing a crucial role in orienting, if not shaping, the perceptions, taxonomies and policies adopted by governmental and intergovernmental agencies". Here I would add the terms such as a "removal", "deportation", "forced return" can be added as definitional approaches to the state and non-state actors'. In this thesis, I will make usage of the term I consider to best describe the fundamental purpose in the context of given practices or occurrences.

2 Early development of assisted return

This chapter brings up a number of critical events that give an understanding how and why the assisted ‘voluntary’ return programmes has developed into its contemporary form. The chapter will start by looking at the first assisted voluntary return programmes in the 1970s. In the following section I will discuss, the so-called ‘repatriation turn’ in the 1980 where voluntary repatriation became described as the best solution for refugees.

In section 2.3 and 2.4, I argue that ‘voluntary’ return in Western Europe was blurred in the 1990s following the displacement caused by the war in former Yugoslavia. At the time, protection became return-oriented and objective judgement on when voluntary return was considered safe and therefore could be promoted. In the last section, I will present how the how a wide array of actors engaged in fact-finding interventions and diverse forms assisting returnees following the Dayton Peace Accord. Lastly, I will conclude the chapter by argue that the stated voluntariness of the ‘voluntary’ returns gradually was blurred for example due to fact of the temporariness of protection.

2.1 The first assisted voluntary return programmes

After the first oil crisis 1973, followed by large structural unemployment, a number of European countries decided to develop schemes for assisted return in the hope to encourage return of the guest workers. The assisted return policies and programmes where implemented as an incentive measure to get labour migrants to return, in particular those who were unemployed (Ghosh 2000a: 191; Gubert 2014:115).

In Europe at the time, the increasing unemployment and anti-immigrant sentiments framed migrants as a social problem and abuser of welfare benefits (Squire 2009: 8; Lietaert et al 2017). The assisted return programmes follow as a compliment to the more restrictive policies on immigration. In Germany the government imposed a ban on labour migration in November 1973 and French government implemented a zero immigration policy in July 1974 (exception for seasonal labour) (Plewa 2010:4).

The first assisted return programmes gave financial bonuses to those legally staying migrants, who were willing to return voluntarily to their country of origin. In France and Belgium financial incentives for return, such as travelling allowance and premiums was thought to increase return rates. In Germany and the Netherlands the focus was rather on credits for housing and business plans. The idea was more migrants would sign up if return came with employment (Ghosh 2000a: 192).

In 1974 the Dutch Ministry of Development cooperation initiated what is known as the first assisted return programme. The initiated programme was called Reintegration of Emigrant Manpower and Promotion of Local Opportunities for Development (REMPLOD) and targeted

guest workers from Turkey, Tunisia and Morocco, who were encouraged to return by giving financial support to start a small business upon return (Gubert 2014:118). Thus, reintegration support had an explicit goal to contribute to economic development in the migrants' country of origin.

In France in 1977, similar return programme was introduced with the pretence to aim for co-development. Co-development meant that the state gave financial assistance to migrants and diaspora organisations that could engage in development oriented activities in their country of origin. The co-development programme in France initially aimed at integration of migrants, but was later expanded to include assistance returnees who could develop its country of origin. Another more controversial side of this latter policy was that the French authorities offered to give compensation to diaspora organisations that could identify co-nationals who were living in France as undocumented (Panizzon 2011: 187). A key feature of the French return programme, in the guise of co-development, aimed to involved actors outside the realm of the state. As argued by Panizzon (2011:187) "... the co-development policy objective was to delegate functions to non-governmental entities" such as immigrant associations.

The first assisted return programmes described above were later regarded as failures for many reasons (Plewa 2011;Gubert 2014; Webber 2011). In the end, the very low rate of people signing up and the fact that it did not "free jobs" from the national population lead to that the programmes where cancelled (Webber 2011: 99). Moreover, many of the migrants who took advantage of the assistance were considered to have returned no matter if assistance was not available. In the case of France this means that high number of Spanish and Portuguese migrants returned with assistance whereas African migrants stayed in the country. There were also other shortcomings of the programmes for example that the amount of financial assistance was insufficient and the sending state or the migrants themselves did not entrust that development outcome would be possible (Plewa 2011; Gubert 2014:119).

After this initial focus on return of labour migrants, Germany initiated in 1979 the first formalized AVR programmes that was targeting rejected asylum seekers, recognized refugees, trafficked persons and other migrants. The programmes called Reintegration and Emigration Programme for Asylum-Seekers (REAG) was implemented by the latter IOM and described as humanitarian program for those who wished to return to 'home' country or migrate to another accessible country (Gubert 2014:115). Soon after, other countries followed the Germany example and set up programmes in collaboration with the IOM to assist the return of different groups of migrants.

Several aspects, techniques and objectives of the first assisted return programmes and project included what was later on (re-) occurring in assisted return programmes targeting diverse groups of migrants. First, one aspect of the early assisted return programmes was that the government has been the key financer and initiator of the programmes to guide a certain behaviour of the group. Secondly, there was an early involvement of non-state actors such as the diaspora organisation in France, which were envisioned to make the programmes more efficient. Thirdly, the programmes described the assistance as a possibility for personal or community development in country of origin. Last, but not least, the programmes were combined with measures to restrict individual migrants to return to the host states. For example, the early return programmes from Germany included a prohibition to return to Germany (Gubert 2014: 116). Thus, at the time of the first assisted returns, return was regarded, as the end of the migration-cycle and re-migration was to be restricted.

2.2 The repatriation turn

Efforts to encourage voluntary return became heralded as the preferred solution by Western European governments to solve the issue of the growing number of refugees' in the 1980s. Voluntary repatriation of refugees where became the preferred solution above the other two so-called durable solutions of resettlement or local integration. The focus was put on the country of origin responsibility and efforts to make voluntary repatriation possible for co-nationals.

In 1980 the UNHCR Executive Committee (ExCom) stated in one of their conclusions that “voluntary repatriation constitutes generally the most appropriate solutions for refugee problems” and the earlier exile bias was put into questioned (ExCom 1980a). The 1980's became a decade of great return of refugees to unstable post-conflict countries such as Uganda and Afghanistan (Aleinikoff 1992: 128). Voluntary repatriation was described as the idealized solution to refugees' situation and described as the best way to meet the human rights of the refugees (Chimni 1999:3). The issue was framed in a human rights language - it was about refugees *right to return*. It was a liberal approach that saw the earlier exile bias as a denial of people's right to freely live in their country of origin (Aleinikoff 1992: 127).

In a conclusion from 1985, the ExCom follows up on the topic of voluntary repatriation by reinstating refugees “basic right to return” and that only voluntary repatriation is supported (ExCom 1985). Furthermore, the international community was to support sending state to make voluntary repatriation possible.

The responsibilities of States towards their nationals and the obligations of other States to promote voluntary repatriation must be upheld by the international community.

International action in favour of voluntary repatriation, whether at the universal or regional level, should receive the full support and co-operation of all States directly concerned (ExCom 1985).

An internalist explanation to upcoming of the refugee situations was given, that laid the responsibility at the door of source state and societies and internal so-called root causes where to be addressed by Western donors (Chimni 1998:351). In the 1980s, the pronounced efforts to increase voluntary repatriation can be understood as a part of the source-control bias where humanitarian intervention in the country of origin were not just for making voluntary repatriation possible but also to try to prevent new situation of mass flight (Alienikoff 1992:129).

The earlier exile bias had lost its political and ideological weight when the Cold war ended (ibid.). Moreover, the receiving states in the global north where no longer in need of an influx of manpower. Asylum seekers were more often portrayed as burdens as the number of asylum seekers rapid growth between 1983-1995 had coincided with the high structural employment in Western Europe (Loescher 2000: 199). Anti-immigrant sentiments grew at the time in the region, which may suggest that rhetoric on voluntary repatriation served a political purpose. Parallel to this focus the protection and asylum mechanisms in Western states weakened (ibid. 198). Moreover, the costs of refugee programmes were souring and Western states pressured UNHCR to promote voluntary repatriation even if it undermined the agency's protection mandate (ibid. 203).

In 1991, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees Sadako Ogata expressed it as: “voluntary repatriation is the most desirable of all durable solutions to the refugee problem, and remains a priority for UNHCR within the context of the limited resources available to the Office” (Ogata 1991). The following year Ogata (1992) predicted that the following decade would be a “decade of repatriation” (Black & Gent 2006:17)

To conclude, voluntary repatriation was now seen as the most preferable solution and considered to be the best way to concern for refugees right to return. However, much points to that growing anti-immigrant sentiments and weakening of protection rights in the Western states, loss of ideological weight of the exile bias that shaped their rhetoric and pressured the UNHCR to take a new focus. I would argue that formulating voluntary repatriation as an issue of rights, a form of humanitarian support and as the best solution for refugees, might have given legitimacy to promote voluntary repatriation.

Nine million people repatriated in the beginning of the 1990 as prolonged regional conflicts came to an end (Loescher 2000:203). But, the start of the following decade came to see one of the largest displacements on the European continent in modern times as the war in former Yugoslavia broke out. Following this, I will show the displacement of foremost Bosnians became a catalyst for thoroughgoing emphasis on return of refugees in the receiving states in Western Europe.

2.3 The return-oriented protection

The Western host countries started to develop regimes of temporary admission after the outbreak of the Balkan war in the 1990s (Koser 2000: 74). This temporary protection strongly emphasised a focus on making return of the refugees possible. Thus, it was a return-oriented protection (Human rights watch 1997).

Long before the outbreak of the war, the ExCom had in the 1980 ratified the possibility to install a “temporary protection regime in accordance with international humanitarian law” (Ex Com 1980b). The idea was that the temporary protection status was to be given when individual screening was not possible and the individuals may not fulfil the stringent criteria for refugee status but rather fled generalized violence. For example, the Bosnian, who was fleeing the generalized violence of the ethnic war, was at least to start with, given protection as a group in a number of receiving states.

The Balkan war led to a sudden displacement of 500 000 Bosnian refugees in Western Europe between 1992-1993 (Koser & Black 1999: 525). The large influx of Bosnian asylum seekers created a political crisis in several receiving states in Western Europe, a particular challenge for the asylum regime. Several of these states established or made usage of national laws that allowed for temporary protection, laws that varied in kind (ibid. 527). UNHCR felt obliged to support the European governments actions since they had concern that they otherwise would not admit the Bosnians (ibid. 526).

In France, after the Dayton Peace Accords¹ had been signed, the Bosnians holding temporary protection was alerted that their protection was soon ending and many were provided with information of assisted return scheme (Walsh et al 1999:115). The public information campaign in Europe at this time was believed to have led to spontaneous return because of fear of deportation (ibid.116). Some Bosnians reported when their visas were about to expire that the authorities in Germany had told them that it was unproblematic to return. The Germany official told them that upon return housing, employment and other needs would be covered for (ibid. 121). It should be noted that this might not have been representative for all official channels in Germany and France, but it is worth noticing that the temporary protection statuses functioned as a reminder that return were to be considered.

The temporary protection became a middle-way between protection and not giving full admission. Thus, the temporary protection would allow for returning refugees soon as permits were due. Possibly, the Western European governments anticipated gaining public support if refugees only were “temporary guests” staying until repatriation was feasible. The individual was to be reminded of the temporariness of their stay and the governments were repeatedly to try if return is safe enough. Voluntary return could be encouraged when objectively viewed as safe. As we shall see, the emphasis was on the safety of return of individuals over the voluntariness of such return.

2.4 ‘Safe return’

In 1990, the EU’s Ad Hoc group on Immigration and the European Council articulated two concepts of ‘safe country’ designed to allow states to return asylum seekers without violating the principle *non-refoulement*. Asylum seekers could have ‘manifestly unfounded’ grounds for asylum and could be denied an asylum determination procedure. The notion of ‘safe countries’ was controversial and permitted states to discard asylum claims based on the nationality of the applicant (Loescher 2000:200). The standard of voluntary repatriation was undermined as the asylum determination procedure was increasingly based on objective factors and to a great extent disenfranchised refugees’ ability to support his or her claim (Chimni 1999: 6).

Another notion gaining prominence at the time much related to the notion of “safe country” was that of “safe return”. Again, if a country was safe (enough) for return was to be objectively tested. According to Goodwin-Gill (1996), the notion of safe return occupied an interim position between refugees voluntarily returning and those who are obliged to return. The objective judgement of the situation by host government triumphed the refugees’ subjective experience of whether or not they can return ‘home’ (Goodwin-Gill 1996). Loescher (2000:203) express it as “...voluntary return has become abandoned in favour of ‘managed repatriation’ often to unsafe areas.”

¹ The General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Formally signed in Paris on 14 December 1995 (OSCE 2018)

UNHCR in their *Handbook of Voluntary repatriation* in 1996 deemed it good to promote *voluntary repatriation* if UNCHR was convinced that “the conditions that the positive pull-factors in the countries of origin are overriding element in the refugee’s decision to return rather than possible push-factor in the host-country” (Human Rights Watch 1997). As a Human right watch article critically inquire in relation to this definition in the Handbook “How would UNHCR ‘weigh’ the pull factors against push factors in deciding whether or not to promote return?” (ibid.).

The formulation of UNHCR definition puts itself as the actor to determine when a managed repatriation can take place. For refugees to consult their personal network or themselves weigh information from different channels is undermined by other actors ‘objectively’ determine when promotion of voluntary repatriation or ‘safe’ return can take place. Ironically, the host governments and authorities or international organisation determined the ability to ‘voluntary’ return and the refugees’ real free choice gets diluted.

2.5 Assisting and facilitating return of ‘state-builders’

After the signing of Dayton Peace Accords in 1995, a whole apparatus of information-gathering activities became established to estimate the possibilities for “safe return” e.g. migration liaison officers, NGOs and a centre in Sarajevo. Even the SFOR troops (NATO lead Stabilisation Force) was involved in information gathering directly to interior ministry in Germany (Walsh et al 1999:119). The information tended to overemphasise the positive return stories presented often in a practical and anecdotal character (ibid. 120).

The peace accords had given UNHCR the responsibility over the return efforts. The UNHCR’s *Repatriation information Report* (RIRs) became Western governments main source of information about ‘safe’ return to Balkans (ibid.117). UNHCR stated in 1996 a plan on return of Bosnian returnees that return and reintegration was top priority and half of UNHCR budget to the region went to the support of returnees (Södergran 1998:47). This might have strengthened the idea that assisting and encourage voluntary returns was an absolutely necessary part of getting post-conflict countries on their feet.

Black (2002) mean that return focus was seen as a “righting of wrongs” that would enable the newly formed states to engage in state building. The peace accords enshrined that the IDPs and refugees right to return and the process where to involve the local authorities and the refugees in re-building of the new states. Returnees to former-Yugoslavia was popularly described as a resource that can be used in the re-building both in terms of manpower and to reinstall the ethnic fabric (SOU 1995:75, p. 214). Thus, the return of refugees and IDPs was seen as inseparable from the post-conflict reconstruction (Black & Gent 2006: 22).

In the period following the peace accord, a growing array of programmes, projects and information centres was established in both host countries and in former Yugoslavia to facilitate returns (Walsh et al 1999). Several of the return and reintegration initiatives were specifically created programmes for Bosnians returning to Bosnian and Herzegovina. Host governments financed NGOs to start programmes for pre-departure training and information as well as on the ground support in the post-conflict countries. The actors formulating return

and reintegration programmes engaged in a great level of innovation. The programmes ranged from in-kind support of building material or new houses (Austria, Sweden and Germany) and large households items such as motor vehicles (UK), building training courses and financial allowance paid instalments (Switzerland) (Koser 2000:83; Walsh et al 1999). Support also took place prior to departure such as Caritas Sweden, who had a pre-departure training course in house repair for prospect returnees (Koser 2000:83-84).

A whole assemblage of interventions to determine ‘safe’ returns, new forms of assistance and new technical vocabulary became established in Europe in the aftermath of the Dayton peace accords. The assisted return and reintegration programmes and project had during later 1990’s became a field of policy interventions. The programmes and projects maintained their humanitarian framing as a possibility for support to prospect returnees that rested mainly on economic and pragmatic considerations. Thus, the economic ‘burden’ of refugees could be lifted off the shoulders of Western Europe and through financial means be quickly re-absorbed in their region of origin.

2.6 From assisted voluntary return to managerial repatriation and ‘safe’ return – an interim conclusion

The first assisted return programme in Western Europe in 1970s was the starting point of giving assistance as form of positive incentive to get migrants to return. Later, the UNHCR was to encourage a focus on voluntary repatriation by heralding it to be the best durable solution and as being about refugees right to return. I argue that these programmes may have functioned as a legitimating force of the encouragement of return. The internalist explanation to the refugee issue put the international community focus on supporting the country of origin to create pull factors for voluntary repatriation. These agendas may be connected to political pressure from Western governments where anti-immigrant sentiments grew and later in 1980 cost of the asylum systems were souring.

There was blurring of the voluntariness of the voluntary returns and repatriation for refugee. The governments and international organisations could through the construction of the notions of “safe return” put the refugees need of protection into question and proclaim that voluntary return to instable post-conflict state was the best solution. The refugee real free choice to voluntary return was undermined as the governments and international organisations objectively deemed an area as safe and manageable to repatriate refugees and followed with promoting voluntary return through political rhetoric, campaigns, and the offer of assistance.

The temporary protection permits also gave the refugees subjective view on when voluntary return was possible less weight as the expiration date of the protection kept them in permanent state of ‘deportability’. Refugees’ return in the Balkans in the 1990s was not problematized as possibly destabilizing factor to the country of origin, but rather the returnees was proclaimed to be state-builders and part of a parcel in order to heal the wounded societies. The role of returnees had already in the early assisted return programmes portrayed “agents of development”. The post-Dayton return programmes and project were not only described as an important resource but also out-right necessary for the peace process. Moreover, the return act was formulated as an exercise of the individuals’ human rights, their right to return.

I have in this chapter showed how different forms of incentive making or promotion took place to assisted 'voluntary' return and repatriation. The assistance given to those returning was seen as development or humanitarian support for individuals, families, communities or countries to be developed or to be re-built. The groups targeted had been labour migrants enjoying residence permit and refugees under the protection mandate of UNHCR and refugees enjoying permanent or temporary protection.

Around the millennia there was a shift of the target group to encourage and promote (assisted) voluntary return to individuals who were undocumented migrants and rejected asylum seekers. In the following chapter, I will look into how the assisted 'voluntary' return program and projects increasingly were set up as an alternative form of removal with the purpose to enhance the number of removals as well as making them more humane and dignified.

3 The alternative deportations

During the 1990s, many initiatives among humanitarian actors and state agents as well as knowledge-production and policy intervention took place in the area of assisted return. This knowledge-production became closely linked to the international organisation such as IOM that works with the governments to develop a series of instruments, policy tools and dialogue to facilitate the governing of migration. The policy field known as migration management steadily grew to become an integral part of Western European nations' approach to migration. This approach set out to balance the control paradigm and liberal protective paradigm. It was done by maintaining states' position at the centre of migration policy and at the same time to formulate it in line with the liberal values of openness and individual human rights.

In the shift of millennium, governments raised concerns over the low level of rejected migrants and asylum seekers that were leaving or were deported from the receiving country (Gibney 2008). Moreover, deportations had increasingly become faced with public dislike, oftentimes displayed by protesting against individual cases (Ellermann 2006). The issues for the Western government were the lack of efficiency in the deportation system, human rights violations and public aversion that the practice caused. Utilizing and developing assisted 'voluntary' return for the group of rejected asylum seekers (and 'illegalized' migrants) was suggested by the policy makers as a possible part of the solutions to enhance efficiency and make removal more humane.

In section 3.1, I will further discuss the problematization of the 'deportation gap' and the concerns over individuals' removals to be both efficient and fine-tuned as to respect human rights in order to maintain the dignity of the individual. Following this, I will examine the prescribed solution to these concerns, which was to utilize the AVR programmes. Thus, the new assisted removals were regarded to address the conceived challenge of balancing the liberal and control regime. Following this, I will discuss how actors such as the EU, its member states, together with international organisations and NGOs engaged in a convergence (from above) in the formulation and implementation of assisted removal and so-called return policy.

3.1 The problematization of 'non-return' and coercive methods

One of the concerns raised in the late 1990s was that of enhanced mobility and migrations due to globalization. The improved ability to get information on possible destination countries, transportation and communication was thought to lead to more 'uncontrolled' mobility. Globalization was feared by some to lead to a possible loss of control and a major challenge for nation states in handling an upsurge in unauthorised population movements (Geiger 2013:22). Concerns grew over undocumented migrants and the 'deportation gap', the gap

between those effectively deported in relations to the individuals with removal orders, rejected or so-called overstayers (Gibney 2008:149). The discontent over the lack of efficiency in removals was then enhanced with heightened fears over terrorism in the aftermath of 9/11 (ibid.146)

Closing the deportation gap was explained to be an issue of asylum system maintenance (ibid.167). The justifications of the whole system are put into play if negative decisions are not enforced (Noll 2000:105). Henceforth, carrying out removal operations was essentially rationalized as part of upholding order and issue of justices. Jonas Widgren, the then director of ICMPD, described in a EU Commissions Green Papers that so called 'non-return' of "aliens without status" as it "...may threaten the whole fundament of a fair asylum policies and active immigration planning within EU" (Widgren 2002: 1). The rhetoric the leaders used to re-instate the ability to control territory and reinvigorate the credibility of the asylum system was to show decisiveness regarding deportations (Dünnwald 2013:231).

Deportation is a particular salient aspect of the migration machinery that poses a challenge in terms of balancing the liberal protective paradigm and control paradigm. Thus, deportation is by definition an exclusionary act that ultimately defines the counters of membership of sovereign territory (Coutin 2003; Gibney 2008). The practice of deportation is of administrative nature and has become deeply embedded in the modern sovereign nation states through the construction of international treaties, conventions and law as well as diplomacy and informal agreements. The international legal documents examine deportation as a question of rights, the sovereign right of the state (Walters 2002: 275-277). However, human rights violations during deportation are common and the reports on the violence that deportees face has put the legitimacy of the practice into question (Dünnwald 2013:231). Therefore, deportation, the forceful removal of foreign 'other', poses a fundamental challenge for the modern liberal state.

In Western Europe, worry over the human rights violation faced by deportees existed. Fundamentally, individuals and organisations increasingly challenged the practice, which they saw threatening individual rights as well as being ultimately discriminatory. Public dislike and protest over mostly individual cases got increased attention in media. For politicians and bureaucrats, this public aversion was seen as a challenge, they needed to find a way to remove individuals and showcase control and at the same time respect individuals human rights (Ellermann 2006).

Noll (1999) mean that these seemingly divergent concerns are caused by the constant conflict between liberal protective paradigm and control paradigm. Where the former holds individual interests and voluntary decision whereas the latter sees enforcement as need in order to serve collective interest and control of composition of population (ibid.). Regarding the issue of deportations the public on the one hand wants aliens removed and have a tendency to want to restrict immigration policy (Ellermann 2006). On the other hand, it is not popular with deportation because of it the social and political costs (Noll 2000:106). Thus, it led states to breach international human rights conventions and stirs public debates over the legitimacy of such treatments (Ghosh 2000a: 208).

As for Western state to enhance efficiency in deportation and lessen public protests, states have engaged in an array of techniques e.g. nightly deportations, offer aid as to sending state for signing readmission agreements and aid to individual returnees for signing up for assisted 'voluntary' return programmes. I will here concentrate on how advancing assisted 'voluntary'

return (AVR) programmes became the prescribed solutions and as a key technique to solve the issue of lack of efficiency, improved cooperation and human rights violation in removals.

3.2 The prescribed solution

In order to strike a balance between these two camps of control regime and liberal protective regime, the assisted 'voluntary' return programmes were to be 'offered' to rejected asylum seekers as a more human and dignified way of being removed (Noll 1999). In Germany in the mid-1990s, they started to promote AVR programmes for rejected asylum seekers and asylum seekers still waiting for decision. As noted above, already 1979 rejected asylum seekers in Germany could apply for AVR programmes. However, now it was presented as an alternative to deportation that would resolve the conflict arising from public concern (Ellermann 2006). The AVR was an attempt to enhance efficiency in terms of 'illegalized' migrants leaving the territory as well as lower the public resistance that deportation caused in these liberal democracies (Ghosh 2000a: 208). A 'balanced mix' of threat of the deportations combined with the offer of assistance were thought to increase people 'voluntary' leaving. Removal of foreigners were to be less financial, political and social costly affair for receiving states in the global north (Noll 2000:118)

Scholars and policy makers suggested that the promotion of AVR as a 'best practice' for removing individuals. One of the proponents to utilize AVR programmes in this way, was Bimal Ghosh, then senior advisor at IOM. He argued for a new migration regime, based on *regulated openness* that would "...ensure greater orderliness and predictability in movements of people – serving and balancing the interest of the sending and receiving countries and the migrants alike" (Ghosh 2000c: 3).

Ghosh had in 1997 been part of launching what was called *New International Regime for Orderly Movement of People* (NIROMP) that was financed by UNFPA and European Governments (Ghosh 2007:115). NIROMP was largely a project to try to establish a normative framework to guide all states in all matters related to mobility and migration (Ghosh 2000c). On the one hand, NIROMP meant to sensitize policy makers and practitioners and present a new more open, liberal and humanitarian approach to mobility and migration. On the other hand, the managerial approach did not call state sovereignty into question, but rather stressed the importance of robust border controls and the necessity to counter all forms of unauthorized entry or stay as to maintain the functioning of such regime (Geiger 2013).

According to the NIROMP return was seen as a "functional component of an emerging regime of orderly migration" (Noll 2000:103) and an "...integral part of the over all migration system, including appropriate arrangements for legal and orderly entry..." (Ghosh 2000b: 228). The experts' prescribed a softer deportation they saw could make removal more efficient. Noll (2000:102) formulated it as "...to strive for efficiency is also to strive for acceptability". Promoting AVR was heralded as the most efficient way to adhere to human rights by avoiding situation where physical violence could occur (ibid.119). However, Noll (2000:120) recommended "a mix of force, persuasion and threat" to convince the person to 'voluntary' leave.

The receiving states were recommended to engage in a bargaining game between their interest, the migrant and the sending state (Noll 2000:105). In other words, they were to start promotion campaigns towards the rejected asylum seekers and sending states. The rejected asylum seekers were to be convinced to sign up for ‘voluntary return’.

The returning state, too, has adding interest in such development-oriented reintegration especially while dealing with unwanted migrants. By making return more attractive and durable it minimize the risk at unauthorized re-entry and reduces the cost of immigration control. Indeed, a particularly strong argument for development –related programmes is that they contribute to migrants’ voluntariness to return just as they enhance the willingness for the origin countries to cooperate (Ghosh 2000a: 207-208)

Pre-departure assistance and post-reintegration was explained as making return “durable”, “sustainable” or “successful”. Sustainable return was to be secured by “alleviating the pressure leading to renew attempts of undocumented migration” (Noll 2000:117). The promotion was said to be improved if the receiving state’s involved third party actors and component development. One such actor was migrant-serving NGOs that was to represent the migrants’ perspective. NGOs and intergovernmental organisation was proposed as useful third party actors in the whole process from promotion to implementation (Ghosh 2000b: 228). As noted by Ellermann (2006:306) engagements by for example church congregations shifted the public attention from the individual costs to its potential benefits.

The AVR was here linked with development potential, as done in the policy and theoretical discussions about migration and development. Return migrations connection to development, is thought to occur when migrants upon return, through newly gained skills and financial assets, can spur development in their countries and communities of origin. Migrants who had the possibility to return, re-migrate and invest were celebrated with catchphrases such as “circular-migration” (Kalm 2010:38). The correlation between development and return was suggested by Ghosh (2000a: 207) to be forged through the support given in the AVR programme. Hence, rejected asylum seekers who may not have the possibility to gain new skills abroad or make savings had to be supported in order to become ‘agents of development’.

Another aspect of the rejected asylum seeker removal is that there is often little to no time to prepare to leave and come to a place where they may or may not have lived before or feel at ‘home’. As argued by Cassarino (2004) migrants’ willingness and preparedness to return affect their ability to mobilize tangible (financial capital) and intangible resource (social network) needed in order to reintegrate. This suggests that the low level of motivations and preparedness may cause the rejected asylum seekers to fail to reintegrate. Having pre-departure counselling as a component of AVR programmes was thought by the architects of the softer removals to compensate for this lack of preparedness (Ghosh 2000a: 207)

I would argue that this managerial approach view the person removed as an autonomous and rational individual that with financial support could create sustained financial beneficial conditions. Thus, the policy presented in early 2000s seems to reflect that a bag of money could bring fore a *homo economicus*. The contexts where the removed individuals are left and not taken into consideration in this generalized policy suggestion. Rather, the individual through so-called pre-departure counselling is to be motivated and coming to terms with return. Thus, there is no consideration with respect to what the *leaving* constitute to them, such as attachments and expectation made in the new place. As noted by De Haas (2005)

those involuntary returned could not be expected to remain where they do not want to be and are likely to end up again in displacement.

The majority of these prescribed solutions to Western governments about concerns over the ‘deportation gap’ and the risk of violating against human rights with coercive removals has later on been realised in different forms. For example, the IOMs AVR, with an added “R” standing for reintegration, now mainly targeted rejected asylum seekers. The IOM is one of the main architects behind this and a facilitator of assisted voluntary return and collaborates closely in policy interventions within the EU. In the following section, I will show how international organisations together with the EU formulated the new assisted removals and worked for a global convergence in this form of policy.

3.3 The architects behind the assisted removals

The policy suggestions outlined above were clearly guided by the ideas and language of managed migration and seen by the proponents as a pragmatic balancing the two paradigms. Agencies that were the forerunners and formulators of migration management in 1990s, such as ICMPD and IOM, became important in sketching out EU's new approach. These agencies were not just architects and implementers of migration related programmes, but also acted behind the scene partaking in informal talks with e.g. the EU. These informal talks involved open discussions on ideas and concerns and were key in exchanging ideas between representatives from agencies, intergovernmental bodies and EU (Düvell 2003: 32). Moreover, these informal talks often formed a basis for formulation of shared policy objectives, similar vocabularies and the idea of need for convergence.

As aforementioned, many European states now saw their role challenged by globalizing forces so they employed the strategy to engage further with intergovernmental and multilateral agencies and actors. Around the shift of the millennium actors such as IOM and UNHCR all increased their funding, staff, and operations (Geiger 2013:21). IOM, the leading actor in the area of migration management and assisted returns, had from 2000 to 2005 doubled its amount of field offices. Through their field offices and operations IOM had the ability to promote the US and European models of migration (Düvell 2003:34) and had the capacity to guide behaviour of weak state through persuasion (Geiger & Pecoud 2014:875). By 2004 IOM ran as many as 20 AVR programmes, removing migrants from over eighteen European countries (Andrijasevic & Walters 2004:996).

Since EU was closely allied with IOM, it was easier to obtain a global reach of migration management discourse. Moreover, the EU member states did not just engage with intergovernmental and multilateral organisations, but also tried to harmonize their so-called return policies and to engage in new forums for collaboration with international organisations and NGOs in assisted removals. All with the purpose of increasing efficiency and acceptability over people being forced to leave territory.

3.4 EU and the convergence of removal policy

The foundational steps towards creating a formalized collaboration in the area of removal policy took place with the EU's high-level summits in Tampere in 1999 and Seville 2002. The two summits can briefly be described as to have laid the ground for a common migrant and asylum politics across the EU. Earlier immigration issues had been seen as a national matter and closely linked to each state sovereignty and identity (Castle 1999:218). The former system was guided by ad hoc intergovernmental collaborations to one where harmonization was institutionalized (Hampshire 2016:537). The Seville summit had an ambition to establish common external migration policy with a global reach. One of the main reasonings was said to be the "fight against illegal". Prior to the summit the Commission had launched a Green Paper that stated that, "return and readmission is an integral part of fighting illegal immigration" (ARGO 2002:7).

The existing bilateral agreements that had formed the basis for readmission was regarded as uncoordinated and competitive (Düvell 2003). Instead, efforts were to be made to seek convergence between all states and actors, which could lead to the efficiency the EU member states aimed for. To achieve convergence in the field the Return Directive for "illegal staying third country national" was outlined in 2008. The Returns Directive was implemented as a response to the European Council call in 2005 for an effective removal and repatriation policy. The Council desired a "common standard for persons to be returned in a humane manner and with full respect for their fundamental rights and dignity" (Returns Directive). For this to be achieved the Returns Directive state as following:

Where there are no reasons to believe that this would undermine the purpose of a return procedure, voluntary return should be preferred over forced return and a period for voluntary departure should be granted. An extension of the period for voluntary departure should be provided for when considered necessary because of the specific circumstances of an individual case. In order to promote voluntary return, Member States should provide for enhanced return assistance and counselling and make best use of the relevant funding possibilities offered under the European Return Fund (ibid.)

"Voluntary departure" became the new term defined as "compliance with the obligation to return within time-limit fixed for that purpose within the return decision" (ibid.). The Directive does not cover "voluntary return" in the sense that a person could entirely out of free choice choose to leave, as the Directive focus is on the 'illegalized' persons. In the text above, it thus state "voluntary return should be preferred over forced return". Thus, the voluntary return is not much voluntary. According to Directive's list of definitions, return is considered to be a "process of going back" that either could be under "voluntary compliance or with an obligation or enforced" (ibid.)

The European Return Fund (ERF) was established in 2007 to support those who voluntary return to their country of origin or being removed and to spur member states joint efforts in the area. ERF supported schemes that assisted and encouraged voluntary return of non-EU nationals, especially those who did not have authorization to stay. The ERF would if necessary support 'enforced return' under compliance with humanitarian principles and respect to human rights. Article 4(b) state that the fund shall contribute to the promotion and provide information on voluntary return as early as possible in the asylum and immigration procedure "to encourage individually third-country nationals to make use of the possibility of voluntary return".

In 2014, the Asylum- Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) was started that finance a broader set of areas. "Return management" is one of AMIF's funding areas with a similar

focus as ERF. Just as in ERF, the AMIF state in its preamble that member state shall be encourage to fund assisted voluntary returns of legally staying migrant and refugees, and asylum applicants leaving before decision has been notified and after rejected migrant applicant. The latter form of ‘voluntary departing’ individuals is interconnected with the coercive removal.

...Member states shall give preference to voluntary return. However, from a policy point of view, voluntary and enforced return are interlinked and have a mutually reinforcing effect, and Member States should therefore be encouraged in their return management to reinforce the complementarities of the two forms (AMIF regulation).

The threat of the coercive removal if not compliant is foundational for the ‘voluntary departure’. The so-called voluntary return is interlinked, connected to the enforced return, as to make the return more efficient. EU- wide disincentives and incentive policy instrument are set up. One example of a coordinated disincentive is the re-entry bans that the Returns directive allow state to put on those who do not leave within the time window set for ‘voluntary departure’. The actual EU-wide centralization of the re-entry ban data came with institution of the ‘second generation’ Schengen Information System (SIS II) in 2013 (ECRE 2013). Yet, the main intent of establishment of the policy was to facilitate a more efficient and humane removal procedure for the rejected asylum seekers.

The major incentive to get rejected asylum seekers to leave is the schemes for reintegration assistance. One of the major assisted ‘voluntary’ schemes that is sponsored by AMIF is the European Reintegration Network (ERIN) Specific Action (SA) programme. ERIN is a collaboration between the members states aiming to assist so-called returnees. Again, it states that it supports voluntary and non-voluntary return. However, it is not clear what this means and ERIN have different criteria in different member states. Moreover, many member states have separate return programmes targeting different nationalities or those returning out of free will or not.

EU have today realised much of what was suggested by the proponents of migration management around shift of the millennia. A vertical convergence can be seen to take place in Western Europe, where the EU formulate removal policy and construct EU-wide instrument aimed to enhance the number of ‘illegalized’ migrants leaving the territories of its member states. In EU the ‘voluntary return’ policy is part of that one single removal policy.

3.5 The alternative deportations – an interim conclusion

Many Western European states had by the end of the millennia raised concerns over undocumented migrants that did not leave the territory. Fears of uncontrolled globalization and terrorism had made the states to problematize a ‘deportation gap’. The system was seen as lacking efficiency and the justification of the whole system was put into question if people did not leave. Another concern for the policy-makers at the time was the public dislike for methods used in deportation and the human rights violations they often caused. Thus, it was a challenge for the modern liberal state to justify such coercive techniques that reflect authoritarian policing.

The prescribed solution for the state leaders was to utilize AVR programmes that would be more social, financial and less politically costly. Now, it was about persuading the individual to sign up for the programme, to do that the threat of the deportation became essentially a disincentive to stay. The voluntariness of AVR-programme can be described as a “least-case-scenario”; a choice of being assisted or not (Erdal & Oeppen 2017:46). The AVR programmes had turned into its contemporary form of assisted removal, that mainly seek to find a more effective way for people to leave. This solution was part of the migration management project, where terms a *regulated openness* was used to describe the new pragmatic way to balance the liberal protective and control paradigm.

To get all parties on board, the sending states and the ‘illegalized’ migrants, it was recommended that the reintegration assistance should be seen as form of development aid that would make ‘voluntary departure’ more attractive and sustainable. The removed individual was seen as a homo economicus; an individual that upon return could invest in themselves and in the society of origin, despite possible harsh contextual circumstances. The individualized development assistance was explained to decrease the chance for fresh attempts of unauthorized re-entry

To involve other non-state actors was suggested by the architects of this new form of removals. Non-state actors such as IOM were to be involved in planning the new form of assisted removals together with the EU. EU now engaged in policy convergence in the area of return and removal, which also led to collaboration on assisted ‘voluntary’ return programmes with service-providing NGOs. EU’s Returns Directive on ‘illegalized’ migrants set a preference of what was now called ‘voluntary departure’ over forced removals. New EU fund sponsored activities that could contribute to inform, facilitate and persuade the rejected asylum seekers and other without permits to ‘voluntary depart’.

The assisted ‘voluntary’ return had turned into a form of alternative assisted removal intervention targeting ‘illegalized’ migrants. It was to be utilized to increase the efficiency of the removal system, linked together with the different forms of assistance and involvement of non-state actors that was understood to make the removal more attractive, sustainable and seen as more humane and dignified. Lastly, in an attempt to create an efficient removal policy the EU member states policy and programmes was converged from above and collaboration on AVR took place.

In the next chapter, I will turn the clock back to the mid-70s and study in-depth how and why assisted voluntary return developed and voluntary returns policy developed into its contemporary form in the case of Sweden.

4 Development of Sweden's return policy and assisted returns and removals

In this chapter, I will look at how return policy and assisted return developed in the case of Sweden. As I will show, Sweden was first sceptical to support those wishing to return as it was seen as going against the political integration goals. Later, the Swedish government and a number of NGOs supported Latin American refugees return as a respond to their request for assistance. In the later half of the 1990s, Sweden started to encourage voluntary return of refugees by for example significantly increasing the maximum return assistance an individual returnee could get. Around the shift of the millennia, the Swedish Immigration agency took over the main responsibility of executing removals from the police. The Immigration agency was to mainstream a return perspective throughout the asylum seekers reception and determination process with the purpose to increase the rejected migrant applicants leaving the territory on their own accord. Lastly, in this chapter, I will discuss how Sweden's removal policy has been harmonized with the other EU member states and how this has contributed to a development of in Sweden of a new vocabulary, new funds and new EU-wide disincentives and incentives as to increase efficiency in 'voluntary departures'.

4.1 Sweden's early returns politics and first assisted voluntary returns

During the 1970s, Sweden did not have an official migrant return politics nor return programmes. An active return politics that promoted return and gave returnee assistance was considered to go against the goal set up for set up in 1975 (Demker & Malmström 1999: 113). However, in practice there were recorded cases when individuals had been given welfare benefits knowing that the persons were aiming to return (Södergran 1998:39). The political goals on integration from 1975 were based partly incorporating a vision elaborate in 1968 that stated that migrants' free choice had to be respected. This meant that migrants for example were to be supported if they engaged in their native culture or learn their mother tongue (SOU 1995: 75). However, it was considered as a politically sensitive issue and a moral conflict to both support integration of immigrants and to financially support return, therefore the latter was avoided (Södergran 1998:40).

It was not until the mid-80s that Swedish politicians started to take an interest in supporting returnees. The first contribution made in Sweden to support refugees' return was after the request of Latin American immigrant associations, which expressed their wish to return (Södergran 1998). A regulation came in place in 1984 (1984:890) that allowed the Swedish immigration agency (*Statens invandrarverk*) to give a travel allowance to foreigners that wish to return. The Swedish international development agency (SIDA) supported projects targeting returnees, for example the Swedish faith-based organisation Diakonia worked on a labour

integration programme in Chile and Uruguay for returnees under the lead of IOM (SOU 1995:75:212).

In a Swedish government paper from 1984, the authors write that the efforts to facilitate return should be developed and that supporting socio-economic development in source countries could increase chance for refugee return (Skr.1984/85). A return policy was formulated by the end of the decade as response to the request for return assistance from refugee groups. Moreover, the government felt they were enabled to informed policy-making because of the gained knowledge from the Swedish NGOs' (reintegration) projects and other Nordic countries shared experience (Södergran 1998; SOU 1995:75). Other factors that might have been conducive to the Swedish government decision to support returnees was the fact that the actors such as UNHCR proclaimed it to be a human right for everyone to return to one's country of origin. Thus, the Swedish government said to fully support the refugees' regime new focus on repatriation as the best solution to refugee crisis (Skr.1984/85).

In 1989 the Swedish parliament approved a set of guidelines regarding refugee return. The guidelines stated that all beneficiaries of return aid had to be strictly voluntary returnees. Therefore, the financial assistance was not to be "too high" as it then could be mistaken that the state were trying to promote return (Proposition 1988/89: 100, own translation²). The guidelines were to safeguard that voluntary return projects were nothing but voluntary and the state regarded the assistance as humanitarian support and not economic politics. The experience gained from the first return and re-integration projects suggested to focus on pre-departure support of the potential returnees. The preparation of the return could be through e.g. individual counselling or training in a study-circle (Södergran 1998). Furthermore, it was stated that a "positive integration" of refugees was the best way to create preconditions for individuals to prepare for return and re-integration (Proposition 1988/89: 100, own translation).

The rhetoric of early return politics in Sweden juxtaposed return and integration of immigrants and refugees. To give assistance to returnees was to be seen as a humanitarian act and should not distract the main political goal of integration by creating too strong incentives for return. Thus, Sweden only sought to assist refugees with permanent residence permits that could actively choose between staying and returning.

4.2 Encouraging voluntary return

Voluntary return should be the long-term goal of international refugee efforts wherever possible. This should be an important part too for the policy of refugees in Sweden and in principle embrace reception from in the first place. The person who received protection in Sweden and wants to return to the country of origin shall be encouraged and support to return (SOU:1995:75, p. 37, own translation).

This statement is made in a state investigation from 1995 and demonstrates how Sweden would see the durable solutions for refugee to return as "...the long-term goal" and now was

² The translations of primary source material have been done from Swedish to English and have been carried out by author of this thesis.

prepared to encourage return. Still, the government maintained that refugees' return should be nothing but voluntary, the individual who wanted to return now was to be encouraged to do so. Information had to be balanced and emphasise that return was nothing but voluntary (SOU:1995:75).

The government suggested in a proposition from 1993 that an authorization of temporary residence permits could minimize the budget for integration and that the state should concentrate on making refugee return feasible by giving support to the place where the catastrophe happened. The year after, in June 1994, Sweden introduced temporary protection permits (Södergran 1998:46). Everyone with the temporary protection permits were later tried in a regular asylum process. Nevertheless, it was maintained that "...when the temporary protection is due the starting point is that those that had protection shall return." (Björnberg 2001:112, own translation).

The government started to encourage voluntary return and the involvement of non-state actors in activities that could facilitate return. In 1997, the government decided to significantly raise the return assistance that had an earlier cap at 7 500 SEK per family to 40 000 SEK. In the following year, the government had given the Swedish Immigration agency a budget of 10 million SEK to do active efforts to promote activities for voluntary return. Non-state actors were actively involved by starting projects for return information programmes together with immigrant associations (Björnberg 2001:109).

The government followed the post-Dayton view on refugee returnees as a "...resources in reconstruction of catastrophe strike area (Södergran 1998:46). As shown in a previous chapter (2.4), the post-Dayton period became a time of policy intervention in the growing field of assisted return projects and programmes. For example, a programme existed to let Bosnians go and visit the area where they might return to in order to see for themselves if a return was something for them (Walsh et al 1999:123).

Sweden had after the large reception of Bosnian refugee in the early 1990 noticeably changed its policy on voluntary return. Now, a lot of resources went into trying to encourage voluntary return. The government had a source –country bias as they argued for to give assistance to the country of origin. In the following chapter, I will show how Sweden progressively tried to make removals softer by letting the Swedish Immigration agency took the main responsibility to try to convince people to leave.

4.3 The Immigration agency new responsibility

Following the Dayton agreement, Sweden saw a markedly lower influx of asylum seekers between 1995-1999. After 2000 a steady increase of asylum seekers was seen that was followed by a problematization of the 'deportation gap' and the violent measure taken when executing removal orders. A hindrance to carry out the removals was explained to be the asylum seekers lack of identification documents that created long asylum determination procedures (Migrationsverket 2018).

Until 1999, execution of removal order had been a task exclusively delegated to the police. Responsibility was now shared with the Immigration agency in an attempt to try to stimulate a

‘voluntary’ return. In a state investigation from 1997, the authors concluded that the Immigration agency should take over the main responsibility over removal orders (SOU 1997:128). A number of reasons were given in the investigation as to why the Immigration agency first should try to talk the rejected asylum seeker to leave. First, the Aliens act was said to rest on the basic values of humanitarianism. Therefore, coercive measures needed to be carefully regulated, determination process more effective and “the foreigner’s return to his home country were to be eased” (SOU 1997:128:45). Secondly, the Immigration board was explained to have a unique competence and a comprehensive view on the immigration issue. They had in 1997 taken over the whole asylum determination procedures and the detention centres, and could thereby work with “issue of execution” throughout the whole process. The idea was that by giving correct, coherent and clear information about the “return process” from day one, it would make it easier to motivate ‘voluntary’ return (*frivilligt återvändande*) (SOU 1997:128, p. 46-48). Hence, if the execution was planned the authorities were thought to be able to “...avoid aggravated and dramatic situation...” (SOU 1997:128, p. 52).

Several NGOs had been against the initial proposition because they believed it could lessen the trust in the Immigration agency that would become more of a policing authority (Proposition 1997/98:). Yet, the idea behind the new regulation was to make the policing acts, of running detention and executing removal order, more humane by letting the Immigration agency get the main responsibility (SOU 1997:128). The authors of the state investigation also saw a role of the humanitarian NGOs in the ambition to enforce less coercive removals.

In the overall ambition to prevent as far as possible the expulsion and expulsion decisions enforced by coercion or threat of coercion there are strong reasons for improving cooperation with the humanitarian organizations. Consideration should be given to the financial support of these organizations in various ways (SOU 1997:128,p.83, own translation).

Implicitly stated is that the humanitarian NGOs was better fitted to provide humanitarian support than for example the state. Additionally, the NGO was described to not categorise immigrants (SOU 1997:128, p. 83). Thus, the NGOs were viewed as working non-discriminatory and possibly easier to entrust. It was also suggested in the state investigation that actors such as IOM with proven experience and the Red Cross with a great network of sister organisations could be possible actors to collaborate with (SOU 1997:128).

Sweden evidently followed the developments taking place across Western Europe around the end of the millennia, which aimed to make removal more humane and dignified. That the Immigration agency got main responsibility over the execution of removal order, the so-called voluntary returns (*frivilligt återvändande*) was based on the idea that the staff was seen as migration experts that could through an integrated approach work more effectively. Thus, return preparation was to be a mainstreamed aspect in the reception and determination procedure alongside integration improving activities. This became known as the double perspective.

4.4 The double perspective

The renamed immigration authority, the Migration agency (*Migrationsverket*), and some municipalities and NGOs started in the early 2000s to engage in measures to prepare all

asylum seekers on an eventual rejection and return. In the early 2000s, there was a great increase of asylum seekers and also high rejection rates (e.g. in 2006 as high as 87 %). To prepare for rejection was seen as a way to enhance the chances that those who may in the future get rejected also would leave (NTG 2007).

Asylum seekers who were waiting for their first decision had to be involved in so-called organised occupational activities (*organierad sysselsättning*). In these activities, the asylum seekers could partake in different forms of education that had a double perspective, a parallel focus on integration and preparation for return. The purpose was to give the asylum seekers tools that could be useful both in the process of integration as well as upon return. Courses could include for example civics, languages and computer training (NTG 2007). The Migration agency also had a so-called return related education (*återvändningsrelaterad utbildning*, ÅVU) that was mandatory for those who received rejection. ÅVU was carried out by five separate entrepreneurs and involved a wide range of courses.

An initiative by Gothenburg municipality and a range of NGOs, called *Ankomst Göteborg* (Arrival Gothenburg) was carried out between 2002-2005, and was started as an alternative or complement to the Migration agency's activities. The project applied the double perspective and mainly offered educational activities to asylum seekers. The stated purpose of working with the double perspective was not to motivate people to return, but to support those who might. One of the projects initiatives was to have a computer course for Iraqi women who had received rejections. The idea was that the women would learn a skill that there was a demand for in Iraq's labour market (Nilsson, 2006).

Another supportive activity held by *Ankomst Göteborg* was the individualized return dialogues, a form of assistance that would enable the prospect returnee to engage in what could be described as a form of therapeutic sessions. Thus, the purpose of such dialogues was that the asylum seekers were to be able to air frustrations, to be listened to, to be shown compassion and concern. It was envisioned that a supportive atmosphere and individually focused interactions were to be created, where the participants felt that they could bring up matters of concern. However, the purpose was also to constructively work on a return plan, and that the asylum seekers would be given correct information about what a rejection meant for their situation (Nilsson, 2006).

Difficulties in these initiatives were that participants "were 100 % concentrated on staying in Sweden" and therefore did not focus on preparing for a return (ibid.). In an estimation in 2006, only 9 % of the rejected asylum seekers participated in ÅVU. ÅVU generally struggled with very low level of participation. Another reason that ÅVU was seen as failure was that very few rejected asylum seekers left the country without being forcefully removed (NTG 2007: 13-14).

These projects can be understood as a tool developed with the aim to spur the rate of rejected asylum seekers leaving without the involvement of the police and possible coercive measures. The activities aimed to prepare individuals emotionally as well as practically. Moreover, the individual dialogues held by *Ankomst Göteborg* included supportive and compassionate elements that installed trust and was combined with more pragmatic skills training by entrepreneurs. All activities were partly or fully financed by the taxes, however carried out by separate entrepreneurs, organisations and projects. Even though the activities that had applied the double perspective later on became seen partly as failures, the parallel focus from day one

on integration and to warn and prepare from the consequences of rejection was continuously to be applied.

The following years new methods were developed to induce returns, upscale the capacity to support those who ‘voluntary departure’ pre- and post return and involved more actors. In the next section, I will first give an account for how the EU’s harmonization of so-called return policy and the establishment of ERF enabled a surge of activity by state and non-state actors in the field of pre- and post removal assistance for rejected asylum seekers. The politicians and experts rhetoric, actions and the vocabulary emphasised how the offer of assistance and increase in deterrent measure could increase the ‘voluntary compliance’ with removal orders.

4.5 Removal and assisted ‘voluntary’ return— two sides of the same coin

European commission had, with the establishment of the Returns Directive, in their vocabulary divorced “voluntary return” from the “voluntary departure” of an ‘illegalized’ migrant leaving under the set time-limit. In Sweden, the two terms that was applied was *frivilligt återvändande* (voluntary return) and *självmant återvändande* (voluntary return). Interestingly, this divorce between *frivilligt* and *självmant återvändande* do not seem clear-cut as the words are regarded as synonymous in a dictionary. Nonetheless, the former refer to individuals’ voluntary returns whereas the latter refers to the so-called ‘voluntary departures’. If one looks closer to the word of “*självmant*”, it can be translated into “själv “(self) and “mana” (exhort), to exhort oneself. Thus, it reflects that the individual shall urge him/herself to take action to leave one his/her own accord.

In 2007, the possibility to take measures aiming to increase the ‘voluntary departures’ increased with the possibility to receive EU funds from ERF and thereby to run more extensive pre-departure and reintegration assistance projects. The ability to offer reintegration assistance also meant a new tool in the toolbox for the Migration agency as to promote return. Moreover, for pre-departure assistance, the Swedish government followed in line with what was stated in the 2008 Returns Directive; “In order to promote voluntary return, Member States should provide for enhanced return assistance and counselling and make best use of relevant funding possibilities offered under ERF” (Returns Directive 2008).

The ERF and later one the AMIF could support projects to stimulate ‘voluntary departure’ and/or projects that aimed to make removals more effective and humane. The municipalities could support those with a residence permit who out of free will wished to return with up to 10 000 SEK to an individual and up to 40 000 SEK to a family (Migrationsverket 2017a). However, the numbers of people receiving this aid decreased and in 2013 only 9 people received this assistance (Stockholm stad 2014:3). The rejected asylum seeker who ‘voluntary depart’ can receive higher financial so-called re-establishment assistance. An individual who ‘voluntary depart’ can according to the bylaw from 2008 (2008: 778) get up to 30 000 SEK and a family a maximum of 75 000 SEK.

In 2012, the Returns directive was incorporated into the Swedish Aliens act that showed an ambition to harmonize the removal policy with other member states. In addition to this, it put a great focus on the issue to increase the ‘voluntary departure’ of the total number of migrants

and asylum seekers. The Swedish government had already started to collaborate with other member states in order to coordinate efforts to create more forceful and coordinated system of incentives and disincentives as to get ‘illegalized migrants’ to leave and not coming back.

In Sweden, assistance of ‘illegalized’ aliens is only given to rejected asylum seekers. In other member states, other groups of undocumented can be assisted through IOMs programmes or ERIN. In Sweden, a few nationalities have been chosen a to be able to apply for support from ERIN. The basis for why these nationalities are chosen is stated in the Migration agency’s website to be “...the preconditions to get established are limited because of difficult circumstance” in the judged country of origin (Migrationsverket 2017b). In other words, to get assistance people were deemed likely to end up in a precarious situation after removal.

The disincentives and incentives was part of the same policy that aimed to get rejected asylum seekers to leave Sweden. In 2016 and 2017, the Swedish government pronounced new efforts were to be taken as to increase forced removals in parallel with the efforts to increase ‘voluntary departure’. This happened when the large number of asylum seekers that had an arrived during autumn of 2015 started to know the outcome of their application. The Sweden’s migration minister Heléne Fritzon (2017, own translation) said that: “...The possibility to forced removal is an important incentive for increased voluntary return (*självmant återvändande*)”. The government further meant that the resource to execute forced removals need to be increased as it function as a key deterrence to increase the ‘voluntary departures’.

Another, deterrence measure to increase ‘voluntary departure’ was implemented in July 2016 by the social democratic government. The new deterrence was to stop the payment of daily allowance to rejected asylum seekers and make it conditional to stay in one of the Migration agency’s accommodations upon the basis that the rejected asylum seeker collaborated for their ‘voluntary departure’ (EMN 2016:5). A social democratic spokesperson on migration issues was arguing that rejected asylum seekers “...need to understand, this is not a life, it is not a better life to live here...” (Lundh - Sammelin 2018).

A stepping-up of deterrence policy has clearly taken place post – 2015, that is enhancement of the disincentives to stay and not ‘voluntary depart’, have dominated the proposals and regulations among the Swedish politicians. This show how the deterrence measures are doing the groundwork to increase the ‘voluntary departure’ and getting people to sign up for assisted removals. The policy on forced removals and the assisted (*självmana*) removals are linked together as two sides of the same coin.

4.6 From avoiding to support returnees to demand voluntary departures - an interim conclusion

In the 1970s, Sweden in contrast to the states in continental Europe, never developed an assisted voluntary return programmes for labour migrants. Not until the request came from refugee communities themselves, the Swedish government reconsidered to support refugees who had a desire to return to their country of origin. Assisting returnees was seen as an act of humanitarianism, an aid given to refugees that made it possible for them to exercise their right to return. It was not until the 1990 and the large influx of refugees from Balkans that the

Swedish government more aggressively started to encourage return through a wide range of measures.

Both in Sweden and in other European states there were concerns over the lack of efficiency in removals and the so-called 'deportation gap'. In an attempt to enhance efficiency and avoid violent situations, the Immigration agency took over the main responsibility to execute removals by trying to convince rejected asylum seekers to leave within a given time window. To facilitate the return different occupational and intervention activities were introduced; the so-called double perspective. That meant that asylum seekers were to be assisted with their integration and in parallel being prepared to leave.

Not until the establishment of the Returns directive and ERF, Sweden started to standardize the assisted 'voluntary' returns and 'offer' them as a softer alternative to deportation. Sweden had steadily converged its policy on voluntary return and assisted 'voluntary' programmes and projects with EU's. The 'voluntary' return is not about a choice of remaining or leaving. The individual returnee is to behave accordingly to measures that has 'steered' and 'guided' them to act as desired. The rejected asylum seeker is to exhort him to act in a self-regulatory manner. Continuously, the mainstreaming of assisting and preparing for return in the determination process and reception is applied.

In the following chapter, I will start by showing how the staff members at the Migration agency are to realise the balanced approach using both incentives and disincentives in sometimes repeated dialogues with rejected asylum seeker. The Migration agency is working to promote 'voluntary departure' by mainstreaming return preparation throughout the process as well as having a specialized returns unit. For the case officers to reach the objective of getting the rejected asylum seeker to 'voluntary depart' should adhere to a number of values and tactics.

5 Assisting, persuading and facilitating the ‘voluntary return’

In previous chapter, I have showed how the assisted ‘voluntary’ returns have gradually developed into a policy instrument of assisted removal in Western Europe in general and particularly in Sweden. It is utilized an attempt to increase efficiency in the number of rejected asylum seekers leaving the territory as well as an attempt to make the process of leaving the territory more humane and dignified. I have also shown how have the great many actors over time have been involved in projects and programmes related to assisting ‘voluntary’ returns. To further understand the (developments of) contemporary policy, projects and programmes, I here aim to inquire the state- and non-state actors in Sweden to understand their involvement, roles and practices in relation to the rejected asylum seekers.

Today, many non-state and state actors are involved in some form of activity related to assisting, persuading or facilitating the rejected asylum seekers to leave the receiving state. Activities range from conveying information on the process, assisting with travel arrangement to psychosocial counselling. So, how do the actors understand their engagement, their roles, and their practices?

In section 5.1, I will reflect about the methods used by the Migration agency as to prepare and persuade the rejected asylum seekers to leave. In the following sections, I am going to discuss how the three non-state actors, the Swedish Church, the Swedish Red Cross and IRARA sees their engagements. Finally, I will conclude my findings and discuss see how we can understand their roles and activities through the lens of the deportation continuum.

5.1 Persuading the rejected to ‘voluntary depart’ – the role of the state actor

In 2000, the State’s Immigration agency had become the Migration agency now tasked with a large set of migration related matters such as running detention centres, reception centres and processing the citizenship applications and labour visas. By having all migration related matter in one place, it was thought that the return related work could be easier to facilitate. Thus, throughout the reception and determination process the staffs is to make sure that in case of rejection the individual is prepared.

In the Migration agency handbook on return (2017:3, own translation), it is described as, “...The reception shall be a part of the preparation for an establishment process or a return. The return process shall begin with a dialogue already before an eventual removal order”. The preparation for an eventual rejection is to take place through an individualized dialogue

as well as being mainstreamed throughout the process. Return planning is envisioned to start at day one in a parallel process with the measures that can enhance good integration.

The handbook on return describe how information is to be given early to the asylum seekers about the consequence of not leaving the country within the given time window for ‘voluntary departure’. The information shall be provided in proposed “regular dialogues” throughout process that brings up aspects of return that was thought to increase the efficiency in a possible future scenario of removal order (Migrationsverket 2017b: 3). In an European Migration Network (EMN) report, it is exemplified that in Sweden the asylum seeker from Western Balkans, are given information on consequences of forced return on day one, which often leads them to withdraw applications (EMN 2016:11).

After a rejection different staff units have tasks in relation to try to increase the ‘voluntary departure’. For example, the reception unit task is to explain that the daily allowance is to be withdrawn and why. Khosravi (2009:46) has shown that the detention staffs are tasked to convince the detainees to leave Sweden. One of his interlocutors, a division chief in the detention centres explains it as: “through conversations, we want to persuade them that going home is for their own good” (ibid. 46). Also, specialized return units are instituted to specifically promote and inform on the ‘voluntary departure’ and to arrange the practical aspects such as issuing exit permits.

The foreigner are informed with the objective to be convinced by the advantage of returning *självmant*, as well as be informed on the consequences of not abet to the *självmana* return (in Ex-post evaluation 2015:10, own translation).

This statement comes from an evaluation report on Migration agency’s work on the *självmana* return and shows how Migration agency staffs are tasked to persuade the persons who have an application that has been rejected. For this, the Migration agency has developed a specific method they call motivational interviewing (MI). It is developed in order to standardize each so-called process that the agency work with and suggest how case officers may work. Each process is constructed into dialogue guidelines following the MI-method with protocols to follow (Migrationsverket 2017c:4). The return process is one of the identified processes, where the application of the MI-method aspires to persuade rejected asylum seekers to *självmant* return (EMN 2016:11).

In contrast to the ÅVU that had the purpose to give the individual a set of practical tools, nowadays, the rejected asylum seeker should get prepared and motivated to return through a more individualized and supportive approach. The Migration agency stated ambition is to work according to the applicants “different needs, requisites and driving forces” (Migrationsverket 2017d, own translation). In practice, this ambition is to be realized through the method of (repeated) individualized return dialogue. (Migrationsverket 2017c:4).

In a web-based education, the staff at the Migration agency is introduced to the fictive character Ali who has just received a rejection. The staff can in the web-based education interactively learn through multiply choice Q&A’s and dialogue box on how to deal with Ali’s case and how the MI-method can be applied in the return process.

The first objective presented in the web-based education is efficiency, which can be achieved if “...everyone is being aware that the case can end in a return”. In the next dialogue box, the headline says “hopeless without preparation” and is followed by the importance to get the

applicants to hand-in id-documents during the determination process in order to make removal possible (Migrationsverket 2017e, own translation). Thus, the education aims to stress for all staff that preparatory work shall be an integrated part of the reception and determination process.

According to the Handbook on return, the work with ‘returnees’ should not just be individualized but also “as far as it is possible take place in collaboration with the foreigner” (Migrationsverket 2017c: 4, own translation). The web-based education about Ali’s return explains that it is “...best for him is to collaborate” and “get him to understand this”. Further, it explains that the case officers’ role is to inform Ali on the return procedure. Nonetheless, the informative part is not just involving practical guidance step-by-step on the procedural and practical aspects. The case officer role is explicitly to “warn for” the deterrent measures and to offer the possibility to apply for re-establishment or reintegration assistance that shall function as a carrot, something that will motivate the person to leave (Migrationsverket 2017e, own translation).

In order for the case officer to achieve the objective of a ‘voluntary departure’ they must emotionally express support and understanding towards the rejected asylum seeker. In the web-based education, it is explained that, “we need to show respect and understanding” and “supporting them that has to return” as “our work have clear connections to the human rights and all humans equal value”(Migrationsverket 2017e, own translation).

In the web-based education on Ali’s case, the case-officer is suggested to pose rhetorical questions “how do you see it?” when discussing Ali’s new situation. It seems to be suggested in the video that the rejected asylum seekers are to be given space to reflect on his or her situation. In this situation, the case officers are informed to listen to the rejected asylum seekers thoughts, and to express empathy. The web-based education goes on by explaining that the case officers being in a listening mode is a winning equation to achieve the objective, “...by listening and giving information when he needs it, you will also win his trust” (Migrationsverket 2017e, own translation). The rejected applicant is to be encouraged to ‘to choose’ the *självmant* return through a mix of forewarnings and attempts to try to instil trust. Hence, the case officer task is to win the rejected asylum seeker over in order to make him or her act as desired.

Another heading in the web-based education is “How do you encourage to their own responsibility?” (Migrationsverket 2017e, own translation). This further reflects that the collaboration and motivation are to lead the rejected asylum seeker to act self-regulatory. The individual shall exhort himself to act ‘correctly’. Thus, he needs to respect decisions and leave.

The rejected asylum seekers are to be guided and steered into take decision to leave, with the help of incentives and disincentives. However, in a sentence in the Migration agency’s handbook on return, it is reflected how the ‘voluntary departure’ is a ‘re-packing’, a softer form of the policing act of removal. The paragraph state how “it does not work to demand a *självmant* return of children in the way you can demand it by adult.” (Migrationsverket 2017c: 8, own translation). So, the adult ‘illegalized’ individuals can be demanded to leave, hence, it is a policing practice.

5.2 Involving the non-state actors

The Migration agency case officers' roles in the removal process are circumscribed. They are not assigned to do anything that goes beyond the walls of the agency. As stated in the presented fictive story about Ali "...Ali is showing up on the meetings" (Migrationsverket 2017e, own translation). These scheduled meetings in the Migration agency's office are the only occasions where the case-officers can inform on the process and persuade the rejected asylum seeker to 'voluntary depart'.

Moreover, the role of the case officer and the relation to the asylum seekers is strictly professional. Even if the case officer is tasked to express empathy they are not to develop a close personal relationship. However, the Migration agency, the Swedish state and the EU regard it is important to collaborate and to support non-state actors that aspire to develop more personal relations with individuals since and have hands on knowledge of the asylum seekers situation. An Ex-post evaluation on Sweden's achievements on assisted 'voluntary' return programmes report concludes that the Migration agency should prioritize collaboration between them and NGOs such as the Swedish Red Cross. The authors of the report reason that NGOs need more (financial) support and that mutual respect between the state and non-state actors needs to be strengthened (Ex-post evaluation, 2015).

The state is directly or indirectly through EU funds funding non-state actors to work with asylum seekers, migrants, rejected asylum seekers, and removed individual. These actors' works can go beyond the state's objective of getting people to leave and often aim to make the process more humane and dignified. However, the non-state actors are a heterogeneous group and they have divergent reasons for supporting rejected asylum seekers.

In the remaining part of this chapter, I aim to demonstrate how three non-state actors understand their involvement, how they see their roles and their practices. The three non-state actors I have chosen to interview are the Swedish Church, the Swedish Red Cross and IRARA that all in very different ways are involved in assisting rejected asylum seekers with problems they may face when they been asked to leave Sweden. I identified that these actors have connections to the researched field through the Migration agency's website, the actors' own websites and information leaflets. I have conducted key informant interviews³ with a representative from each of these actors in order to get better insights of their work.

5.3 Supporting not motivating – the role of the non-state actors

The Swedish Church and Swedish Red Cross means that they support rejected asylum seekers because they identify them as vulnerable and because the group are seeking their help. As I

³ I identify the three interviewed individuals as key informant, as they had main responsibility of the issues or projects that I concerned to inquire. Each interview was about 15 to 40 minutes long and semi-structured. I used a broader opening question followed up with a number of discussion points. The interviews were carried out over the phone or Skype online calls. The interviews with Carita Ibarra and Josefin Zeolla were conducted in Swedish and the interview Cameron Fay in English.

will demonstrate in this section, both key informant from the Church and the Red Cross stresses how their premises for assisting the group is significantly different to the state actors.

The Swedish Church does not have a structured way of assisting rejected asylum seekers and more specifically, those considering to 'voluntary depart'. My key informant, a deacon responsible for refugee and integration issues in one of the Swedish Church parishes describes it as "... we don't have specific work focused on return, but it is part of the other work that deals with undocumented migrants, among other things ..." (Ibarra interview 2018, own translation, 00:55). The Church sees each case as unique and aims to help in the situation in which they are.

We always support in the situation in which they are in. If they do choose to not to go back, we support them in that, if they want to go back we support them in that too. So, we have no such concept there, *this how we do*. Without listening a lot to the individual. Many do not want to return (Ibarra interview 2018, own translation, 02:38).

Active members of the Church meet asylum-seekers often through their daily activities in the parishes and may continue to meet, interact and assist them when they have got a rejection. The parishes assisting the (rejected) asylum seekers to improve their situation is understood to be part of their engagement with people in vulnerable situations and connected to their general engagement with assisting newcomers. Thus, the deacon at Swedish Church identify the rejected asylum seekers as a group that is, "... very vulnerable and that is what the deacon are working with" (Ibarra interview 2018, own translation, 08:55).

Recently, the Swedish Church volunteers and staff, who wish to learn more about process of returns and removals will have the chance to become more educated on these issues as AMIF sponsor an educational project about this subject. This educational project on return and removal policy issues will be planned and carried out by the Swedish Red Cross and will also be open to their volunteers (Migrationsverket 2017f).

The Swedish Red Cross has since 2007 had an official policy to work with issues related to assisting 'voluntary' returns. Between 2008-2015, the Red Cross carried out a project with pre-departure counselling and reintegration assistance for rejected asylum seekers from a few selected nationalities. In 2017, a similar project was started, but with a smaller budget and less possibilities to support reintegration efforts., They claim their work with rejected asylum seekers are grounded on humanitarian principles and an identified vulnerability in the group as well as needs among the increasing group of rejected asylum seekers (Zeolla interview 2018). The interviewed project manager at the Red Cross mean that their support is;

... much about talking, giving advice about how the process looks like, and listen. The Red Cross does a lot of listening and receiving. Getting the person to reconcile with what is going to happen (Zeolla interview 2018, own translation 05:18)

This described assistance is what the Red cross calls psychosocial counselling. It is combined with practical support and provision of information about the so-called return process. The Red Cross offers this pre-return support to individuals who themselves seeks the help and it can take place over a series of occasion (Zeolla interview 2018; Jonsson et al 2016).

...It is about explaining so that the applicant understands and what choices he/she has. Partly, what it means to leave, to return, what the law says, how the process looks like, so that the person himself can decide. Once the person has made the decision, it should

be an informed decision. Then, we can advise how to prepare for the trip home or return, for example, what documents they should bring, it is good to make contact with the family if you have not done it before or during the period you have gone away (Zeolla interview 2018, own translation 04:23).

The practice of the Red Cross staff in this regard seems to be similar to what the Swedish migration agency's case officers are instructed to do. They shall listen, inform so that person can himself take a decision on presented options and offer financial and practical help. However, when the project manager at the Red Cross answers to a general question about the organisation's projects, she stresses how their practices differs from the Migration agency's.

The support is individually based, it depends a bit on what is requested and is always given at request of the individual. We do not deal with any motivational conversations or look up people who will return. They are going to return and they want help, practical and psychosocial support for return (Zeolla interview 2018, own translation, 03:40)

Thus, the Red Cross do not aim to motivate the individual to take any decision. For them, it is up to the individual to make their own decision. Moreover, the project manager at the Red Cross emphasis that it is the individual that comes to them to seek help, not the other way around. In this way, the Red Cross define how their assistance differ from that of the Migration agency. Even if the actual practices can at a first glance seem similar, the differences according to the Red Cross lie in the motives for assisting. In an evaluation report from one of the Red Cross first so-called return projects, the authors point out that "...The states interest to make return more effective and to increase number of returns are not acceptable premises." (Jonsson et al 2016: 11). Also, the interviewed deacon means that the Church are not trying to motivate the rejected asylum seekers to anything, by saying, "We do not entice people to go home, who do not want to. As I said before, they make their own decisions" (Ibarra interview 2018, own translation, 05:22).

The Church and Red Cross see that theirs role as to alleviate suffering and their starting point for assisting rejected asylum seeker comes from recognizing them as a vulnerable group. Both informants mean that they support the individuals upon their request and the deacon in particular stress how the Church tries to support anyone *where they are*. Moreover, the informants' stresses that they are not promoting or motivating people to take any decisions.

5.4 The trustful source of information

Personal engagement, acting non-discriminatory and values such as compassion and trust is rather stressed as guiding the work of the Church and the Red Cross. These actors have a great reach across Sweden of local branches or parishes and can in a trustful way reach out to a large number of rejected asylum seekers. I will here argue that the non-state actors' great network and their trustfulness make them useful partners for the state's work on getting asylum seekers to leave.

These two non-state actors practice aim create a personalized environment of trust and possibly even close relations are built. The Red Cross mean their work is built on trust and reliance. Further, they mean they are using a holistic way of working when assisting rejected

asylum seekers (Jonsson et al 2016:11). For the Swedish Church, the essentials of the support lie in the interpersonal relations.

What we have a lot of, what we create, it's relationships and venues for meetings. Pure human warmth as you can say. So, we can contribute with clothes, so this is also the case if someone needs it. But, it's this, really, the community, to meet someone....” (Ibarra interview 2018, own translation, 07:45)

State actors may perceive the humanitarian values and the holistic, and non-discriminatory way of working as quality. Consequently, the Red Cross evolution report from 2016 mentions that the case officers at the Migration agency sometimes refer the rejected asylum seeker to the Red Cross for additional help (Jonsson et al 2016:13). Thus, it may be recognized by the Migration agency that additional personal support is valuable in terms of making the situation of the rejected asylum seekers more humane and dignified.

The Red Cross and the Church may also be valuable because of their local presences across Sweden, which enable them to reach-out to many (rejected) asylum seekers. Both key informants explain that the way they get in touch with asylum seekers, usually through activities held with the purpose to facilitate integration such as language cafés. The Red Cross project manager means that is through these activities they reach out to prospect rejected asylum seekers. ‘

We are developing that education now and it is mostly aimed at the Red Cross's volunteers and staff and volunteers at the Church who come in contact with potential returnees. That is because the Red Cross has a lot of around Sweden, which is about totally different things; training the Swedish language, breakfast clubs, integration-promoting activities and many of our volunteers in these activities get in touch with some of those who ask questions about return. It's about educating them so they can respond to the questions they get. They should not in any way run return cases or become experts. It is true that they can answer questions raised by the refugees and be able to respond to it. If it happens that someone has decided to return and they want support, they can turn to our consulting phone and let them talk to an employee. (Zeolla interview 2018, own translation, 23:05)

The key informant from the Red Cross also identifies experience working with the group as the reason to why they are given funding from AMIF to hold educational sessions on the so-called return process issues for their staff and volunteers. Moreover, she points out that the Swedish Red Cross network can efficiently reach the target group.

We have experience in working with vulnerable persons and experience working with migrants. And those who will return are very vulnerable. So that's an exposed group that we've identified. Then there we are in all of Sweden, we have operations in those places where the target group is. In all municipalities in Sweden, so we reach the target group in an efficient and good way. I think that's the main idea actually. Then we have experience in training and we have a wide network. But, above all, I think it's our experience (Zeolla interview 2018, own translation, 25:27).

The deacon at the Swedish church thinks that the education can give the volunteers and staff a chance to learn, "...actual knowledge, what can be done and what cannot be done? Really pure facts..." (Ibarra interview 2018, own translation, 06:38). The staff and volunteers are thought to function as a referral system that is able to convey information on what is possible both in the scenario of staying and leaving. In the Swedish Church official website, it is

presented in a FAQ section about undocumented that "...Instead, we can contribute with objective information...to stay away from authorities can mean a long time in a vulnerable situation...and expulsion with force" (Svenska Kyrkan 2018, own translations).

The non-state actors see that giving information on consequences of not leaving as an additional support to a group they identify as vulnerable. I argue that it can also contribute to efficiency in the return, lessen forced removals as the staff and volunteers can inform on consequences of hiding from authorities trying not to leave the territory. Thus, the additional information that the Church and Red Cross can support can improve the state to reach its objective of more 'voluntary departures'.

5.5 Consensus-mentality and the designated roles

The Red Cross and the Church are not in any way opposing the prevailing logics of the state discourse and the practice of repatriating or removal of individuals. Rather, they are in dialogue with authorities to facilitate it through assistance and information. They aim to make the rejected asylum seekers more informed and to make the process more humane and dignified. However, they might raise concerns of deportation to certain countries, or of specific groups or single individuals (Ibarra interview 2018; Zeolla interview 2018). So, these non-state actors mean that their role is to raise concern over specific cases without challenging the practice per say.

Regularly held meeting facilitates the dialogue between civil society actors, the migration agency and the police. Meetings can be held at both central and local level and can bring up a range of current issues and with diverse agendas. These meetings are held to keep each other informed and a forum for discussion about current issues.

We are constantly in contact with authorities, we sometimes raise individual cases, but we also have a systematic impact on SRC in migration issues, and it may be about how the return is executed, primarily what countries are returning to. But we have a wide impact on SRC. We are in constant dialogue and we are part of different user groups, and regularly meet with the migration agency and other authorities where we raise issues that we see (Zeolla interview 2018, own translations, 11:15).

This reflects what Kalir & Wissink (2015) mean is a tradition of consensus. In the case of Sweden, the actors are representing different interests but are sharing a consensus mentality. In other words, they are to engage in a constructive dialogue with the objectives to come closer to a shared understanding. Nonetheless, such meetings are not meant to lead to that actors are going to engage in the same activities. The actors rather think that they have different roles to play.

We have no counselling function, it is the Red Cross, who has it, but we look more at the whole, it's purely human. Advice it's their role, we have different roles in the non-for-profit sector. (Ibarra interview 2018, own translation 13:22)

The deacon meant that there are ascribed roles also between civil society actors. The states actors involved in facilitating removals and the non-state actors that aim to support rejected

asylum seekers all see that they have certain objectives with their engagements. None of the actor is opposing the others' practices but aim to influence them in a way they see as desired.

I argue that all actors may contribute to an assisted 'voluntary departure' perceived as more humane and dignified removal despite having different rationales for being involved. The different actors work ranges from spreading information, individual dialogues and counselling, to be the enforcer of violence. However, all have the objective to give aid pre- and post-departure and to arrange, if possible, the soft-deportations.

5.6 Beyond the state's objective

As discussed previous section, the Red Cross and Swedish Church do not completely oppose state practice of removal but rather seek to improve it in different ways. One of the ways that this is done is by supporting the individual when they are back in the country of origin. The Swedish Red Cross previous project had through their sister organisations, the capacity to follow-up on individuals' situation in their country of origin. They could give psychosocial support and sometimes also smaller cash grants (Zeolla, interview 2017). The Swedish Church has no organised form of assistance, but because many close relations have been created between individual former asylum seekers and some parish members, they have continued to keep in touch after departure including sometimes sending money.

Yes, you can keep in touch with them in their home country. Some parishes here choose to collect money and send to their home country when someone has returned. So, you do not lose contact. With today's social media, it's easy to keep in touch with someone (Ibarra interview 2018, own translation 04:00).

This type of private initiatives, forming a group or a loose networks that organise some sort of post-removal monitoring and assistance may be increasing as a consequence of the removal of young people who have had a long waiting time and built a social network in Sweden.

In Sweden, it is foremost the state that systematically supports individuals post-removal, with so-called re-integration or re-establishment assistance. The state has outsourced this practice to the ERIN SA partners (Caritas, IRARA etc.) that arrange so that their respective partners on the ground can provide the in-kind reintegration support. IRARA, that I will study closer here, has the contract to carry out the assisted 'voluntary' returns to Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Also, rejected asylum seekers from Morocco, Russia and Iraq can be supported with reintegration in their country of origin. The reason as to why these nationalities are chosen is not further explained. A broader group of nationalities can receive cash-grants from an IOM country office upon arrival in the country of origin. As aforementioned, these nationalities are to be given the support because "the prerequisites for establishing are limited due to difficult contradictions" (Migrationsverket 2017b).

Interestingly, the Swedish Red Cross supported another group of countries in their projects that ran between 2008-2015. The Red Cross key informant explains how they reasoned when they choose which the nationalities to support with reintegration assistance:

It was to the place where many returned. This was in in 2008-2009. There were many from the Balkans who would return. But it was also the countries where we judged that had most returnees. There were no protection reasons, but the problem of return was mainly social-economic reasons. That's where we could assist, we could not protect anyone and that was one of the reasons we chose Afghanistan for example... There were many who returned there, but also which Red Cross associations had capacity and could engage in this and where it was practically possible. But the need is what guides the decision, and then the Balkans ... There are many who come from Balkan and there were few who got a residence permit... (Zeolla interview 2018, own translation 17:15)

The Red Cross do not support 'voluntary departures' to countries where they perceive the security situation as unstable and where they do not have the capacity to follow-up. They choose to support the nationality they identified as having mainly a humanitarian and socio-economic needs, not those identified as being in need of protection.

In contrast, the ERIN SA partner organisation assist on where they have the contracted to do so. The ERIN SA partner organisation IRARA is organising returns and provides reintegration assistance, "...because there was a kind of a gap. A niche in the market, with specific organisations dedicated to the return and reintegration process." (Fay interview 2018,01:26). The reintegration manager interviewed from IRARA describes the NGO as a new specialist in the field as the directorship has "...great experience working with NGO in migration". The director travels around the world and makes connections with potentially new in-country service providers. This can explain why the IRARA website display that they have partners from Kenya to Sri Lanka. However, at the moment, ERIN or their equivalents does not finance IRARA to provide reintegration assistance in these countries.

The countries on our website is essentially where we have the provision for returnees at the moment. That doesn't mean that is necessarily returnees going there that we are providing services to through ERIN at the moment anyway. The main countries at the moment are Afghanistan and Pakistan. Some of the partners that are in those countries, have assisted returnees before, but has not necessarily assisted them through ERIN or through IRARA (Fay, Interview 2018, 31:10).

The selection of countries where IRARA's contracting partners assist is not only based on a perceived need in the group of returnees. They work on the behalf of EU and compete with other providers of such service. Strategically, they are extending their global network of service providers of in-kind support in the country of origin. The founders of IRARA identified a gap in the market of service providing NGOs, which was that of a more specialized NGO in the field of reintegration. A market place that IRARA seemingly calculate to be growing hence the developments of ERIN.

IRARA understand their involvement as providing services to states and also to "... assists Returnees who are returning either voluntarily or otherwise from EU-member states" (IRARA 2018). They do not mean to question any practices of the state.

I think that, the overall goals of our services are to develop a more bespoke reintegration process for the returnees. It is kind of dignified way of dealing with the migration issue So we see our place as working within the constrains that been set by the European governments and by the European Union so for example we don't really have any remit to question the decision, whether someone is eligible for asylum or whether they should have be granted refugee statues that is not our remit we cannot really question that. Our

role is really just to work the best as we can within the parameters that are set by that legislator within Europe (Fay, interview 2018, 07:06).

IRARA that is a service-providing NGO has no agenda to question state practices. Rather, they aim to serve the state's interest and provide them with a service that can make their practice more humane and dignified.

IRARA as well as the Red Cross state that they aim to work towards a sustainable reintegration. The informants from the two organisations points out that providing the reintegration support and creating a sustainable situation for the group goes beyond the main interest of the receiving state government. Thus, the main concern for the state is to get the 'illegalized' migrant to leave the territory.

The Red Cross project manager describes that one of the reasons why they organisation to engage with rejected asylum seekers was because "...the Swedish authorities responsibility for a person stop when the execution has been carried out, that is to say, when a person has left the country." (Zeolla interview 2018, own translate, 09:52). This shows that the Red Cross understands that the Swedish states main interest lies in the removal and not in the re-integration. IRARA's reintegration manager brings up this aspect as well.

Some of the European countries are happy, basically, once the returnee is home, or back to the country of origin I should say, and when the given the money or the services once that is delivered, they are happy that the process is done. But I am trying to investigate, how we can sort of see it as a long-term process, being not just about the individual returnee, To look at it from a developmental aspects as well, to not just look at it from a migration point of view, but to look at it from a development point of view. This is something that is in the process, and we are trying to develop that, but I would say, making it sustainable, is it something that the returnee want within the year, if they give up after six months, then obviously that is not sustainable reintegration for them (Fay, interview 2018, 18:12).

The interest of the states contemporary form of assisted 'voluntary' return (and reintegration) programmes is a form of assisted removal. Nevertheless, IRARA aims to investigate how reintegration aid can realise a development potential and led to a sustainable situation for the individual in socio-economic terms.

In the Red Cross former project that finished in 2015, they provided a small financial aid to facilitate for the individual that aimed to get started on the labour market (Zeolla 2017 interview, own translation). The Red Cross sister organisations, other national Red Cross organisations in the countries of origin were tasked to evaluate. When the reintegration part of the Red Cross return project was finalised in 2015, there was no more budget for Red Cross to allocate to the sister organisations to be used for this project.

IRARA also have limited resources to follow-up on an individual's situation when they returned. Thus, IRARA is financed to monitor the individuals one-year after they have returned to their country of origin. As resources are limited, it is difficult for the actors engaged in provision of reintegration assistance to know if they have been able to realise the objectives of making individual self-reliant or (even) if they have become 'agents of development'.

What diverges between the Swedish Red Cross, the Swedish Church and IRARA is their understanding of why they engage in provision of reintegration support or in sending private money. Some of the Church parishes engagement in assisting post-removal can be understood as private initiatives, based on private interpersonal relations. The Red Cross see their provision of post-removal assistance, as with the pre-departure assistance, as an attempt to fulfil a vulnerable group's humanitarian needs. Furthermore, the Red Cross see their reintegration assistance as going beyond the interest of the state, which is essentially to get the rejected asylum seeker efficiently removed.

IRARA mainly provides services for the states, which aim to make 'voluntary departures' more humane as well as to enable the state to have a form of carrot to offer. The informant from IRARA also explains that it is in their interest to show that they can make reintegration sustainable and go beyond the state main interest, which is to get the individual removed. However, IRARA, just as a Red Cross, does not have infinite resources to guarantee sustainable reintegration.

5.7 A deportation continuum? – an interim conclusion

In this final section I am going to conclude my findings and also to discuss how we can further understand the actors through the lens of the deportation continuum.

The staff at the Migration agency is tasked to realise the governments objective to increase the number of 'voluntary departures'. Here the assistance function as a part of the many methods used to persuade the rejected asylum seeker to leave. A mix of force and persuasion is needed as well as preparation by mainstreaming a double perspective. The staff is instructed to display emotions of empathy, and listen to the concerns of the rejected asylum seekers as to install trust in the process and possibly get more rejected asylum seekers to effectively leave the territory.

Another way for the state actors to install trust in the process and to make the removal more humane and dignified is to directly engage with non-state actors or indirectly by finance their projects. Moreover, the state and non-state actors facilitate a dialogue by holding regular meetings. None of the non-state actors researched here are opposing the practice of removal. They share the basic understanding that those without protection needs should leave in a dignified and humane way. The Swedish Red Cross and the Swedish Church wants to for example partake in meetings as to ensure that the practice develop in what they see as a desirable way. This shows how the actors aim to create a consensus and collaborate on the issues, without challenging prevailing logics of the practice.

The Red Cross and the Church stresses that their motives for engaging and practices are significantly difference from the states. For them, it is important to point out that they only support those who request it and they are not trying to motivate anyone to anything. Their involvement is based on an identified vulnerability of the group not to reach objective of people leaving the territory.

In contrast to these actors, IRARA, the service-providing NGO, involvement is based on the states demand for a service. A service that makes the state removals seem softer and can make them more effective as people may be more willing to leave when offered assistance to do so.

The actors mean that they have different roles, roles that they ascribed to themselves and by others. The values, the practices and the understanding of engaging in assisting the group are be spread across a continuum and can be under negotiation.-However, there are limits, implicit agreed understandings what the actors are to engage with. There is as Kalir & Wissink (2015) describe “pre-agreed lines” of action between the actors. Thus, as I have shown it is important for the civil society actors to emphasis how their reasoning for engaging and practice differ from the states. All the non-state actors understands that their engagements goes beyond what the state mainly aim to do, which is to essential get the individual efficiently removed.

I mean that the reach that these actors both spatially, across the territory as well as beyond it borders, but also emotionally, through the personal relation, can make more rejected asylum seekers to effectively to leave the territory in possibly a more humane and dignified way.

6 Conclusion

This thesis has had a twofold aim as to give a possible deeper insight in today's policy, programmes and engagements in 'voluntary returns'. First, this thesis have aimed to enhance the understanding how and why so-called assisted voluntary return programmes and the policy have developed into its contemporary form in Western Europe and particular in Sweden. Secondly, I have tried to show how state- and non-state actors engaged in facilitating so-called assisted voluntary returns for rejected asylum seekers and/or assisting rejected asylum seekers in Sweden understand their involvement, their roles and their practices.

My first conclusion is that the stated voluntariness of the so-called assisted voluntary return programmes have in Western Europe and Sweden gradually been blurred and have today become a part of a singular forced removal policy. The targets groups and practices have also been shifting as well as the framing of the programmes and the individual to are targeted to return or removed.

The first assisted voluntary returns programmes in the mid-1970s was partially framed as development programme and where through incentive of assistance trying to guide (redundant) migrant labour power to take the decision to return to their country of origin. The programmes where implemented a long side policies that banned future labour emigrations. This shows how the anti-immigrant sentiments and structural unemployment was the reason for starting the programmes.

In the 1980s UNCHR started to promote voluntary repatriation as the preferred (durable) solution, it was seen as humanitarian act that supported refugees right to return. This might have given legitimacy to receiving state to encourage refugees to return when the countries of origin objectively were deemed safe and divest the refugee to make his own judgement. The 'repatriation turn' can be understood to have taken place because the cost for asylum system was souring and richer states being less willing to give protection.

The great displacement on the European continent caused by the war in former Yugoslavia led the Western European states restriction on protection for the refugees and further focus on encourage refugees 'voluntary' return. The voluntariness of voluntary return was even more blurred. The time-limited protection was return oriented, as the refugees were constant to be reminded that protection could end and led to deportation. An apparatus of intervention was built up to encourage, assist and facilitate more returns after the signing of the Dayton Peace Accords.

After the shift of the millennia the proponents and policy-makers of migration management prescribed a managerial solution to deportation. Thus, to promote and utilize the AVR programmes as an alternative (assisted) removal. The reason for this was that Western state saw it as a growing problem that rejected asylum seekers and other undocumented migrants did not leave the territory. A lack of efficiency in removals was problematized at the same time as a public dislike grew for the violent methods of deportation. To utilize AVR-programmes for deportation was seen as a pragmatic, balanced approach to increase

efficiency and to avoid human rights violations. A mix of threat and assistance was thought to lead to the desired efficiency. Moreover, it was argued that the provision of reintegration assistance could be understood as a contribution to development - as way to get all involved parties on-board.

Intergovernmental organisations, such as IOM, were the leading architects behind this new alternative deportation and managerial approach to migration. The number of AVR programmes grew immensely around this time and the global reach of organisation of IOM. These policy-makers worked closely with EU and later much of these suggestions was realised in the Union's policy. A convergence from above took place with the EU- wide removal policy and for example reintegration assistance through the collaboration on the ERIN SA. EU's Return Directive stated that voluntary returns was "preferred" over forced. Hence 'voluntary returns' was seen as an integrated part of a EU- wide removal policy.

The development of Sweden's (voluntary) return policy, the agenda and rhetoric on return and removal as well as the assistance to voluntary returns has gradually been converging with states in the surrounding region. Throughout the recent decades it has involved a wide range of methods and actors.

In the mid-70s Sweden did not have an agenda on voluntary return for refugees as it was seen as go against the political objectives on integration. After the request of immigrant association the state started to assist returns and in 1989 guidelines on voluntary return was adopted. In the 1990s Sweden adopted policies as neighbouring region, as that of temporary protection and many projects were started as to assist returnees. The financial support that earlier had been kept low financial support to not promote return, was raised in 1997 to encourage returns. Great many actors in Sweden started to engage in facilitating and assisting returns and returnees.

In the start of the new millennia the immigration agency took over main responsibility for execution of removal orders from the policy, which meant that they now were tasked with trying to convince the rejected applicant to 'voluntary depart'. The agency was meant implement a so-called double perspective a parallel focus on preparing for return and integration for the asylum seekers. Civil society actors and municipality also engaged in diverse activities that were thought to prepare asylum seekers for return. All these new efforts were attempts to increase the efficiency in returns as the number of rejected asylum seekers were soaring after 2000. Moreover, it was understood as a way to get rejected asylum seekers to leave the territory in a more humane and dignified way.

The following years Sweden were to converge its regulation on removal and collaborated closely with other member states. This meant that 'voluntary departures' is the main focus for assistance and now was an alternative form of assisted removals. After the political crisis followed by the large influx of refugees in 2015, the Swedish politicians has mainly focused on implemented new deterrence policies as to get more (rejected) asylum seekers to leave the territory on their own accord.

To realise the Return's directive "preference" for 'voluntary departures' the staff at the Swedish Migration agency has to persuade the rejected asylum seekers to leave the territory. Persuasion is to take place through a mix of EU-wide incentives and disincentives such as reintegration assistance and re-entry bans. Enhance efficiency in people leaving the territory is by the agency engage in mainstreaming and specialization of the issue.

Today, many non-state actors are in formal and non-formal ways involved in assisting, preparing or facilitating rejected asylum seekers leaving Sweden. Even practices and also values-basis among the actors studied in this thesis can seem similar their understanding of their roles and engagements differs. I mean that the understanding of having different roles, values and practices can help to contribute to the states objective to efficiency in 'voluntary departure' and making the process more human and dignified.

The Swedish Church and the Swedish Red Cross understands that their great network in Sweden and contact with asylum seekers as the reasons to that they receives funded to be able to give information to on the 'return process' and removal policy. Both actors mean that an identify vulnerability of rejected asylum seekers as the reason to supporting the group and they stress that individuals themselves that seeking assistance from them. Compassion, empathy, human support and interpersonal relations are some of the values that these two actors want to convey. The Red Cross see their practices as respond to humanitarian need and the Church mean that they support rejected asylum seekers in any situation and do not run any financed formal programme to support removed individuals but parishes might take private initiatives to do so.

The Red Cross see their reintegration support as going beyond the Swedish states interest that they see is just to remove the individual. IRARA are also identifies their provision of reintegration assistance as a practice that goes beyond the main interest of the state. IRARA are in contrast to the Red Cross understanding their services and support as being based on an identified gap in the market place. They are responding to a demand of the EU's member states and are not trying to challenge or oppose any of the state practices.

The Red Cross and the Church they may try to influence the state practices in way they see as desirable, but are not trying to challenge the prevailing logics of removals. The actors also understand it as they have different roles and tasks in relation to the rejected asylum seekers. Meeting are held between state and civil society actors in attempts to influence and inform one and another. This shows on a consensus mentality existing between the actors and strive to influence each other's actions in a desired way.

To conclude, the development into the contemporary form of assisted 'voluntary' return and policy on voluntary return has been gradual and involved a great range of state and non-state actors and practices. Programmes to assist have great many times been accompanied by restrictionist and deterrence policy, from bans on labour immigration to today's EU wide re-entry bans. The project, programmes and policy have changed in character also with occurrence of specific "events" from the oil-crisis in 1973 to the so called 'refugee crisis' in 2015. The person to be returned or removed has been portrayed differently by different actors, from agent of development, to a state-builder and vulnerable persons.

Many non-state actors have understood their engagements, roles and practices very differently from one and another but have regardless engaged in many similar practices of encouraging and facilitating from voluntary to non-voluntary removals. The non-state actors brought up in this paper are not challenging the state practice. The state and non-state actors actions and values are not opposing but rather exists on a continuum. A horizontal and vertical convergence can be seen of the values of the actors involved, their policy, practices and programmes. Yet, at the same time designated roles of each actor are maintained

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