

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### **A. Background**

Eritrea is fairly a new country that got its independence on a thirty years long war (1 September 1961 – 29 May 1991) against Ethiopia and legally recognized by UN supervised referendum in 1993 (United Nations, 1996). Eritrea is located in Eastern Africa in the Horn of Africa, bordered by Sudan in the west, Ethiopia in the south, by Djibouti in the southeast, and it shares maritime borders with Saudi Arabia and Yemen. According to UN Statistic Division (2016) with total area of 117,000 km<sup>2</sup>, Eritrea population is around 6 million people.

The young country was never absent of conflict. The independence of Eritrea was followed by socio-economic and boundary delimitation controversies with Ethiopia. Thus, after five years of independence, in 1998, the two states went to a war which has been called Operation Sunset by the Eritrean side which invaded the town of Badma and the surrounding area using tanks and artillery. The war was highly destructive and very pervasive, claimed approximately 135,000 Ethiopian and 19,000 Eritrean casualties (Bezabih, 2014).

From that history of war, the Eritrea government decided to keep the military style government behind the reason of getting prepared in case of neighbors attack. In fact, Eritrea is known as one of the most

authoritarian regimes in the world, rivaled that of North Korea (Bozzini, 2012). It did not democratize itself after the independence, rather it had developed its own militaristic ideology inspired by a socialist-type of rule and ideology.

According to Jennifer Riggan in *Georgetown Journal Of International Affairs* (2016), the Eritrean state bureaucracy is disorganized, ineffective in many aspects and unstable. Independent mass media were forcedly shut down in 2001, and civil society organizations were forbidden from gathering. The government also has brutally curtailed the formation of opposition groups and organized protests. Arbitrary detentions are common. All but four religions are banned.

Gaim Kibreab in *Forced Labour in Eritrea* (2009) described that the glory of winning the war over Ethiopia by the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), now Eritrean People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ), made the perception of the social capital produced during the thirty years' war as the foundation of the edifice on which Eritrean patriotism and Eritrean national identity rest. Thus, PFDJ and Eritrea government believes that a highly organized, disciplined, committed and cohesive army with an impressive organizational and fighting capability are the necessary competence for its citizen and created National Service.

The National Service in other side can also be viewed as the mean to abolish the danger of multi-ethnic and multi-faith 'chaos' in which the government's view can only be avoided by inculcating national values on

the hundreds of thousands of conscripts who basically originate from disparate ethno-linguistic groups (Kibreab, 2009).

National Service in Eritrean sense is compulsory military training and civil services for all Eritreans between the age of 18 to 50 for the maximum of 18 months. Actually in its origin according to Proclamation No. 11/1991, the first proclamation on national service in the country, only few citizens, specifically the unemployed youth who were targeted, but after it was replaced by Proclamation 82/1995 all Eritreans, except the veterans of the 30 years' war of independence and the physically and mentally disabled people are required to take part in the National Service regardless of family responsibility and gender (Kibreab, 2014).

Worse, in May 1998 after the border war broke out between Eritrea and Ethiopia the national service was extended by the government, furthermore they even remobilized the people who had been demobilized. In December 2000 the Eritrean government had promised to demobilize more than 200,000 soldiers, including conscripts, but in fact according to Human Rights Council report (2015) by May 2002 instead, Eritrea Government extended the national service indefinitely.

This indefinite National Service later became the main reason of young citizens fleeing the country. Amnesty International in its report (2015) described that the conscripts in the National Service have no rights to oppose the government, they even were not getting chance to choose their assignments or jobs, paid with a low monthly salary between 145 – 500

Nakfa (approximately 30 US\$), got limited and poor access to health care, they were also not allowed to visit their family on a regular basis.

Majority of the Eritreans were fleeing to Europe through Mediterranean route, which spans from North Africa to Italy. In 2015, UN refugee agency, UNHCR stated that there were 5000 people flee to Red Sea to reach Europe in every month and in November 2014, it was said that 90% of Eritreans arriving in Europe were between 18 and 24 years old. In the first seven months of 2016 it was reported that 11,564 Eritrean arrivals in Italy, representing 12 percent of arrivals there—second to Nigeria. In the same period, another 2,692 migrants were reported dead at sea along that route (Laub, 2016).

European Union countries, including Italy, fielded 17,810 asylum applications from Eritrean nationals. In 2015, the top recipients of asylum applications from Eritrean nationals were Germany with 10,990 migrants, Switzerland 9,965 migrants, the Netherlands 7,455 migrants, and Sweden 7,230 migrants (UNHCR, 2014).

Some countries, including the United Kingdom and Denmark, said that the increased number of the people going there because of the experience of National Service conscripts in Eritrea had come to the point where those fleeing no longer had grounds for asylum. Many more resided in neighboring Ethiopia and Sudan, bringing the diaspora to about half a million, and making the country of six million people “one of the world’s fastest-emptying nations,” according to the *Wall Street Journal*

(2016).

The massive youth migrations made Eritrea suffered from human resources shortages, but the government only took an ambivalent stance because the government benefits from the large diaspora. It collected a 2 percent income tax from many émigrés, reportedly on the threat of denying them consular services, like travel documents, or services to family members who remained in Eritrea (Hepner, 2009). But now under the pressure of international community and the major decline of their economy, Eritrean government ought to find ways to stop the massive youth migration and to bring back those who are already got asylums in the fleeing countries. Based on the explanations above, therefore, the effort that Eritrea government took in order to stop its massive young migrations and to bring back those who already got asylum in the fleeing countries are worth to be analyzed.

## **B. Research Question**

Based on the background of the problem explained above, a research question was made: *“How are Eritrea Government Policy to Reduce the Massive Youth Migration?”*

## **C. Purpose of Research**

The research is aimed to analyze Eritrea government actions towards its emigrants, and its effort to stop the massive youth migration as the country has been deemed as the fastest emptying country.

## **D. Theoretical Framework**

In answering the background problem and research question, the author uses push and pull of migration model by Everett Lee and political system theory from David Easton.

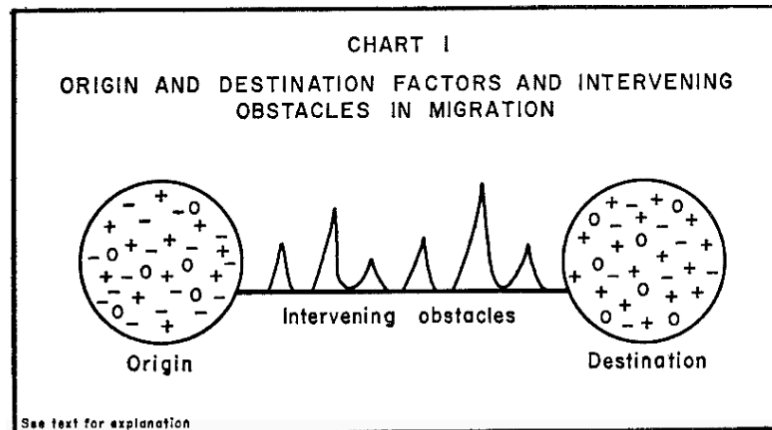
### **1. Push and Pull of Migration Model by Everett Lee**

In his paper “ A Theory of Migration”, Everett Lee summarized factors which enter into the decision of migration and the process of migration under four headings (Lee, 1966):

- a. Factors associated with the area of origin
- b. Factors associated with the area of destination
- c. Intervening obstacles
- d. Personal factors

He indicated schematically the first three factors in the chart below. The + signs in the chart stand for the pull factors of an area which act to hold people within the area or attract people to it, and – signs stand for the push factors in an area which tend to repel people. There are 0's to which people are essentially indifferent. All these factors work with the personal factors together to determine the decision making of migration.

Picture 1.1. Origin and Destination Factors and Intervening Obstacles in Migration



Source: Everett S. Lee in A Theory of Migration

If this model is attributed to explain the push and pull factors of Eritrea massive youth migration we can see that the factors that affected the decision taken by the Eritrean youth into the following:

a. Factor Associated with Eritrea as The Area of Origin

Eritrea is a small country located in the Horn of Africa with authoritarian and military-styled government that forced the implementation of compulsory indefinite National Service towards its citizen. The conscripts are paid with low monthly salary between 145 – 500 Nakfa (approximately 30 US\$), they got limited and poor access to health care, they were also not allowed to visit their family on a regular basis. The UN report also said that Eritrea has remained as the least developed country in the world in the last 10 years.

From the explanation we can understand that the push factors are the indefinite compulsory National Service, economic condition like

low salary and low development of opportunity, and the limited access to health care and education, while the pull factor remain weak as the migrants must leave the family back in Eritrea.

b. Factor Associated with The Area of Destinations

The main destination for the Eritrea youth migration is Europe. Here the explanation will be focused on the factors that Europe offers as the pull factors and the problems that became the push factors. Europe Union with its migrant policy offers a lot of opportunity to Eritrean who search for a better life. There the migrants can easily have access to health care and education, and they can work accordingly to their will without being forced.

For the push factors, there is the threat of marginalization and increased morbidity that the migrants have been facing. There are also several conflicts happened between the migrants and the host citizens.

c. Intervening Obstacle

Lee mentioned in his article that distance is the most studied and mentioned obstacle in migration. To travel to Europe the Eritrean youth migrants need to cross the Mediterranean route which spans from North Africa to Italy. Most of them risking their life to travel by small boat with the threat of crashing and drowning. Beside that according to *The Guardian*, Eritrean had to pay around \$2000-\$7000 to be smuggled out of the country.



There is also the problem of gaining the asylum as the migrant need to have a legal standing to grant asylum. European Union stated that they prioritize those who are the victim of war for granting asylum, as now Eritrean who fled from the country can rather be considered as economic migrants.

d. Personal Factors

For personal factors according to the interview conducted by Amnesty International, they conducted interview with Binyam, an 18 years old Eritrean who fled the country unaccompanied, he said that the reason was that he did not want to join the national service as he learnt from his father and sister experience. The report also stated that people fleeing Eritrea not only because of prolonged and indefinite of national service, but also to the impact this has on their ability to survive economically, enjoy their right to a family life and due to the other violations they experience within national service.

## **2. Political System Theory (Input-Output)**

According to David Easton, Political System Theory still holds key positions in the state political studies. The political system is a collective set of political structures that have the functions to achieve the goal of a state. Political systems approach is intended to provide a scientific explanation through the political phenomenon.

Easton (1965) identified four attributes that need to be considered in any review of the political system, as follows:

a. System

It is useful to view political life as system of behavior. Similar to the functionalist paradigm, within the framework of the political system there are units interconnected and work together to move the process of political system. These units are the institutions that are authoritative for running the political system like legislative, executive, judiciary, political parties, civil society organizations, etc.

b. Environment

A system is distinguishable from the environment in which it exists and opens to influences it. A good system should have differentiation (distinction and separation) work. In a complex modern society, it is impossible for one agency to solve the whole problem. Integration between different units working is also needed to achieve a common goal. By the existence of this integration, it could maximize the efforts of those different units to achieve a common goal.

c. Response

Variations in the structures and processes within a system may usefully be interpreted as constructive or positive alternative efforts by members of a system to regulate or cope with stress flowing from environmental as well as internal sources. In this case, political system is driven by demands and support in which formed input. Demand is a set of interests that the allocation is not evenly distributed over several units of society in the political system. Support is a community effort to sustain the existence of a political system to continue running. There is also output which are the decisions and actions of the authorities. They produce effects and consequences which have direct relation with the members' attitude and behavior for the system. The decision is the selection of one or more selection or action as appropriate to support the entry. Meanwhile, the government's action is a concrete implementation of decisions.

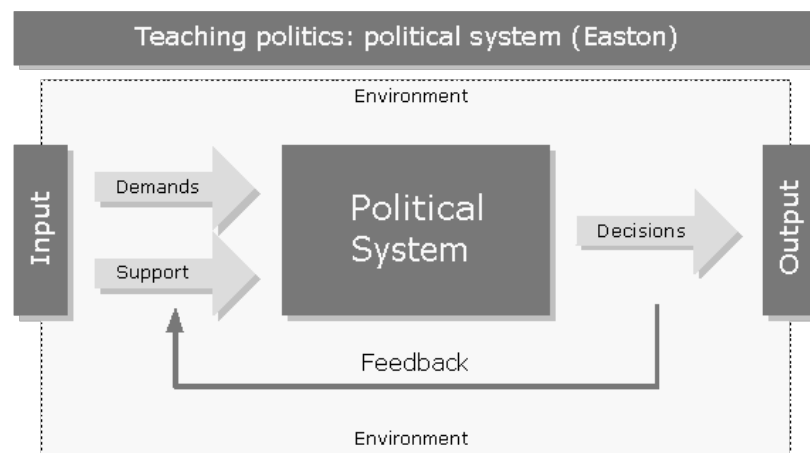
d. Feedback

The capacity of a system to persist in the face of stress is a function of the presence and nature of the information and other influences that return to its actors and decision-makers. It is a dynamic process through which information about the outputs and the

environment is communicated to the system which may result in subsequent change or modification of the system. When information relating to converted inputs, or outputs comes in, then there is a kind of re-communication of information, or re-inputation of inputs already converted into outputs. By doing so, the political system gets an opportunity to modify or transform its behavior conducive to that feedback.

Those attributes in the application of Political System Theory go as follows:

Picture 1.2. Political System Theory



Source: David Easton in Ronald, Chilcote. (2003). *Teori Perbandingan Politik: Penelusuran dan Paradigma*. Jakarta: Raja Grafindo Perkasa.

If this theory attributed to the efforts of the Eritrea Government to stop the massive youth migration then, it relates to some reasons/motivations. First, the pressure Eritrea got from international community following the massive migration of its citizen

mainly to Europe. EU has been putting pressure on Eritrea saying that Europe can no longer accept Eritrean migrants which is increasing each year and the European institutions and national governments are to make a show of deporting refused asylum seekers to try to discourage others from making the journey (Plaut & van Reisen, 2015). The pressure also comes from the economic sanctions, arm embargoes, travel ban and asset freeze imposed on listed individuals deemed a threat to peace and the national reconciliation process put by UK, US, EU, UN, and Amnesty International in accusation of human rights violation by Eritrea Government.

Second, the economic condition in which Eritrea's gross domestic product growth (GDP) growth was estimated at around 9% in the 2011-12 period according to The World Bank, the growth was mainly stimulated by the mining sector (gold), the coming on stream of the Bisha mine in 2011 and the historically high gold price prevailing at the time (The World Bank, 2015). But despite of that, according to UN Committee for Development Policy (2016) Eritrea remained as one of the least developed countries in the world and in the term of human resource they are lacking the quality as the young citizens has been fleeing the country in the fear of the indefinite National Service.

## **E. Hypothesis**

Based on the background, research question, the framework of the above theories, the hypotheses that can be taken are Eritrean Government policy to reduce the massive youth migration are:

*First*, Eritrea Government changes its policy from being a secretive country to be an open country in order to lift the sanctions and embargos by international community. *Second*, Eritrea Government reforms the national service policy to erase the indefinite national service and raise the monthly salary of the conscripts in the national service according to their education. *Third*, create more jobs opportunity in the mining sectors infused by the foreign direct investment. *Fourth*, to restrain the money in the black market and hit human traffickers abroad, such as those in Sudan and Ethiopia, Eritrea Government print a new Nakfa currency notes.

## **F. Methodology of Research**

### 1. Unit Analysis

Based on the object of this research, the unit analysis of this paper is State which lies on Eritrean Government.

### 2. Research and Data Types

In the making of this undergraduate thesis, the writer uses qualitative method of so-called descriptive method which aims at

describing an analyzed phenomenon. Furthermore, the data necessary in this research is secondary data. The form of these data lies on documents or literatures which are relevant to the topic discussed.

### 3. Data Collection Method

In the accomplishment of this paper, the writer uses a method of literature review relevant to the research object. These references come from books, scientific journals, press releases, websites and so forth and any other valid resources which are relevant to the research object.

### **G. Research Scope**

In writing this thesis the writer limited the discussion on the mass youth migration after the Eritrea-Ethiopia war in which the National Service became indefinite started from 2002-2016 as the main reason of the massive migration is the uncertainty of the National Service. The time limitation was used in order to avoid the complexity of the observation and analysis.

### **H. Thesis Writing System**

The systematics of this thesis consists of five chapters with various discussion subtopics, as follows:

In **Chapter I**, the writer discusses about the Background, Research Question, the theoretical framework, hypothesis, research methodology, scope of the study, the purpose of the research and writing system.

In **Chapter II**, the writer discusses about the history of National Service in Eritrea before and after Eritrea-Ethiopia War in 1998-2002.

In **Chapter III**, the writer talks about the Eritrea youth response towards the indefinite national service and the massive youth migration.

In **Chapter IV**, the writer analyzes the Eritrea Government policy in reducing the massive youth migration.

In **Chapter V**, the author draws conclusion taken from the whole chapters as the last inference.