

Every Nation's Refugee?

*A Comparative Analysis of Asylum Policies towards
Syrians among Hungary, France, and Germany*

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This thesis is dedicated to the over 11 million Syrians who have been externally or internally displaced by the tragedies in their home country.

Chapter I: Introduction

“There were so many bombs being dropped on us, I felt sure we would all die. I thought we had lived our last hours on Earth” – Syrian refugee Khaldieh on living in Homs, Syria (qtd. in Willsher 2016, April 16).

“We thought that Europe cares and that they would save us. But we ... have lost hope in Europe. There is discrimination and no freedom to move” – anonymous Syrian refugee (qtd. in “Don’t get on the boat”).

“I was so depressed [but] I’ve gotten better.... I feel optimistic that tomorrow will be a better day” – Syrian refugee Hassan Zaroid (qtd. in “Syrian refugees”).

Waves of migrants are pouring across the borders. Over the past few years the movement of refugees from the Middle East and North Africa has become one of the most talked-about international political issues. Refugee movement from Syria during their civil war has been especially important. Over half the population of Syria has been internally or externally displaced because of their civil war, and more than four million have been forced to flee abroad (Bixler & Martinez 2015, September 11; World Vision 2016, April 11). The majority of these Syrians have fled to neighboring countries like Lebanon, Turkey, and Jordan. About 3.8 million Syrians are in one of Syria’s neighboring countries: roughly 1.9 million in Turkey, 1.1 million in Lebanon, 620,000 in Jordan, and 250,000 in Iraq (Martinez 2015, September 10).

However, a significant number want to migrate to Europe; by one estimate, over half of all refugees attempting to reach Europe are Syrian (Eurostat 2015). In 2014, there were 137,947 official asylum applications in Europe, and between April 2011 (when the Syrian Civil War started) and November 2015 there were over 800,000 asylum applications (UNHCR 2015). These numbers are conservative when one considers the thousands of displaced persons who fled over land or overseas to Europe without filing an official asylum application. According to one UN statistic, Europe receives 5,000-8,000 total refugees per day (Jeffrey 2015, November 14). Since opening its border to Syrians, Germany received over 800,000 refugees in the last quarter

of 2015, about 8,700 per day (Huggler & Holehouse 2015, October 5). As with all estimates of refugee flow, none of these numbers are exact, but they do paint a picture of how important the flow of refugees in general and Syrians in particular are to Europe.

The ways in which the European Union member nations responded to this influx of refugees in the summer and fall of 2015 have been puzzling, as EU member states were—and still are—split on how welcoming they should be, even though there are mechanisms already in place for situations like this. Most prominently, the Dublin Regulations state that a refugee must seek asylum in the first EU country s/he enters, and the EU often holds summits to determine quota for each member nation. Despite this, EU countries had a wide range of responses, as illustrated by the disparities among Germany, France, and Hungary. In September, Germany unilaterally dropped the Dublin regulations and said they would take as many Syrians as wanted to come. Germany officially expected to take in 800,000 refugees by the end of December 2015 (with non-public documents hinting at numbers closer to 1.5 million), and Vice-Chancellor Sigmar Gabriel has said Germany could take 500,000 more each year for “several years” (Huggler & Holehouse 2015, October 5; Smith & Tran 2015, September 8). Most other EU countries, meanwhile, have been far more hesitant. France did not go as far as Germany, pledging instead to take in 30,000 Syrians over the next two years (Thatoor 2015, November 18). Hungary, meanwhile, wanted—and, as of writing, continues—to seek to accept no refugees if possible, and has gone as far as constructing fences within the EU Schengen zone in order to keep out Syrians (Steinbuch 2015, September 16). What causes different EU countries to have such different policies towards Syrian refugees? More generally, why do different countries have different levels of welcoming towards refugees?

Literature Review

Before answering any research question, one must know what scholarship already exists. Although refugee studies is largely a post-World War II scholarly field, there is still much literature on the topic. Much of this literature helps to answer this thesis' research question without directly addressing refugee acceptance. To begin, there is the question of what exactly a "refugee" is. Many have tackled this question from a jurisprudential perspective, tackling what the international community has legally defined it as (Al-Khatibeh & Al-Labady 2014; Janco 2014). Others have attempted to reconceive the definition of refugee, arguing that in a fairer world the definition of refugee would be expanded and not tied to the relationship between an individual and a state (Shacknove 1985). A typical definition of a refugee defines a refugee as someone who "due to well-founded fear of being persecuted [...] because of his race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, unwilling to avail himself to the protection of that country" (Al-Khatibeh & Al-Labady 2014: 11). This definition is rooted in jurisprudence, and is primarily based on international discussions at the 1951 Geneva Refugee Convention (Drywood 2014). The Convention definition helps those individuals who are fleeing persecution based on a specific characteristic (race, religion, etc.) they have, and whose home nation will not or cannot protect them (Janco 2014). Where this interpretation of "refugee" falls short is in characterizing those individuals who are fleeing non-specific persecution, a categorization in which Syrian refugees fall. Syrians are fleeing the horrors of war, but these horrors are nondiscriminatory in whom they target; civilians are dying not based on race or religion, but simply for being in Syria while their civil war is ongoing.

A more useful definition in the Syrian context, which will therefore be used in this thesis, is one espoused by Shacknove (1985). He writes that “refugees are, in essence, persons whose basic needs are unprotected by their country of origin, who have no remaining recourse other than to seek international restitution of their needs, and who are so situated that international assistance is possible” (277). Syrians fleeing life-threatening situations in their homelands clearly fulfill all three requirements Shacknove mentions. The infrastructure that existed in Syria is no longer able to give Syrians the bare necessities for life, as evidenced by the nearly half-million deaths that have already occurred (Nasser et. al. 2015). Their only recourse is to flee to neighboring countries or Europe, and the international assistance of taking them in is, of course possible.

Before discussing the remaining literature, it is necessary to talk about the difference between “asylum seeker” and “refugee.” Technically, under the aforementioned international definition, an asylum seeker is someone who has formally applied to be a refugee, and if s/he is granted asylum s/he becomes a refugee (Da Lomba 2010; Mitchell 2006). Someone who eschews the asylum process altogether would then be a “migrant,” with subcategories such as economic migrant, forced migrant, and undocumented migrant also existing. This distinction is important in some contexts (especially legal analyses), but becomes somewhat of a hindrance with Syrians, as so many Syrians are technically not refugees or asylum seekers, but forced migrants. Therefore, this thesis will not concern itself too closely with the distinction between asylum seeker and refugee, using the terms somewhat interchangeably to signify any Syrian who meets Shacknove’s criteria.

Many scholars have also written about asylum from a legal perspective, that is, the jurisprudential aspects of asylum law and policy (e.g. Da Lomba 2010; Drywood 2014;

Hathaway 2005; Lambert 2009; Soltesz 1995; Tolley 2012). This includes not only cut-and-dried reports on national court rulings, but also more subtle works about why certain national and supranational courts act in certain ways. This is important to asylum policy in general, but not entirely relevant for this thesis. All of the national policies this thesis analyzes came from the executive or legislative branches, not the judicial; no major ruling has been issued either welcoming or blocking Syrian refugees in any of the three case studies in this work.

In addition to technical, definition-based works in refugee studies, there have also been many refugee integration articles about how refugees are treated once they are in a country. Many of these writings deal with to what extent social welfare programs are available to refugees (Snyder 2011; Spicer 2008; Statham 2002). These works are policy-related, but they focus more on refugee integration, rather than what processes allow the refugees to be in a certain country in the first place. However, many times a country's social welfare policy vis-à-vis refugees reflects broader national culture.

There have also been many articles about the history of various national asylum policies (e.g. Bosswick 2000; Burgess 2008; Caron 1993; Faist 1994; Knight 2014; Lambert et. al. 2008; Layton-Henry 2004; Poutrous 2014; Reyes 2011; Soltesz 1995; Wischenbart 1994). These works tend to be about the evolution of asylum laws in a specific country, and many do not specifically address why asylum policies have evolved as they have. Those that do can be very useful in comparing different countries' policies. Furthermore, the background information these articles provide, especially the historical and cultural backgrounds, is useful in examining why contemporary refugee policy is the way it is.

Perhaps the largest and certainly the most useful (in this context) subset of the refugee studies literature are those articles and books that focus squarely on asylum politics: why certain

countries accept refugees. Most of these works concern themselves with only a few case studies (as this thesis is doing), or even just one, although there are works that to some extent summarize the already-existing literature (e.g. Joly 1996). The theories these articles hypothesize and test in examining their case studies generally fall into one of three schools of thought: economic explanations, foreign policy explanations, and national politics and culture explanations. The goal of this thesis is to analyze these three schools of thought in the context of the European Union.

The first school of thought consists of those authors who have written about accepting or rejecting refugees from an economic perspective. Within this school of thought, some have argued that a country's absorption capacity is the ultimate decider in whether a country takes in refugees (Bolderson 2011; Da Lomba 2010). Absorption capacity consists of economic resources, prime among them land availability and economic prosperity (Pryce 1999). During economic booms a country takes in more refugees, and during busts it accepts fewer. Proponents of this theory believe that if countries have different asylum policies, they must also have different economic capacities.

Another theory in this school of thought is that the economic demographics of a country may lead it to become more or less restrictive. If a country has high unemployment, it is more susceptible to having restrictive policies, and vice-versa (Joly 1996). During contractions, the large numbers of unemployed resent the refugees who have entered their country and, in their minds, stolen their jobs. Furthermore, a country in economic peril focuses less of its resources on welcoming refugees, lowering its quotas or giving refugees fewer rights (Neumayer 2005). Under this theory a country that accepts refugees must have a low unemployment rate.

It has also been theorized that when a population is lacking in certain workplace skills, it will try to “import” select refugees to fill this economic void. Subscribers to this theory would contend that countries with certain underperforming economic demographics would be more likely to witness a refugee “crisis” and make its asylum policies less restrictive. A prominent example of this effect occurred when Britain brought in Austrian and German refugees post-WWII to work in mines, textile factories, hospitals, and farmland (Kay and Miles 1992). This phenomenon has been predicted to recur in Europe. For over a decade, many have written about the so-called “greying of Europe” (Bernstein 2003, June 29; Carone & Costello 2006; Hewitt 2002). Due to a variety of factors, chief among them low fertility rates, impending retirements of the post-WWII generation, and increased life expectancy, Europe is expected to have a relative dearth of workers (Carone and Costello 2006). Because of this asymmetric age gap, there are many more Europeans ready to retire than there are people to replace them. This will lead to a stagnant economy due to decreased taxation revenue but increased welfare spending on pensions (Carone & Costello 2006; Hewitt 2002). Statistically, the ageing trend can be measured in a number of ways. Bernstein (2003, June 29) noted how the average age of Europe is expected in 2050 to rise from 37.7 years to a whopping 52.3, about 17 years higher than what the US is predicted to be. The US Census Bureau similarly estimates that Europe will have 14% fewer workers in 2030 (Hewitt 2002). One of the best ways to illustrate an ageing populace is through the old-age dependency ratio, which takes the quotient of people older than 64 and people between 15 and 64. This number succinctly shows the ratio of the old, non-workers to those working aged. According to Eurostat, the European Union as a whole has an old-age dependency ratio of 28.1 in 2014, more than six points higher than the United States, indicating that the ageing of Europe is a real and pertinent problem.

Economic perspectives are far from the only aspect of asylum that can be analyzed. The second major school of thought that this thesis will analyze believes that a country's foreign policy dictates asylum policy. One hypothesis in this school holds that a country's relationship to the refugee-giving country decides how many refugees a country will accept, especially if that country already has a substantial population of citizens of that country within its borders (Weiner 1985). In general, there is an inverse relationship between positivity of relationship and number of refugees accepted. If a country cuts ties with a refugee-giving country, especially for ideological reasons, it might accept more refugees as proof that the refugee-giving country has an oppressive or inefficient regime: think of how the US took in Cuban (and, to a lesser extent, Vietnamese) refugees during the Cold War as a symbolic anti-Communist gesture (Scanlan & Loescher 1983; Suhrke 1983). This showed the American populace that the Cuban regime was so oppressive that its citizens had to flee, an attempt by the government to keep the national sentiment anti-Communist and in favor of the Cold War. Governments can also recruit refugees specifically to work for the military to take down the refugees' country of origin, as the American CIA did with Cubans (Scanlan & Loescher 1983). The opposite can occur with countries that are allies, such as with the US and Haiti. The US was reluctant to indict the Duvalier regime as committing enough injustices where they would spawn a large number of refugees (Zucker 1983). Therefore, the official US position on Haitians was generally unwelcoming, especially in contrast to the American regulations regarding Cubans and Vietnamese.

Another theory within this school of thought contends that even more important than a country's relationship with the refugee-giving country is its relations to another third party (either a specific country or a transnational group). For example, Australia's interest in keeping

on good terms with members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), many of whom were refugee-takers at the time, was part of the reason why they took on refugees during the Vietnam War. Australia at this time faced “a concern not to alienate the ASEAN countries,” with whom Australia had Preferential Trade Agreements (Kleimann 2014). By closing their doors as countries such as Indonesia and Malaysia were almost overwhelmed by the number of so-called “Boat People” arriving on their shores, Australia would have jeopardized the favorable economic relations they had with important trade partners (Suhrke 1983: 105).

The last school of thought in refugee acceptance literature contends that national politics and culture decides asylum policies. The first major theory concerns itself with interparty fighting and competition. Many of these theorists have argued that smaller right-wing parties’ policies enter and affect mainstream policies disproportionately relative to their support among the citizenry (Adams et. al. 2006; Han 2013). This has been found to be true not only generally, but also with asylum: as Adams et. al. (2006) demonstrated, right-wing parties have “placed the asylum issue on the political agenda by introducing the issue in parliamentary debates, election manifestos and party conferences” (386). Notable right-wing political presences will use their political capital to guide the discussion surrounding refugees in such a way that it leads to more restrictive asylum policies, even if the restrictive policies target an already-integrated minority population (Givens & Luedtke 2005).

Furthermore, other scholars have observed that conservative European parties post-Cold War use xenophobia before competitive elections in order to garner more votes. This theory—that conservative parties use anti-refugee policies as a “weapon of last resort” before elections—was found to be true in the late-1970s across Europe’s largest countries of immigration, England, Germany, and France (Thränhardt 1995: 337). This result has been verified in subsequent studies

across Europe (Bale et. al. 2010; Fitzgerald et. al. 2014; Berning & Schlueter 2016). Therefore, proponents of this theory would argue that the stronger a nationalist or similar right-wing party is, the more restrictive a country's asylum policy is going to be, making it necessary for a country to have a right-wing party in power, especially before an election, in order to restrict refugees' access to the country. The corollary of this claim would be that it is necessary for a country *not* to have such a political outlook in order to become more welcoming towards Syrian refugees.

A similar theory in this school of thought believes that the most important aspect for whether or not refugees will be welcomed is public opinion. This theory is separate from the interparty fighting one, although the two can feed into one another. Many have already analyzed the role of public opinion on domestic policy in Europe, concluding that public opinion ultimately shapes what policies become, often regardless of the subject (Adams et. al. 2004; Anderson 1998; Burstein 1998). Moreover, mass public opinion over a topic will almost automatically put it on policy-makers' agenda (Cobb & Elder 1972). Adams et. al. (2004) proved that European political parties are much more likely to change their policy stances based on public opinion rather than based on past electoral results, while Paul Burstein (1998) concluded that democracies "do what their citizens want, and they are especially likely to do so when an issue is important to the public" (51). In other words, believers in this school of thought think that the overall opinion of the public, rather than just the opinion political elites, will lead a country's asylum policy to be more or less welcoming.

There are several different elements that can influence public opinion. One is the cultural makeup of a society, and how this makeup affects perceptions of refugees. How countries and their populace view certain aspects (e.g. race, religion, ethnicity) of the *citizens* of the refugee-

giving country, rather than the country as a foreign entity, directly affects how welcoming or unwelcoming they are. For example, Australia infamously had a “White Australia” policy after WWII, in which they sought to keep out all immigrants, including refugees, from non-English-speaking-countries (Carens 1988). According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, of the post-WWII adults in the country, only 33,973 were born in Africa, Asia, or Latin America, which is about one-half of one percent of the total population (“Year Book Australia, 1940”). This sort of country—i.e. predominately white—is biased to therefore accept only white refugees.

In addition to cultural diversity, or lack thereof, others have argued that the media sways public opinion. The media reflects public opinion, but it can also shape it. The framing of the news—that is, how the news is presented—is often as important as the content i.e. what the news contains. This has been shown to be true not just with asylum, but across a multitude of diverse issues, including political elections, natural disasters, and judicial decisions (Collins & Cooper 2012; de Vreese 2004; Hayes 2008). For instance, Givens & Luedtke (2005) have found that “issue salience, as measured by newspaper articles” was the most important factor in driving immigration policies in the EU (17). As just one example of this phenomenon, Greensdale (2005) convincingly argued that the British press consistently uses misleading terminology, such as “fanatic,” when negatively describing refugees. This both reflects the undercurrents of xenophobia in British culture, and also serves to reinforce the negative stereotypes Brits have of refugees. Because of this, the UK—and other countries with a conservative media landscape—underinformed or misinformed their readers about refugees, leading to an anti-refugee populace.

The last potential factor to influence public opinion that this project will look at is the history of a country. In examining US ecology policy, Downs (1972) seems to argue that the culture of a country based on historical perspectives is the most important factor: “This

[problem-solving] outlook is rooted in the great American tradition of optimistically viewing obstacles to social progress as *external* to the structure of society itself” (emphasis original) (39). With respect to refugee studies, the focus has been primarily specific to asylum policy. That is, some scholars have looked at how a country has viewed asylum in the past as the key explanation for how the country views it now (e.g. Caron 1993; Knight 2014; Soltesz 1995; Wischenbart 1994). This theory is a major reason why surveys by current scholars are still being conducted into historical moments, such as Burgess’s (2008) book on refugees during the French Revolution and its aftermath. History’s importance on asylum policy still looms large in the hearts and minds of the citizens.

Regarding the specific case of Syrian refugees, there has been much more limited research into and analysis of asylum responses, largely because the Syrian Civil War only began in 2011. The rich discussion of European asylum responses to Syrian refugees is lacking, as many countries’ asylum policies only recently became clear. Most of the work about the EU’s role vis-à-vis Syrians has been normative; that is, many scholarly and non-scholarly articles have discussed what Western countries have or have not done to help refugees, and whether or not Europe can accommodate more of them (Glazer 2015; Harding et. al. 2015, September 2; Ostrand 2015). What is missing from the analyses of Syrian refugees is why certain EU countries have acted as they have. Why have different EU countries reacted in various manners? In order to answer this question, this thesis will draw upon the theories’ espoused in previous works, and attempt to apply them with varying degrees of success to specific EU countries.

Research Design

As demonstrated above, there already exists a large literature on the topic of refugee studies. The three aforementioned schools of thought will be the theoretical framework for this

particular analysis of EU member's policies towards Syrians. In order to determine which independent variable explains the dependent variable, this thesis will utilize a most similar systems research design, with the three cases being Hungary, France, and Germany. The dependent variable y will be degree of welcoming towards Syrian refugees in the fall of 2015. Under Myron Weiner's (1985) demarcations, Germany had "unrestricted entry rules" (does not attempt to stop Syrians from entering) after unilaterally dropping Dublin III and accepting all Syrian refugees, a number projected to reach 800,000 by the end of 2015 (Smith & Tran 2015, September 8). Hungary had "unwanted entry rules," having gone as far as erecting a fence. They attempt, sometimes unsuccessfully, to stop all Syrians refugees from entering their country. France, meanwhile, had "selective entry rules," as they accept some refugees but had a quota of between 24,000 and 30,000 Syrians over the next two years (Frej 2015, November 18; Withnall 2015, September 22).

These three nations have similarities that will control for several factors. All three countries are EU countries, so they are subject to the same set of transnational protocols. They are also roughly in the same geographic area, especially in contrast to other refugee-taking countries, such as the US and various Middle Eastern countries. All three countries have also been refugee-giving countries in the 20th century, especially in World War II and the Cold War. They also have at least some experience with taking refugees in the past, such as during the Cold War, the Greek Civil War or the Balkan wars of the 1990s. Currently, they all have been dealing with many refugees and asylum-seekers from Syria.

In order to answer comparatively the research question, this thesis will be drawing upon the aforementioned previous refugee scholars who have tackled refugee acceptance using other case studies, as characterized by the three schools of thought. Each chapter in this thesis will

analyze how well these theories can explain the situation in a given country. The first body chapter will apply the economic, foreign policy, and national policy and culture theories to Hungary, arguing that the school of thought that best explains Hungary's is national politics, especially interparty fighting and public opinion, which is itself influenced by Hungary's cultural makeup, media landscape, and history. However, the foreign policy school of thought can still be useful in Hungary, as Hungary's relations with the third-party entity of the EU plays a major role in its national asylum policy. The next chapter will be on France, showing how a variety of necessary but insufficient conditions in the economic and national politics/culture schools of thought came together to produce France's selective entry rules. This chapter also includes the importance of a "focusing event," a phenomenon unique to France among the three countries, which cannot explain France's selective entry rules but can explain why it shifted from 24,000 to 30,000 refugees. The final body chapter is an analysis of Germany will examine the country's asylum policies through the same lenses as before, concluding that a combination of Germany's thriving economy and public opinion can explain the country's historic decision to adopt unrestricted entry rules for Syrians. This thesis will conclude by summarizing the primary findings and explaining how this fits into the existing body of literature before offering some suggestions for further research.

The answer to this work's research question will be rooted in specific temporal and spatial contexts, but that does not mean it is tethered to the cases. By examining the specific case of Syrians and the European Union, this thesis will shed significant light on why countries accept or reject refugees. The factors for refugee acceptance this study reveals are potentially applicable to both past and future cases. This could allow scholars to determine under what circumstances

asylum bills are likely to fail and when they are likely to succeed. More importantly, it will add to the existing literature on refugee studies.

Chapter II: Hungary

“We’ve been through all these countries, this one is definitely the worst. It is supposed to be an E.U. country, but it has broken every single tenet they had. Greece is such a poor country, and it treated us better.” – Azad Darwish, Syrian law school alumnus in Budapest (qtd. in Hartocollis 2015, September 5).

“I think the world hates the Syrian people. Every day there is a new obstacle.” – Khaled, Syrian physiotherapist in Hungary (qtd. in Connelly 2015, September 15).

I. Introduction

During an interview with *Business Insider*, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán made his country’s position on asylum-seekers very clear: “If somebody takes masses of non-registered immigrants from the Middle East into a country, this also means importing terrorism, criminalism, anti-Semitism and homophobia.... We do not want these illegal migrants. We do not want to import problems that appeared in Germany. And we do not accept anyone trying to force us to so” (qtd. in Diekmann 2016, February 25). Since 2015, Hungary has steadfastly followed these anti-refugee principles. Hungary has been one of, if not the, most hostile country towards accepting Syrian refugees. Hungary has consistently refused to take in any Syrian, whether it be through national laws or international protocol. In 2014, Hungary granted asylum to only nine percent of applicants, by far the lowest rate in the EU, even though some 35% of applicants were Syrians fleeing the war, per Eurostat (Pardavi & Gyulai 2015, September 30). They lessened their refugee acceptance rate to almost zero the following year. The UNHCR estimated that Hungary took in about 7,000 Syrian refugees in 2015, the vast majority of whom came during the first half of the year; in September, Hungary closed border crossing points with Serbia, forcing refugees to enter the EU through Croatia. The next month, Hungary built a fence on its southern border, directing human traffic to Slovenia (Al Jazeera 2015, October 17).

Throughout the second half of the year, at around the same time as Germany was welcoming refugees, Hungary did almost everything in its power to avoid taking in any refugees.

Hungary's radical unwanted entry rules cannot be explained by one single theory, so several will be examined in this chapter. First are economic perspectives, which have applied to other case studies but do not empirically fit with Hungary's situation. Second are foreign relations, in which Hungarian-Syrian relations, like economic hypotheses, cannot explain the former's near-zero refugee acceptance rate. However, Hungarian relationship to the EU and, to a lesser extent, Russia, does contribute to its deep reluctance to accept refugees. Last are national explanations. The competition between the main conservative party and the increasingly popular far-right party is making Hungary's refugee politics more and more restrictive and unwelcoming. Similarly, the hostile public opinion of Hungary's citizenry towards refugees is reflected in the policies. Public opinion itself, as shall be demonstrated, has multiple influencers, prime among them being Hungary's monolithic cultural makeup, the conservative and controlled media, and Hungary's history of rejecting refugees.

II. Economic School of Thought

Absorption Capacity

Refugees take up resources of a country, even as they can be an economic boon. A country must have certain economic resources in order to take in refugees. Chief among these necessary resources is land availability: "Heavily populated regions are unlikely to have the land to support large numbers of newcomers" (Jacobsen 1996: 664). This can have potentially disastrous short- and long-term effects on land use, natural resources, and water systems (Jacobsen 1994). Usually, the main concern is that an economically un- or underdeveloped country will lack the raw resources to take in refugees. Although it seems logical that Western

countries will not have this problem, it must still be objectively verified. Furthermore, it could be that there is a correlation between the amount of land availability and refugee acceptance, though the empirical evidence with Hungary does not bear this out. As Pryce (1999) has noted, there are many different measurements of land availability, and redefining this term is beyond the scope of this work. Therefore, this thesis will use two metrics previously seen in the literature: population density (Modell 1971) and arable land per capita (Cotula et. al. 2009). In tandem, these metrics reveal both how much raw land there is, which can be used for developing housing for refugees, and how much land can be utilized for producing foodstuffs.

In the case of Hungary, both measurements cannot explain its asylum policy, as Hungary clearly has enough land to take in refugees, yet still rebuffs them; Hungary's population density shows that there is enough land available to take in refugees, meaning that this metric cannot explain Hungary's unwillingness to take in refugees. Hungary's population density in 2014 was 109 people per square kilometer of land (per the World Bank). This makes Hungary the thirteenth most densely populous nation in the EU, and 76th in the world. Hungary is actually less densely populated than the European Union as a whole, which has a population density of 116 people/km². Hungary is in the middle of the pack, both in the EU and the world, meaning that it has enough land to use for services like housing refugees.

Arable land per capita paints a similar picture. Hungary, as a country with a mild European continental climate, has, predictably, more than enough arable land. The Central European country has 0.45 hectares of arable land per person, making it the fifth most bountiful country in the EU and number 19 in the world. Hungary's arable land area is actually just 0.03 hectares fewer per person than the US. Even though Hungary has ample land resources to take in refugees, they refuse to.

Labor considerations is a primary economic theory that can affect asylum policy, as the labor market can be used to measure economic health. Economically prosperous countries, with expansive labor markets, often admit more refugees than their debtor counterparts. The high rate of employment means that refugees are less likely to be vilified as job-stealers, as is the case during economic contractions (Joly 1996; Scheinman 1983). During contractions, the large numbers of unemployed resent the refugees who have entered their country and, in their minds, stolen their jobs. Furthermore, a country in economic peril focuses less of its resources on welcoming refugees, lowering its quotas or giving refugees already within the country fewer rights (Neumayer 2005).

As with land availability, though, labor capacity cannot explain Hungary's asylum policy. Hungary started the 2015 calendar year with an unemployment rate of 7.5%, but that figure fell throughout the entire year, ending at 6.1%. In July 2015, Hungary was 13th in unemployment in the EU, in a virtual tie with Romania (11th) and the Netherlands (12th), all of who had unemployment rates of 6.8%. In fact, Hungary is ahead of some traditionally strong Western European countries, including Sweden and Belgium.

Ageing of Europe

This does not mean that all economically inclined theories are not applicable to Hungary. If a country does not have a large enough working force, it could need essentially to "import" refugees in order to prevent their manufacturing industry from faltering, as was the case with the United Kingdom after World War II (Kay & Miles 1992). Economies need laborers in order to keep producing goods and services, so a country with a dearth of workers needs to bring more in so that its economy can still function at a normal level. In doing so, a country can revitalize its economy or keep it thriving, with refugees filling in the labor gap for native workers or

immigrants. Under this workforce production theory, a country without enough workers would be more likely to increase refugee acceptance to bolster labor capacity.

Over the past fifteen years or so, Europe as a continent and Hungary as a nation have been the victim of the so-called “greying of Europe” that has left the continent with a dearth of youth who can serve as laborers. This has the potential to severely damage the economy of Europe as a whole, as there will not be enough workers to sustain economic growth, leading to stagnation (Hewitt 2002). Hungary has, for a long time, been exemplary of this ageing trend, yet they have not taken in a significant number of refugees, making it implausible that this is the primary explanation of Hungary’s asylum policy. More than 17% of Hungarians are over 64 years old, compared to only 14% 0-14 years. Similarly, Hungary’s old-age dependency ratio, which measures the ratio of people older than 64 years old to those 15-64, is 25.8, meaning that there are about four persons of working age supporting each pensioners. Although this number is less than that of the EU as a whole (28.1), it is only slightly smaller, and is in line with the greying of Europe phenomenon. Worldwide, Hungary has the 169th-highest old-age dependency ratio, making it one of the countries with the severest ageing population. (See Figure 2.1 for a summary of this section’s findings.)

Metric	Hungary	EU Rank	World Rank
Population Density	109 people/km ²	13/28	76/219
Arable Land	0.45 hectares/person	5/28	19/198
Unemployment Rate	6.1%	13/28	71/174
Old-age Dependency Ratio	25.8	21/28	25/193

Figure 2.1: Economic findings in Hungary

III. Foreign Policy School of Thought

Hungarian-Syrian Relations

If economic theories cannot account for Hungary's unwanted entry rules, perhaps foreign policy explanations can. The first major theory in this school of thought examines the relationship a country has with the refugee-giving country. Historically, if a country cuts ties with a refugee-giving country, especially for ideological reasons, it will accept more refugees as proof that the refugee-giving country has an oppressive or inefficient regime: think of how the US took in Vietnamese and especially Cuban refugees during the Cold War in order to justify American antagonism towards Communist countries (Scanlan & Loescher 1983; Suhrke 1983).

This situation does not appear to apply to Hungary, though. That Hungary is taking in no refugees would, under this theory, indicate that Hungary and Syria are allies. However, both historically and especially contemporarily this has not been the case. In the past, Hungary and Syria have been economic trade partners, although not to a great extent: according to Békés et al. (2015, November 5), Syria for much of its history fell in between being a friendly trade partner with Hungary, like Algeria and Egypt, and being a country with which Hungary would not trade, like pro-Western countries like Saudi Arabia and Kuwait were. This led to a situation where "close political relations as well as commercial connections could not be very intense" (Ibid.). Ideologically, the closest Hungary and Syria came to antagonists was over a dispute in the execution of Marxism. During the Cold War, Hungary refused to issue a joint statement in 1973 saying that Syria was building a socialist society (Ibid.). Even then, though, Hungary and Syria were both operating within the same, USSR-controlled sphere of influence.

Currently, the start of the Syrian Civil War has worsened Hungary-Syrian relations to the point where they are now much more adversaries than allies, indicating that this bilateral relation

is not the main influencer of Hungary's asylum policy. Since the start of the war, Hungary has been very cold towards President Assad's regime. Hungary closed its embassy in Damascus in December 2012, formally cutting diplomatic relations with Syria (Molnár 2013, September 16). Hungary also deported the staffers in the Syrian embassy, because "Hungary no longer consider[ed] the diplomats representing the Bashar al-Assad regime here as legitimate diplomatic representatives" (Xinhua 2012, December 19). This notion began earlier in the month, when Hungary joined the "Friends of Syria" coalition in recognizing the opposition group to Assad, the Syrian National Coalition, as the "sole legitimate representative of the Syrian people" ("Friends of Syria" 2012, December 12). This stance indicates that, although Hungary will be willing to reestablish diplomatic ties with a democratic Syria, they remain unwilling to do so until Assad is out. This series of events indicates adversaries, not allies.

Hungarian-EU Relations

Of course, there are other Hungarian relations that one must consider. Chief among them is Hungary's relation to the European Union. When discussing these so-called relations to a third party, Suhrke (1983) notes how Australia accepted Vietnamese refugees in order to remain on good terms with members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). If Australia had not taken in refugees, it could have alienated the ASEAN nations who were poorly equipped to take in refugees, thereby putting their Preferential Trade Agreements at risk. Hungary's relation to the EU is the opposite. Hungary actually has a relatively antagonistic relationship with the EU, which Hungary hopes to see weakened. Therefore, Hungary rejected the EU's refugee-friendly policies while imposing their unwanted entry rules. Under official EU regulations, Hungary is supposed to take in thousands of refugees, a scenario they criticized almost immediately after it was announced (Nolan 2015, September 23). The anti-refugee Prime

Minister later called for a referendum “he is certain to win” on the issue (Traynor 2016, February 24). (The referendum, as of writing, has not yet taken place.)

Since Hungary voted to join the EU in mid-2003, there has been much skepticism in the country surrounding the EU. Among the citizenry, there was not a lot of enthusiasm for joining the EU. At the public referendum, the pro-accession group won 84% of the vote, but only 45% of Hungarians voted, a surprisingly low number considering that prior opinion polls indicated that voter turnout could have been over twenty points higher (Partos 2003, April 14). This is partially due to the inevitability of the “Yes” vote winning, but also indicates a certain apathy among voters that hints at the contemporary chilliness between Hungary and the EU. Specifically, many individuals believed that there would be few, if any, personal gains to be had by joining the EU (Fowler 2003).

More importantly, those in political power, have been anti-EU for at least the past few years, if not since the disappointing 2003 referendum or even, as Hegedüs (2006) argues, since the 1990s.¹ At first, post-Communist countries were eager to join the EU, which was “considered a seal of approval by ‘the West’ on democratic transitions” (Batory 2008: 264). However, the slow response time by the EU led to resentment among many future EU countries, especially Hungary. In 2003, almost half (47.7%) of politicians were either soft or hard Eurosceptics (Ibid.: 265). During the early 20th century elections, Hungary’s Eurosceptic parties gained a greater

¹ The role of the political elite will be further discussed later in this section and others, in the domestic policy section. The reason to discuss them in different sections is to differentiate how they interact with various issues and actors. This section focuses on Hungary’s relation with the EU, in which the politicians play a large role. This relationship in turn affects asylum policy. Later sections will dedicate themselves solely to politicians, and the domestic impact they have on policy, rhetoric, and public opinion—not with respect to the EU, but with respect to asylum policy.

cumulative share of the vote (51.6) than any of the other ten countries up for EU accession (Taggart & Szczerbiak 2004).

Ultimately, the voters and elites believed that the positives of joining the EU outweighed the negatives, and for a period there was relative peace between the EU and Hungary. However, the legacy of Europessimism manifested itself when the Fidesz party came to power in 2010. Fidesz, the main opposition party to the 2003 referendum, was heavily Eurosceptic, at one point calling EU accession a “forced marriage” (Partos 2003, April 14). The relative antagonism between the two entities continued in 2015, as evidenced through Prime Minister and Fidesz head Viktor Orbán. According to one observer, Orbán “started to put Hungary first,” ahead of its international obligations (Stone 2014, December 15). For instance, Orbán cancelled Hungary’s debt repayments with foreign countries.

In defying the EU, Hungary’s most powerful elected official seems to have a goal of defanging the EU from a “Europe of nations [to] a Europe of nationalisms” (Haraszti 2015). In this sense, Orbán could be using the refugee situation as a means of driving a wedge among the EU members. This would to some extent explain his heavy anti-EU rhetoric and his flouting of EU refugee quotas.² In doing so, Orbán “is doing his best to make his perspective dominate” EU politics (Bruszt 2015, September 14). Hungary is a relatively weak member of the EU, controlling only 21 seats in the supranational parliament. (By contrast, France has 74 and Germany 96.) The more power the EU has, the more easily it can dictate Hungary’s foreign policy. This is one of the main reasons why Orbán has publicly feuded with his one-time European People’s Party ally German Chancellor Angela Merkel, saying, “The German,

² Technically, the Orbán government would say that it is fully abiding by the EU’s Dublin III regulations, and it has “a legal obligation to secure the EU’s external borders,” which Hungary has on its East with Ukraine and its South with Serbia, but, as Kelemen (2015, September 20) notes, Hungary’s borderline abuse of refugees violates the “Reception Conditions Directive.”

Hungarian or Austrian way of life is not a basic right of all people on earth. It is only a right for those who have contributed to it. We have to help them get back their own lives, with dignity and we have to send them back to their own countries” (qtd. in Heath 2015, November 22). Germany, as a “semi-hegemonic” EU power, had more say in Hungarian affairs than Orbán would like (Webber 2014). By disagreeing with Germany and the EU over asylum, Orbán hopes to set a precedent where Hungary is allowed to disagree with the EU whenever he deems it best for his country.

This theory is compelling because Hungary has shown a propensity to flaunt EU rules and regulations on issues other than asylum. Hungary is, for an EU member, atypically close to Russia, which has historically battled the EU on a number of issues, including energy deals, political reform in Central Asia, and the Europeanization of Ukraine and Moldovan (Leonard & Popescu 2007; Lukyanov 2008; Rumanov et. al. 2011). If Hungary were intent on keeping the EU together, it would undermine Russian power in continental Europe, rather than strengthen in. Instead, Hungary agreed to a controversial nuclear deal with Russia, in which the latter essentially exchanged €10 billion for an energy contract, a move that has been called “a financial transaction, and for the Russians this is buying influence” by the former Hungarian State Secretary (Lovas & Balazs 2015, November 20; Than 2015, March 30). This move clearly violated EU procurement procedure, as there was little to now transparency throughout the entire process. Even when the EU tried—unsuccessfully—to stop the nuclear deal, Hungary compensated Russia by breaking another EU rule: Hungary bought 30 military-grade helicopters from Russia for over \$400 million, violating the EU ban on military cooperation with Russia (UNIAN 2016, February 19). Hungary has also been one of the most vocal opponents of EU

sanctions against Russia, leading it to be called “[one] of the Kremlin’s closes allies in Europe” (Emmot & Baczynska 2016, March 14).

Russia was not the first time under Orbán’s regime that Hungary and the EU clashed. In 2012, Hungary came under much EU criticism after their new constitution contained taxation on central bank transactions (Meijer 2012, September 7). This led to a back-and-forth between the two entities that lasted over a year. The EU threatened to sue Hungary for “conflicts with EU law by putting into question the independence of the country's central bank,” according to an official EU Justice Commission statement (CRO 2012, January 17). Although the EU never took Hungary to court, the Central European country eventually agreed to lower the taxation rate to meet EU regulations (Peto & Dunai 2013, June 17). The EU later froze €495 million of funds loaned to Hungary when the European Commission felt that the country’s “efforts to end the country's excessive government deficit and its subsequent failure to take appropriate action” warranted punishment (European Commission 2012). Once again, this situation was resolved diplomatically, with the EU agreeing to lift the ban in exchange for minor changes in economic policy (Emmott 2012, June 22). With these two examples one can see how Hungary went against EU policy while still managing to avoid serious repercussions for their actions.

The reason why Hungary does not simply opt out of the EU is because they have much more to gain by staying within the confines of a weakened European Union. The EU freezing Hungary’s funds illustrates this. Without the EU, Hungary would have been virtually unable to cope with its debt. The €495 million comes from a €6.5 billion loan the EU made during the 2008 world recession (Jolly 2008, October 29). Largely because of Hungary’s status as an EU member, they were also able to secure €13.5 billion loan from the IMF and the World Bank. If Hungary had not been a part of the EU, they would have struggled mightily to deal with their

debt, as their debt in 2008 was estimated by the IMF to be an astoundingly high 97% of the previous year's GDP (IMF Survey Online 2008, November 6). Without this bailout, Hungary would have probably had to default on their external debts, sending shock waves throughout the national markets. The ideal situation for Hungary would be to exist in a world in which they are offered all the infrastructural benefits of being an EU member while being able to conduct its national and foreign affairs without any ramifications from the EU. By disregarding the EU's asylum policy, they hope to create such a world.

IV. National Politics and Culture

Interparty Competition

If economic or foreign policy explanations are less than adequate for explaining Hungary's refugee policies, one should look inwards, at the politics and culture of the country itself. The first major theory in the national school of thought holds that interparty fighting and competition dictate policy generally, and asylum policy specifically. Within interparty competition, right-wing parties can have an impact disproportionate to their number of supporters. As Han (2013) has measured, right-wing parties' anti-asylum ideas enter and shape the refugee discussion, thereby moving certain parties—including the ruling party—further to the right.

If this phenomenon were true in Hungary, we would expect to see a far-right party with a radical view on asylum policies. This is almost exactly the case with Hungary's far-right national party, Jobbik. Jobbik has a strong voice in Hungary, especially relative to other European far-right parties: they gained 24 of the 199 parliamentary seats in 2014, and also have three of Hungary's 21 European Parliament seats. This is a contrast to France's and Germany's right-wing parties, which have won 4/924 and 0 national seats, respectively. (A full comparison of the

three countries' far-right parties is provided in Figure 4.2.) Jobbik made even greater gains just before the strict asylum policies were implemented, winning a parliamentary district in a special election that underscored the party's legitimacy and viability for the 2018 election (Simon 2015, April 12). Jobbik's rise coincides directly with the importance of the topic of asylum, as their first major electoral victory occurred in 2009, when they sent three of their members to the EU Parliament primarily on their xenophobic, anti-refugee policies (Balogh 2009, June 7). Even though Hungary had very few refugees at the time, the issue of asylum was present enough that Jobbik could utilize the attention it was getting to make electoral gains.

Furthermore, Jobbik espouses the quasi-fascist anti-refugee rhetoric that legitimizes restrictive asylum policies. According to a press release on their website, Jobbik's deputy leader believes that refugees coming not only to Hungary, but to Europe as a whole should be halted: "Jobbik's opinion, which the party has been voicing for years, is becoming more and more relevant: a 'No Vacancy' sign should be put up at Europe's border" (Tamás 2015, January 21). This would involve a "zero tolerance" policy towards new asylum-seekers, as well as the internment or deportation of current refugees within Hungary's borders. This extremely restrictive policy would include amending the Hungarian constitution to give border police the right to shoot asylum-seekers as they attempt to enter Hungary (Novak 2015, August 28). In sum, Jobbik's asylum policies are consistent with those of a far-right party influencing mainstream policies through interparty competition.

Jobbik's influence has been the primary factor behind the ruling party Fidesz's rightward shift on refugee policy. By adopting elements of Jobbik's party platform, Fidesz hopes to recapture erstwhile supporters who have switched allegiance to Jobbik. Fidesz was once able to push any legislation through Parliament, but lost the key two-thirds majority in a February 2015

special election (Simon 2015, April 13). The certainty of Fidesz dominating Hungarian politics had been cast into doubt. In 2015 voter polls concerning the 2018 election, Fidesz had a double-digit lead over Jobbik, but only with support numbers of around 25% (“Bizalmitőke-vesztés “ 2015, April 18; HVG 2015, February 18; Keszthelyi 2015, April 23) (see Figure 2.2 for the comparison of voter support).

Date	Fidesz Support	Jobbik Support
February 2015	27%	14%
March 2015	24%	15%

Figure 2.2: Fidesz versus Jobbik polls

The key to reacquiring their former supermajority, in the eyes of party elites, was by getting Jobbik voters to cross party lines. It is not hard to understand why: according to a Median poll, a fifth of Jobbik voters in 2015 voted for Fidesz in 2014 (Simon 2015, April 13). Because of their desire to court former voters, Fidesz, according to an Amnesty International researcher, “shifted further and further right... [T]here are some quite high-ranking members of Fidesz who make statements that would be easily attributable to Jobbik members” (qtd. in Resnikoff 2015, September 1). With respect to rhetoric, Orbán’s party became not just anti-refugee, but anti-immigration. It is often clear that he is speaking to Muslims or persons of Arab descent, the primary examples of which are of course Syrian refugees. The list of examples is nearly endless. The Fidesz government sent a leading questionnaire (subsequently condemned by the UN) to citizens of Hungary with questions such as: “There are some who think that mismanagement of the immigration question by Brussels may have something to do with increased terrorism. Do you agree with this view?” (Miles 2015, May 22). They also put up billboards saying, “If you come to Hungary, you cannot take the jobs of Hungarians!” (Kounkalakis 2015, September 6). Finally, Orbán said at a rally honoring the *Charlie Hebdo* victims, “We should not look at economic immigration as if it had any use, because it only brings trouble and threats to European

people. Therefore, immigration must be stopped. We do not want to see a *significant minority* among ourselves that has different cultural characteristics and background. We would like to keep Hungary as Hungary” (Traub 2015, October 27, emphasis added).

Policy-wise, Fidesz’s stance on refugees is similarly unambiguous. Hungary famously built a fence under the Orbán regime, and the army is also being used to keep out refugees (Traub 2015, October 27). In fact, seeking asylum has actually been criminalized in Hungary (Ibid). Not only has Hungary built a fence to keep refugees out, it also detains those who have made it across the border, rather than letting them continue through to more prosperous nations like Austria or Germany (Kounkalakis 2015, September 6). This policy led in part to the much-publicized incident in which 71 refugees died of asphyxiation in an abandoned human trafficking freight truck on a highway connecting Budapest to Vienna (Ibid).

Looking at both the role of the minority far-right party and the rhetoric of the current right party in Hungary, it appears logical that interparty competition could be an, if not the, explanation that decodes Hungary’s extremely harsh asylum policies. However, this theory is still open to criticism. One logical critique is that a country’s left-wing parties would work against the right-wing parties. After all, Hungary does have a socialist party, the MSZP, which has worked to provide help integrating refugees (BT 2015, July 25). The reason why this critique does not apply to Hungary is because MSZP is a relatively powerless party that has not taken a strong stance towards refugee acceptance. Due to an election scandal and the fallout of the 2008 economic recession, the MSZP lost 131 seats in the 2010 federal election, landing “a blow to the Socialist[s]” and handing Fidesz the supermajority (Waterfield 2010, April 11). Four years later was slightly better for MSZP, as they increased their seat share by 3.8% by forming the Unity coalition with other center-left parties (Mudde 2014, April 14). This was something of a pyrrhic

victory, though, as Fidesz still had the constitutional majority, and intrafighting among the five-party center-left coalition left Fidesz's would-be opposition an "unholy babel of competing left-liberal parties" unable of seriously challenging the conservative majority (D'Amato 2014, March 11).

Moreover, MSZP in Hungary has not taken a strong, pro-refugee policy stance, afraid that the backlash could cripple the already reeling third-place party, especially in the wake of polls showing that the overwhelming majority of Hungarians are against accepting refugees ("The attitude of Hungarians to the refugee crisis" 2015, October 8).³ The official MSZP policy was to secure the border while establishing more migrant camps en route to Hungary, and treating refugees who are already in Hungary more humanely (Horváth 2015, August 5). However, the fractured nature of the socialist party led to many of its members holding more conservative viewpoints. Former MSZP leader Attila Mesterházy "categorically" supported Orbán's policy, and he was far from the only one who went along with Fidesz (Adam 2015, September 24). For instance, former MSZP chairman István Hiller said, "I dislike having a fence on our country's border but let anyone say something better" (qtd. in Mandiner 2015, November 11). This is indicative of the pragmatism of MSZP, which believed that a pro-refugee platform would be its death knell. Even the minority of MSZP officials who staunchly believe in the need to help refugees acknowledged this political reality: former party chairman László Kovács said that "There are two possible choices for political parties," with one being to "follow what is popular and brings more votes" and the other to adopt "inhumane solutions" in order to win votes (qtd. in Balogh 2015, November 15). This political reality applied even to center-left MSZP voters: "[T]he majority of Socialist voters want tough action against the influx of

³ As discussed below, in the public opinion section.

refugees” (Dull 2015, September 24).⁴ In order to appeal to this crowd, the vast majority of MSZP members of parliament have chosen either to remain silent on the issue, or fall in line with the right-wing’s stance. During a September vote on whether soldiers should be deployed to “secure” the border against refugees, 27 of the 29 MSZP MPs abstained from the vote, afraid of showing their pro-refugee sentiment and alienating voters (Dull 2015, September 21). If MSZP were more stridently pro-refugee, they may be able to counter the far-right’s influence on mainstream politics, but unfortunately for Syrians attempting to enter Hungary this is not the case.

Public Opinion

The second major theory in the domestic sphere advocates that public opinion is the major driver of asylum policies. This explanation focuses less on the elites, although of course elites such as those in control of the media can still play a major role. As demonstrated in the introduction, public opinion is one of the main drivers of policy change in general. Mass public opinion will put an issue like asylum policy on policy-makers’ agenda, and public opinion also affects political parties’ positions more than past election results (Adams et. al. 2004; Cobb & Elder 1972). Put another way, parties cannot institute unpopular policies without suffering electorally, so they are more likely to introduce legislation that the populace supports.

Judging by the opinions of the citizens, Hungary has adopted an asylum policy that mirrors its public opinion. Hungarians are highly xenophobic, especially regarding Arabs and Muslims. In 2008, a polling company started asking Hungarians about the fictitious group of “pirézeket,” with an astounding two-thirds of those questioned saying the pirézekets should not be let into the country (Sik 2008, September 24). Although that number has since fallen to about

⁴ “a szocialista szavazók nagy része is szeretné a kemény fellépést a menekültáradat ellen.”

60%, contemporary Hungarians have become even more unwilling to accept real refugees (Ballai 2015, May 7). Only 9% of respondents said that all asylum-seekers should be admitted, with 45% saying it should be determined on a case-by-case basis; however, of those 45% who support conditional asylum, about 19 in 20 would reject ethnic Arabs, such as Syrians (Ibid). Simple math tells us that 88% of Hungarians believe that no Arab asylum-seeker whatsoever should be even considered for asylum in Hungary, meaning that only a small number of Hungarians even want to consider taking in Syrian refugees. Because of this, parties in power cannot pass more welcoming asylum policies, as the backlash would cause them to be voted out of office in the next election.

This is not to suggest that there are no pro-refugee movements in Hungary. There have been a number of protests and opinion pieces supporting less restrictive asylum laws and fairer treatment of integrated refugees. 22 Hungarian NGOs, including the Hungarian Civil Liberties Union and Greenpeace Hungary, wrote a press release “call[ing] on the government of Hungary to act the way a government can be expected to act in a crisis: humanely, fairly, and with due respect for human rights” (qtd. in Staff 2015, September 9). There have also been a number of protests against the governmental position on asylum, including one in Budapest and one in the border town of Martonfa (Horváth 2015, August 5; Kűfner 2016, September 6). The reason these movements have not become a part of the national sentiment is because of how sparsely attended they are. Pro-refugee protests in Hungary rarely draw huge numbers. One of the largest was a 2000-person march through Budapest, a city with a population of 1.7 million (RT 2015, September 14). Other protests contained “220 strong” and “a number of people” (Hungary Today 2015, August 4; Kűfner 2015, September 6). In the future, these movements might gain more

followers and cause a pro-refugee uprising. In late 2015, though, they were not powerful to make up for the millions of anti-refugee Hungarians.

Cultural Makeup

When speaking of the infamous “White Australia” policy towards immigrants, Carens (1998) argued that the cultural makeup of the citizenry of the country. Because Australia was overwhelmingly white, they were biased to accept only white refugees and immigrants. Based on the most recent census, it certainly appears as though the cultural makeup of Hungary is affecting popular opinion just like with Australia. Hungary, as a homogenous nation, is inherently biased against Muslims. In 2011, only 4,537 people in Hungary identified as nationally Arabic; considering the population of Hungary is near ten million, four and a half thousand is almost literally nothing. The story with respect to religion, rather than ethnicity or nationality, is identical. Asylum-seekers are not required to declare their religion, but Syria as a country has 87% Muslims (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor 2006). Hungary is the opposite end of the spectrum as Syria: only 2.29% of Hungarians were non-Christians or non-Jews, and a mere 5,579 Hungarians declared themselves as Islamic, which amounts to an insignificant 0.077%. This is far less than Hungary’s neighbors, such as Austria (5.4%) and Croatia (1.4%) (Hackett 2013, November 17). The only Central European countries that have a comparably low number of Muslims are the Czech Republic (<0.1%), Poland (<0.1%), and Slovakia (0.2%), all of which have been sharply criticized for mistreatment of refugees (see Al Jazeera 2016, March 23; Cameron 2015, January 16; Culik 2015, September 7; Gebert 2015, September 9; Ojewska 2015, December 3). Because Hungary’s populace is overwhelmingly white, its public opinion favors rejecting non-white refugees.

The Media

The cultural composition of a country is not the only potential factor to influence public opinion; the media also plays an important role. The media can both reflect and shape public opinion. The framing of the news—that is, how the news is presented—is often as important as the content i.e. what the news contains. This has been shown to be true not just with asylum, but across a multitude of diverse issues, including political elections, natural disasters, and judicial decisions (Collins & Cooper 2012; de Vreese 2004; Givens & Luedtke 2005; Hayes 2008). For instance, characterizing Muslim asylum-seekers as highly orthodox, say by using terms like “fanatic,” will increase Islamophobia (especially in relation to national security) and lead to more restrictive policies (Greensdale 2005: 11). Because the citizenry is underinformed about refugees, they are more likely to hold empirically incorrect opinions, such as that increased refugee acceptance leads to unemployment, terrorism, and crime.

In Hungary, a scenario similar to the British one is occurring, in part because the government heavily controls the press. After the fall of Communism, the media became privatized; however, in the absence of regulations, most of the major news outlets were concentrated in the hands of foreign investors such as Rupert Murdoch. As a means of (over)compensation, the government bought shares of major outlets such as *Heti Magyarország*, appointing pro-government officials to positions of power (Oltay 1993). Coupled with declining print runs, this led to a highly politicized newspaper atmosphere in the 1990s, in which serious journalism was sacrificed for political fodder (Molnár 1999; Oltay 1993).

Contemporary Hungary also has a controlled press. Freedom House’s most recent report classified Hungary’s press as only “partly free,” giving it a score of 37/100 (0 is totally free). This is significantly higher than the aforementioned other Central European countries without

Muslims: the Czech Republic (21), Slovakia (24), and Poland (26) all have better freedom scores. As Alivizatos et. al. (2015) note, the 2010 Press and Media Acts are worded so vaguely that almost any anti-government speech can be interpreted as seditious or offensive. Judicially, a 2011 ruling by Hungary's Constitutional Court, while meaningful in that it brought to light the lack of freedom of press in Hungary, essentially maintained the status quo of the media-government relationship (Nagy 2013). These two factors led to a September 2015 report by the Committee to Protect Journalists calling Hungary the "canary in the coal mine" of EU press (qtd. in Hervey 2016, September 29). Because of the institutions in place, Viktor Orbán can fully legally fine and unduly meddle with outlets taking anti-government positions. Orbán has not given anyone the maximum \$900,000 fine for insulting him or his party, but the fear has journalists around Hungary treading lightly (Traub 2015, October 26). Even without fines implemented, the Hungarian press has not been able to report the news freely. There have been accusations of police assaults on journalists covering refugees, and press are routinely denied access to refugee camps (CPJ 2015, September 17; Hungarian Civil Liberties Union 2015, September 23; Marthoz 2016, March 7).

This in turn affects public opinion, as the wall-to-wall asylum coverage portrays refugees negatively. Today, the public is by and large unaware of the relative lack of risks associated with refugees. Furthermore, the general citizenry of Hungary does not even know what the alternative to Fidesz's asylum policies are, as Fidesz uses the media as another party organ. Only 34% of Hungarians are even familiar with the socialist MSZP's official stance on refugees (mentioned above), about half as are familiar with Fidesz's ("The attitude of Hungarians to the refugee crisis" 2015, October 8). A typical report on refugees will heavily quote Fidesz officials and fail to mention opposing viewpoints. For example, a *Magyar Nemzet* article about increased police

checks in Debrecen directly quoted the Fidesz mayor and made sure to draw a connection between refugees and violence, but never once questioned the ethics of these anti-refugee police checks. The first line set the tenor for the entire article, and is a microcosm for Hungarian press coverage of refugees, as it begins by enumerating the “dangers” of refugees: “public safety, prevention of the offenses committed, [and] detection of crime to perpetrate unlawful acts” (MTI 2015, July 1).⁵

To measure this quantitatively, one can search for loaded terms among Hungarian newspapers. The data for Hungary, though, is much scarcer than for France and Germany, as Hungarian newspapers (both in Hungarian and English) are not as widely available remotely as their French and German counterparts. However, even with limited data one can see the bias of the press, which is much more likely to portray refugees as security threats than as people seeking help. Searching English-language Hungarian newspapers in 2015 for negative words results in almost twice as many hits as with positive words. A combination of “Syrian refugee” and any of “security,” “danger,” “terror,” and “attack” gives one twelve hits, whereas searching for “Syrian refugee” and “dying,” “journey,” “aid,” or “war” only results in seven.⁶ The sample size of these results is regrettably small, but they are consistent with a government-controlled, biased press that focuses on the negative aspects of refugees, thereby influencing the public to back anti-refugee Fidesz views on asylum.

⁵ “a közbiztonság fenntartása, a jogellenes cselekmények elkövetésének megelőzése, megakadályozása, az elkövetett szabálysértések, bűncselekmények felderítése”

⁶ The first search was Syrian refugee AND security OR danger OR terror* OR attack. The latter was Syrian refugee AND dying OR journey OR war. Both searches were conducted in NewsBank, as very few Hungarian periodicals are available in LexisNexis, the database used in the upcoming chapters.

History

A country's history can have an enormous impact on current public opinion. Countries that are historically unwelcoming towards refugees tend to remain that way, as Knight (2014) and Lambert et. al. (2008) have noticed in various European countries. This appears to be the case with Hungary's asylum policy, as Hungary has historically been unwelcoming towards refugees. Even though Hungary has been a refugee-giving country in many historical contexts, most notably during the Cold War, it has shown a propensity to shun non-white, non-Christian refugees. Both the Hungarian government and non-governmental organizations have historically exhibited a deep reluctance to help refugees. During the 1940s, Hungary not only allowed the National Socialists to persecute Jews, but actively helped them by rounding up Jews in the summer of 1944 (Pittaway 2003). Hungary in this historical context was so anti-refugee they essentially deported refugees.

This attitude towards refugees continued throughout twentieth century and beyond. For instance, Hungary took in some 60,000 refugees from Yugoslavia, but they were very poorly received (Kamm 1992, July 24). Even when Hungarians welcomed refugees, they did so with less than open arms. Volunteers attempting to help them with their living situation were threatened and in some cases driven out of refugee-hosting cities (Marcus 1995). Although these refugees were European, many were Muslim, fleeing Slobodan Milošević's attempted ethnic cleansing in the Balkans (Oberschall 2000; Snyder et. al. 2005). The Balkan situation in Hungary is a contrast to, say, Slovakia, which had an asylum policy on par with or even more welcoming than the EU's (Bagatela & Sergi 2004; Vermeersch 2005). This culture of hostility has continued in modern times, where Syrians are shunned and unwelcome

V. Conclusion

Hungary's asylum policy shift can reasonably be explained by a few factors; others do not make empirical sense. Most economic theories, while useful in other situations, will be inadequate when examining Hungary. Certain non-economic theories similarly cannot for Hungary's uniquely low Syrian refugee acceptance rate. Hungary's relation with Syria also does not seem capable of explaining why it rejects refugees from that country, and it does not appear as though focusing events play a large role in the restrictive asylum policies.

To explain a situation as complex as Hungary's asylum policy, one needs to look at multiple theories. Public opinion can explain much of it, as the overwhelming majority of Hungarians are unwilling to take in Syrian refugees. Public opinion itself is also influenced by many factors. Hungary is a primarily homogenous country, especially religiously and racially, which is reflected in the attitudes of Hungarians towards foreigners and asylum-seekers. The semi-controlled press also influences public opinion, as they frame refugees as dangerous, and often fail to present alternative asylum policy choices. Hungary's history has a similar effect, as there is a common strand of unwillingness to help refugees dating back to the 1940s.

In addition to public opinion, national and international politics have played a major role in shaping asylum policy. Hungary's main party is both already right wing, and must become even more conservative—especially with its asylum politics—to try to win votes away from an upstart nationalist party. Internationally, Hungary's decision to go against the EU Dublin protocol, like its mutually beneficial relations with Russia, serves as more fodder for Hungary's combative relationship with the European Union.

Although this chapter has presented this chapter with stark delineations of the theories, there is a degree of interrelatedness among them, with public opinion being a common strand

among all of them. Public opinion could drive Hungary to have such hostile relations with the EU simultaneously as it votes in right and far-right parties. The media affects public opinion, but it also reflects it, presenting conservative opinions that will draw more readers and appease the government. The monolithic nature of these readers means the media has little reason to portray the refugees in a fair light, showing the connection between a conservative press and a culturally non-diverse populace. However these factors are connected, some combination of these three theories is the most likely explanation for why Hungary has unwanted entry rules towards Syrian refugees.

Chapter III: France

“All we want in France is a normal life for our children. And if one day the war stops in Syria we will go back. That’s if we have something to go back to.” – Syrian refugee Malek (qtd. in Willsher 2016, April 16).

I. Introduction

France, as a country that accepts limited numbers of refugees, makes for an interesting case study. There are, essentially, two phases of French contemporary asylum policy (vis-à-vis Syrians), both contained under the umbrella of selected entry rules. The first occurred in September 2015, when France agreed to follow the European Union’s refugee distribution program and take in 24,000 refugees. The second occurred two months later, when President Hollande held a press conference explaining that France would accept 30,000 Syrians. The majority of this section will focus on analyzing why France has selective entry rules in general, regardless of the exact number, as in either scenario it serves as a contrast to both Hungary and Germany. However, from a more non-comparatist perspective, it is nonetheless important to account for the shift within fall 2015 in order to fully understand French asylum policy.

In order to be consistent with the previous and upcoming chapters, the analysis of France’s asylum policy will begin with the economic school of thought, before moving on to foreign policy and national politics and culture. Most of these theories, such as economic factors, cultural makeup, and the role of the media, are best understood within a broader selective entry rules perspective; others, like the presence of a focusing event, only make sense when examining the shift from 24,000 to 30,000. Overall, the state of asylum policy in France is best explained by several necessary conditions, chief among them being absorption capacity and public opinion.

II. Economic School of Thought

Absorption Capacity

Refugees take up resources of a country, even as they can be an economic boon. A country must have certain economic resources in order to take in refugees. Chief among these necessary resources is land availability, as measured by population density and arable land per capita; a country with too large a population or too little available land can harm its natural resources almost irreparably (Jacobsen 1994). With France specifically, population density indicates that there is enough raw land for services like housing to take in refugees. France's population density is just higher than Hungary's (depending on the estimate). Per the World Bank and adjusting for overseas departments, France's 2014 population density was 121 people/km², slightly higher than Hungary's 109 people, making France the 11th-most populous EU nation, on par with the EU's average of 116 people/km² (Hungary was the 13th-most populous in the EU). (France's economic situation is summarized in Figure 3.1.) From a global perspective, France was the 70th-most densely populated country in the world, and Hungary was 76th. France was more populated than Hungary, and yet France takes in more refugees. This indicates that having a medium-to-low population density (depending on how you define it) is a necessary but insufficient condition to explain open asylum policy; alternately, there could be no correlation between population density and refugee acceptance. Arable land per capita tells a similar story, with France having a lower ranking than Hungary, yet welcoming fewer Syrians. France has 0.28 hectares per person, fewer than Hungary's 0.45, making France 11th in the EU and 37th in the world, compared to Hungary's 5 and 19, respectively. Hungary has the ability to feed many more refugees than France, yet has stonewalled Syrians while France has set quotas in the tens of thousands.

Labor considerations which did not appear to make an impact on Hungary's asylum policy, similarly seems to be not affecting France's. Labor concerns can affect asylum policy because labor markets are often used to measure economic health. Economically struggling countries, with poor labor markets, often use their resources on non-asylum policies, and can even vilify refugees for the poor economy (Joly 1996; Scheinman 1983). Although Neumayer (2005) found a negative correlation between unemployment rate and asylum acceptance, this does not appear to be the case in this situation. According to Eurostat, France's unemployment rate in July 2015 was 10.5%, one of the worst in the EU. France had the 8th-worst unemployment rate in the EU, trailing bailout-candidate countries such as Greece, Spain, and Portugal. France's unemployment rate was also well worse than Hungary's, which was 6.8%. If unemployment had a simple negative relationship with refugee acceptance, Hungary should actually be accepting more refugees than France; instead, France is welcoming about 30,000 more than Hungary. Something more than unemployment rate must be at play in the contrasting acceptance rates between Hungary and France.

Ageing of Europe

Perhaps France is accepting more refugees than Hungary in order to compensate for labor shortages. If this were the case, we would expect to see France affected by the greying of Europe phenomenon more so than Hungary. This is empirically the case, but not to an extent that can explain the wide variation in the two country's acceptance of refugees. France's old-age dependency ratio is 28.4, slightly higher than Hungary's 25.8. However, both values fall well within one standard deviation of the mean of 26.7 for the European Union as a whole, and they are within one standard deviation of each other. Because the values are so statistically close, one would expect to see only minute variations in refugee acceptance if France and Hungary based

their asylum policy around workforce demographics, rather than the two countries being in two separate categories in terms of refugee acceptance rate.

Metric	France	EU Rank	World Rank
Population Density	121 people/km ²	11/28	70/219
Arable Land	0.28 hectares/person	11/28	37/198
Unemployment Rate	10.5%	20/28	123/174
Old-age Dependency Ratio	18.4	9/28	10/193

Figure 3.1: Economic findings in France

Furthermore, accepting the number of refugees that France did in 2015 cannot significantly help it with its old-age problem. France’s population in 2014 was 65.89 million, and its population share older than 64 and younger than 15 was 18.0 and 18.6, respectively.⁷ This means that there are over 11 million retirees and over 12 million non-working-age children. Considering that France only expects to add tens of thousands of refugees within the next two years, this cannot be the primary factor behind refugee acceptance.

III. Foreign Policy School of Thought

Franco-Syrian Relations

If the economic school of thought cannot explain France’s asylum policies, perhaps their foreign policy can. As with Hungary, the first potential explanation is France’s relationship with Syria. France can claim a unique and complex relationship with Syria, dating back to the origins of the Arab nation. France was, for better or worse, integral in the post-World War I formation of Syria from the ashes of the Ottoman Empire. The partitioning of the Middle East, executed primarily by France and Great Britain under the auspices of the League of Nations, has come under fire, and the two imperial powers unceremonious withdrawal from the region has been pegged as the beginning of sectarian conflict in the region (Fildis 2011). France’s influence in

⁷ The reason why France still experiences the greying of Europe even though these two numbers seem to balance out is because the former number is expected to increase and the latter number expected to decrease, based on the current populations and rates of fertility and immigration.

the region dates back to religious penetration, railroad construction, and the accumulation of soft power in the early 1900s (Shorrock 1970). France consolidated power in the region through the 1920 Franco-Syrian War, one of only two wars Syria would fight in the century (Gleditsch 2004). Between 1922 and 1936, under the so-called French Mandate for Syria and Lebanon, Syria was within France's sphere of influence. Even afterwards, Syria was for the next decade under heavy economic control and military occupation by France, to the chagrin of other Western nations such as the United States (Melki 1997; Dueck 2010; Rabinovich 2008). Although Syria was not technically a colony, France treated it like any of its other imperial territories (Fildis 2011). This can be seen through the fact the High Commission's Service de l'instruction (Education Department), whose programmatic mission was to integrate French culture into the religious doctrine of the major religions in Syria and Lebanon (Dueck 2010). Through the virtual colonization of Syria, France was able to shape the young nation with Francophone influences.

Even though the bilateral relations have been somewhat tortured, the French influence on Syria led the two countries to have flourishing relations after Bashar al-Assad rose to power; France was one of Syria's staunchest Western allies in the 1990s and early 2000s. When Assad came to power, "France was one of the western country who viewed a birth of a new era in the modern Syria" (Diyab 2015, February 3). Because of the Francophone influences on Syria, France was uniquely positioned among all Western countries to support Assad, the most Westernized of all Syria's leaders. For example, President Nicolas Sarkozy heaped praised on Assad for protecting the rights of Syrian Christians, who themselves are a legacy of France's religious involvement a century before Sarkozy and Assad met (Ramani 2015, November 19).

However, these rosy relations starting drifting south in 2003, irrevocably tainted by the American specter of war. Wanting to better Franco-American relations amid France's refusal to commit to Iraq, then-President Jacques Chirac urged Syria to reconsider its anti-Iraq War policy, something that Syria was unwilling to do (Kabal 2006, May 26). This set the stage for the 2005 assassination of former Lebanese prime minister Rafiq Hariri, for which many held Syria at least indirectly responsible (Lesch 2012). Because France had been a strong ally of Lebanon, and Chirac and Hariri had an especially cordial relationship, the French government was one of the strongest voices calling on Damascus to withdraw about 15,000 troops from Lebanon (Ibid). France had held up Syria as a near-ideal Middle East country, but a Syria that attacked France's allies was not one they wanted to publically support for fear of alienating their other interests both in the region and internationally. Relations further deteriorated in 2011 and 2012 when Assad's onetime ally Sarkozy repeatedly hurled invective at his Middle Eastern counterpart, calling for his resignation, questioning his legitimacy, and reacting to Assad's Homs massacre with "disgust and revulsion" (Ramani 2015, November 19). This reaction illustrates how France was forced to recant their steadfast support for Syria once it became clear that the Assad regime did not embody the principles France espoused in international relations.

As the refugee crisis was coming to a head, Franco-Syrian relations were at their worst. Feeling betrayed by the actions of a country they had once touted as a paragon of a new Middle East, France became one of the first internationally active voices to denounce the Assad regime. France was the first country in the world to start a criminal inquiry into torture under the Assad regime, a move indicative of the complete shift in the once-favorable relations between Assad and France (Nossiter 2015, September 30). France has also repeatedly called for the resignation of Assad, including after the November coordinated terrorist attacks on Paris (Black 2015,

November 14). France has also put its money where its mouth is, so to speak: France is one of the most hawkish European countries, deploying its only aircraft carrier to the Middle East to support air strikes against ISIS compounds (Shaheen 2015, November 16). France has, in essence, been an early adversary of both ISIS and the Assad family, vehemently opposing them while publically supporting the Syrian National Coalition. France is such an adversary of the nominal leader of Syria, Assad, that they do not envision an outcome where the Civil War ends with him in power; France alone among European countries has declared that the Coalition will be “the future interim government of democratic Syria” (Talmon 2013). France’s history with Syria is complex, and even now their relationship with the moderate Syrian National Coalition cannot pithily be described; however, in this historical moment there is no doubt that France and the Assad regime specifically are adversaries.

Based on which refugees France is admitting, it is plausible that their bilateral relations with Syria is driving their asylum policy. Most Syrian refugees self-identify as fleeing the two primary antagonists of France, the Assad and ISIS/ISIL regimes: Almost half of Syrian refugees are fleeing Assad, and seven out of ten Syrians in Europe are there due to Assad or ISIS (Osborne 2015, October 10). Most of these refugees, in fact, blame Assad, rather than ISIS, for the civil war in their country: in one survey released by the Berlin Social Science Center, more than twice as many Syrians said Assad was responsible for the war, rather than ISIS (Osborne 2015, October 10). This survey is a veritable gold mine of anti-Assad sentiment; for example, a quarter of Syrians said Assad would have to leave Syria in order for them to return, the second most popular answer behind the Civil War stopping, and well ahead of democratization. Based on the fact that so many Syrian refugees have the same ideological position as the Hollande

regime, one might expect France to have liberal asylum policies towards accepting Syrians specifically, as the acceptance of these refugees could undermine Assad's regime.

If the animosity between Syria and France really drove French asylum policy, the acceptance of Syrian refugees would be politicized in one of a couple manners described by Scanlon & Loesher (1983): either France would accept Syrians to help actively dethrone Assad, or they would do so to symbolically reject Assad's legitimacy and keep public sentiment in favor of a war on Syria. The former is not the scenario, as France's backing of Syria's nationalist rebels have largely been conducted without any sort of aid or assistance from Syria's refugees, preferring instead to attempt to persuade other Western powers to support the moderate opposition (Fabius 2014, November 3; Ahmed 2015, September 28). The latter scenario seems more likely, but even then it cannot wholly account for France's policy attitudes towards Syrian refugees. If France took in refugees purely as a symbolic gesture against Assad, one would expect the rhetoric surrounding the change in refugee policy to explicitly reference the Syrian dictator; to take in Syrian refugees without explicitly mentioning Assad would do very little to undermine his legitimacy, as it would not be clear that France was taking in refugees as an anti-Assad stance as opposed to one of the other reasons this chapter presents. However, France's justification for taking in refugees in November of last year were primarily centered around the duty that France had, both to itself and to Syrian individuals, rather than vitriolic attacks on Assad, as indicated by a series of statements Hollande gave. None of these statements mention Assad. Upon announcing the future acceptance of 30,000 refugees, the French President said it was France's "humanitarian duty" to accept these refugees (Tharoor 2015, November 18). Hollande also has indicated that he will not be cowed by the ISIS attacks, saying, "Why would France be without its museums, without its terraces, its concerts, its sports competitions? France

should remain as it is. Our [French] duty is to carry on our lives” (Fields 2015, November 18). Rather than verbally sparring with Assad, France has justified its asylum policies through humanitarianism and France’s war on ISIS.

Franco-EU Relations

In theory, the EU controls the distribution of refugees among its member states, making it potentially the most important factor in asylum policies. France is entirely different than Hungary: as one of the major powers in the EU, France should logically want to keep the status quo intact. If every member state toed the line, France would be one of the three strongest nations in the EU, along with Germany and the United Kingdom. Empirically, though, this is not always the case. France has never rigidly followed EU programs of any sort, including asylum policies. There is sometimes a tendency for France to adhere to some EU recommendations, such as budgetary recommendations, but this is due to national politics rather than any pressure from Brussels (Hassenteufel & Palier 2015). In general, France supports the EU because the EU supports France; France’s most stringent support for EU programs has been, unsurprisingly, for those that will help France, such as the Common Agricultural Policy (Lefebvre 2004). When there is a decision that threatens French interests, France tends to fight against it, with the most notable example being the question of Turkish accession under the Chirac regime (Ibid). In other words, France follows EU policies when it suits them.

With respect to asylum policy specifically, France similarly does not always have a history of following the letter of EU law. For instance, French courts have been reticent to use any sort of international precedent as justification for national asylum laws (Lambert 2009). In fact, French courts, along with Italian and Greek, are the most likely to push back at EU asylum directives (Tolley 2012). Even when France does follow EU, it is usually to turn away refugees,

rather than to accept them—as they are now doing. During the US War in Afghanistan, for example, France used EU regulations to turn away Afghan refugees, by stringently using the Dublin Regulations to refool them to Turkey (Schuster 2011).

Contemporarily, France is at perhaps the height of its Euroscepticism. One indicator of this is the success of the Eurosceptic far-right party (which will be discussed further below). Following significant successes in the European Parliamentary elections, the leader of *Front national* (National Front) called the win “a massive rejection of the EU” (Waterfield et. al. 2014, May 25). Although this party’s success cannot fully explain their electoral success—their radical anti-refugee policy and economic platform, as discussed below, also play a role in this—France has shown a disregard for EU quotas. According to official reports, France should be taking on 11.87% of all refugees (Communication from the Commission 2015). This works out to 24,000 refugees, a number they explicitly obtained from the EU (Withnall 2015, September 7). However, France later changed its mind, upping that number to 30,000 refugees. Once again, France’s asylum policies are independent of EU quotas.

Franco-German Relations

If Franco-EU relations cannot fully explain France’s asylum policy, perhaps another bilateral relation can. One potential relationship is between France and Germany, which has been characterized as “the French obsession” (Lefebvre 2004: 1). Germany, as the primary pro-refugee European force, could perhaps influence France to take in more Syrians, but this theory does not fit qualitatively or quantitatively. Quantitatively, Germany, which has unrestricted entry rules, took on at least 800,000 refugees in 2015, more than 25 times what France, which has selected entry rules, expects to take in twice Germany’s time period. If Germany really did exert

a significant influence over France's asylum policy, one would expect to see more convergence over the issue of refugee acceptance, which is numerically and categorically not the case.

Even beyond these contemporary numbers, there is no evidence to suggest that Germany's asylum policy would influence France's. If Germany exerted a significant influence on France's asylum policy, one place where this might be seen is the European Union: Germany could use the EU to manipulate France's asylum policy to look more like its own. However, multiple authors have found that Franco-German relations do not drive EU policy (de Schoutheete 1990; Webber 1999). Moreover, as demonstrated above, the EU does not even significantly influence French asylum policy.

The unmediated relationship between France and Germany also does not determine France's asylum policy. The two main ways Germany's asylum policy could influence France is if France followed Germany's lead in adopting unrestricted entry rules, or attempted to undermine Germany by closing its borders and making Germany an outlier, but there is little evidence that either scenario is occurring. Qualitatively, there is no reason for France to blindly follow Germany's lead; as Lefebvre (2004) chronicled, post-Cold War France did not want a German-centric Europe: "Since the break-up of the Soviet bloc and the reunification of Germany, France's place at the center of Europe has become threatened." Quantitatively, France has not done as Germany has, taking in hundreds of thousands of refugees fewer than their eastern neighbors. In the latter scenario, one might expect to see France reject Germany's decision as ardently as Hungary rejected the EU's, but once again there is little logical or empirical evidence for this. As Weil (1999) noted, France and Germany's attitudes towards immigration converge primarily with EU-wide policies, such as the Schengen zone. Quantitatively, France does essentially what is in its best interests, rather than fitting its policy as

a counterpoint to Germany's. France's asylum policy of 30,000 refugees fits in between the outward rejection that Hungary adopts vis-à-vis the EU and the complete adoption of Germany's policy.

IV. National Politics and Culture

Interparty Competition

In Hungary, it is easy to see how the rise of a right-wing party can move highly conservative policies into mainstream politics. Similar to Hungary, France has seen a right-wing, nationalist party come into more and more power over recent years. In many ways, the National Front (FN) mirrors Hungary's Jobbik party. They gained major victories in 2014 at the local and super-national election, winning 21 of 74 European Parliament seats and 358 of 1,758 Regional Council spots. (The political victories of FN are presented in Figure 3.2.) Also like Hungary, France's far-right party has achieved these victories based on xenophobic nativism; in fact, FN leader Marine Le Pen has explicitly pointed to Hungarian PM Viktor Orbán's regime as a source of inspiration, and judging from her ideological positions it is not hard to see why. A typical comment from her about Syrian refugees is, "This country was attacked violently by migrants. We must not believe that migrants will come peacefully when the borders are closed" (S.A. 2015, September 24).⁸

	State Elections	National Elections	EU Elections
Seats	356/1758	4/925	21/74
Popular vote	27.7%	23.6%	7.1%

Figure 3.2: Election results for FN

Where FN differs from the Jobbik is in the policy results they have not achieved. Unlike in Hungary, where virtually no refugees are admitted, France has been steadfast in its duty to

⁸ "Ce pays a été attaqué violemment par des migrants. Il ne faut pas croire que les migrants viendront de manière pacifique quand les frontières sont fermées."

refugees. One of the reasons is that FN has very little national power, unlike Jobbik. FN can only claim a paltry four of the 925 parliamentary seats (two each in the National Assembly and Senate), a figure that will not change until the 2017 election. In a parliamentary system, parties like FN with few seats have very little ability to form important coalitions that can significantly impact legislation, as they have few political resources that they can utilize during political negotiations. This means that FN will not be able to introduce legislation or create a national discussion around any issue not already in the mainstream.

Furthermore, the ruling party, unlike in Hungary, is the center-left Socialist Party (PS). As Han (2013) and Thränhardt (1995) have noted, left-wing parties are far less likely than right-wing ones, such as Hungary's Fidesz, to pass restrictive asylum policies, especially before an election period. Put another way, a party that does not have xenophobic undertones in its platform will not suddenly adopt them before an election. PS, even though it is not a staunch supporter of refugees, has still not exhibited the xenophobia that is present in other aspects of French politics. Both FN leader Marine Le Pen and former president and Union for a Popular Movement (UMP) party leader Nicolas Sarkozy have called for reinstatements of border controls in order to severely limit the number of refugees who can enter (Viscusi 2015, September 22). PS, meanwhile, has proposed and adopted quota systems that have been called "moderate and acceptable" even by political rivals such as Alain Juppé and François Fillon (qtd. in Briançon 2015, September 14). PS is not a far-left party, but its asylum politics are still far enough on the left not to become radically conservative before an election.

Public Opinion

Public opinion can be one of the major drivers of policy in general, as it puts issues on policy-makers' agendas and sways their positions more so than factors such as election results

(Adams et. al. 2004; Burstein 1998; Cobb & Elder 1972). This heavily influenced Hungary's asylum policies, as seen in the previous chapter. In 2015, France had selected entry rules, a middle route between the extreme positions of Hungary and Germany. Therefore, in order for public opinion to be a factor in asylum policy, one might expect France's citizenry similarly to be in favor of a middle ground between shutting out and unequivocally welcoming Syrian refugees.

Indeed, this seems to be the case.⁹ Some polls have even directly compared French and German asylum policies. In an Odoxa poll, a plurality (55%) of French citizens said they were against adopting German unrestricted entry rules (Le Parisien 2015, September 5). However, the French are largely against banning refugees, as Hungary has done. More than two-thirds (69%) of Frenchmen are in favor of a quota system in which all EU members, including France, must take on a share of the refugees (Ibid). French citizens in general favor a refugee policy in which France takes on a relatively small (especially compared to Germany) share of the refugees. Policy-wise, this is exactly what is occurring, as France has committed to only taking on 30,000 refugees over the next two years.

In this sense, France's asylum policy mirrors popular sentiment, giving credence to this theory. This can be seen in various op-eds in newspapers like *Le Monde*.¹⁰ Many articles argue

⁹ One might also expect the public to be polarized, with some of the public supporting unrestricted entry rules and some supporting unwelcoming rules. This could lead to the government choosing a middle ground between the two extremes. However, this view has largely not been supported in the literature. Previous scholarship has found that polarized public opinion can often lead to legislative gridlock (Farina 2015). Moreover, as shall be demonstrated in the next chapter with the presence of Neo-Nazis, a polarized public can sometimes lead to "the nation mood" adopting one side and rejecting the other. Regardless, the French public has been demonstrated as not being highly polarized, as the vast majority of the French want a middle-of-the-road quota system.

¹⁰ The media can both reflect and change public opinion. A complete analysis of how the media changes public opinion follows below. This section deals only with how individual articles are

for letting in more refugees, but none that I have found called for a completely open border for Syrians. A typical opinion piece would call for France to “intensify our efforts to protect those fleeing war and persecution” (Muiznieks 2015, September 5).¹¹ The protection writers like this espouse is usually some variation of a quota scheme. One writer even mentions this explicitly, lamenting the “forgotten [...] idea of ‘quotas’ for each country,” including France (Stroobants 2015, April 25).¹² Through newspaper articles like this, one can see how public opinion is firmly for instituting some sort of quota system.

Cultural Makeup

Once seen how in countries such as Australia and Hungary cultural makeup can be the primary driver of public opinion, which in turn affects asylum policy. Countries with homogenous populations are less likely to adopt new, anti-xenophobic morals if their populations remain ethnically stagnant (Carens 1988). In France, this is definitely not true, as one can tell based on France’s open, albeit selectively, asylum policy. One can clearly see differences between France and a country like Hungary or Australia with the population of Muslims, one of the primary characteristics of Syrian refugees. France has a significant minority of Muslims, with around 7-9% of the country practicing Islam (“France: The world factbook”). This makes Islam the second biggest religion in France (behind Catholicism) (Davis 2011). It also makes France the EU country with the third-largest Muslim population, only behind Bulgaria (13.7%) and Cyprus (25.3%), nations with a small number of absolute Muslims (1 million and 280,000, respectively) (Hackett 2015, November 17). That France has so

representative of the general national mood. According to Rüb (2009), opinion pieces are one of the best way to analyze the general public sentiment

¹¹ “Nous devons intensifier nos efforts pour protéger ceux qui fuient les guerres et les persécutions.”

¹² “Oubliée également [...] l'idée de ‘quotas’ obligatoires pour chaque pays.”

many Muslims is a vestige of its colonial era, in which France had predominantly Muslim territories in North Africa, such as Algeria. In the 1960s, France allowed both refugees and economic migrants to enter the country to help sustain its prosperous economy; this has led to France being called “the first [Muslim community] that has contemplated integration into a Christian society” (Viorst 1996: 80). This history has led to the current makeup of France, in which almost one-tenth of all Frenchmen are Muslim, a stark contrast to the virtually complete absence of Muslims in Hungary.

This is not to suggest that France has been a sort of safe haven for Muslims. There have been repeated accusations of Islamophobia in France among non-Muslims (e.g. Buehler 2011; Davis 2011; Laitin 2010; Yahmed 2003, November 19). This mixing between Islamophobics on the one hand and Muslims on the other has created a unique dynamic among the French citizenry; because of this, France has a much more liberal asylum policy than Hungary towards the overwhelmingly Muslim Syrians, but is stopped short from having unrestricted entry rules. On an individual level, 37% of Muslims in France in a 2006 Pew poll said they have a bad personal experience in France due to their religion (“Muslims in Europe” 2006, July 6). This was the highest rate of Islamophobia among major European countries, and twice that of Germany’s (19%). On a macro level, one can see Islamophobia in France’s campaign against traditional Muslim attire. Former President Nicolas Sarkozy said of the head-to-toe burqa: “It will not be welcome on French soil. We cannot accept, in our country, women imprisoned behind a mesh, cut off from society, deprived of all identity” (Kirby 2009, June 22). A ban that fines women for wearing the full facial veil passed with only one dissenting vote in 2010 (Erlanger 2010, July 13). France’s desire to completely integrate the Muslim community has led to its citizenry fearing traditional markers of Islam, including burqas.

The Media

Similar to Hungary, France's cultural makeup affects its asylum policies to a certain extent; unlike Hungary, it does not appear as though its media outlets exert a major role. The relationship between the state and the media is much freer in France than in Hungary, meaning the government does not dictate what the press writes. Freedom House, which gave Hungary a 37/100, gave France a much more favorable 23/100 "freedom score," putting France's fourth estate firmly in the most free category. France's media is, in almost all ways, similar to other Western European democracies' (Hallin & Mancini 2004; Kuhn 2010). Also unlike Hungary, France's fourth estate in the Fifth Republic has been relatively divorced from the political parties (Kuhn 2006). The main criticism of French media is that defamation and anti-hate laws, coupled with an unwillingness by political elites to give French reporters access to information, have hindered the ability of journalists to investigate potential scandals (Hunter 1995; Bird 1999; Hallin & Mancini 2004; Kuhn 2010). In fact, French investigative journalism has been described as "less a matter of real journalistic research than of being able to secure speedier access than competitors to material" (Marchetti 2009: 372). Although this may be problematic with respect to journalistic integrity, the lack of investigative journalism in France does not really influence the way the media portrays refugees or asylum policy.

Of course, media can still influence public perception without a central state's intervention. The way the media frames issues in general, including asylum, can hugely influence policy (Allen 2004; Collins & Cooper 2012; de Vreese 2004; Entman 1991; Givens & Luedtke 2005; Greensdale 2005; Hayes 2008; Hotchkiss 2010; Klocker & Dunn 2003). Characterizing Muslim asylum-seekers as highly orthodox, for instance by using terms like "fanatic," will increase Islamophobia (especially in relation to national security) and lead to more

restrictive policies (Greensdale 2005: 11). If this were the case in France, one would expect to see high usages of key terms emphasizing the supposed terrorist associated with taking in refugees. To objectively measure this, one can use the LexisNexis database to track instances of key terms. For the purpose of this paper, calendar year 2015 was searched for any combination of “Syrian refugee” and “insecurity,” “danger,” “terrorist,” or “attacks” in the three largest-circulation daily newspapers in France: *Le Figaro*, *Le Monde*, and *L’Humanité*.¹³ The hits for these searches were surprisingly low, especially considering that the timeframe includes both the attacks on the *Charlie Hebdo* offices (January) and the November attacks on, among other places, the Bataclan Theater. The left-wing *L’Humanité* had a predictably low five results, but even the center-left and far-right papers of *Le Monde* and *Le Figaro* only had 56 and 47 hits, respectively. Considering how many opportunities there were to defame refugees, it is impressive how often a highly conservative newspaper like *Le Figaro* avoided this type of framing. In fact, even *Le Figaro* has been measured in its avoidance of shock-value editorials (e.g. Slama 2015, September 3). For instance, an editorial in September cautioned against rushing to build walls or tear down fences in response to the recovery of a dead child refugee’s body: “Asylum policy is a clear failure... [Neither] freedom of movement [n]or walls erected here and there... is the solution” (Gélie 2015, September 3).¹⁴ Here *Le Figaro*, bastion of conservative French politics, strike a center-right balance between completely closing and opening the gates. Considering the politics of the far-right, it is surprising that their primary newspaper does not rely on demagoguery and shock journalism, indicating that journalism as a whole in France is relative even-keeled, especially in contrast to Hungary.

¹³ The full search was: (réfugié Syrien) AND (insécurité OR danger OR crise terroriste OR terroriste OR attentants). No data was available for *Libération*.

¹⁴ “La politique d’asile est un échec patent [...] espace de libre circulation [...] [p]as plus que les murs érigés ici ou là [...] n’est la solution.”

Moreover, French newspapers have portrayed Syrian refugees as needing help, underscoring the personal element of asylum-seekers. This leads to a situation in which a public discussion of refugees does not focus on how harmful *they* are to society, but how much harm and potential harm they have faced. This can be measured by searching the same newspapers for a combination of “Syrian refugee” and “dying,” “help,” “journey,” and “war.”¹⁵ This results in a much higher number of hits than before. *Le Monde* had 112, *Le Figaro* 104, and *L’Humanité* 41. In sum, there were 149 more hits for the pro-refugee search than the anti-refugee one, indicating that the French media portray refugees favorably, especially relative to Hungary. If France’s media were like Hungary’s, France’s asylum policies would be more restrictive. Instead, France has a more moderate and welcoming asylum policy, and, as shall be shown below, the media has not even influenced policy after a focusing event.

History

The last major factor for influencing public opinion is a country’s history. Hungary’s history with refugees, especially Jews during the Holocaust, was an augury for the current unwelcoming mindset among the citizenry. France’s populace is similarly affected by its history, but not in a way that makes it completely unwelcoming. Rather, since the French Revolution France has believed in the right to asylum, but believes this right should be enshrined on political refugees. This idea of asylum for political refugees can help explain why the French stop well short of welcoming all refugees.

The birth of a new French nation in the late 19th century was founded on certain revolutionary ideals. It is not within the scope of this thesis to definitively say which ideals and actions engendered the fall of the Bastille and subsequent events, but one can say with

¹⁵ (réfugié Syrien) AND (mourante OR aide OR voyage OR guerre)

confidence that a major ideological goal of the French Revolution was to create a less hierarchical society, both in terms of economic wealth and in terms of political capital (for a fuller discussion on the causes and ideals of the French Revolution see e.g. Hunt 1998; Lewis 1999; Wallerstein 1989). This can be seen in the first two tenets of one of the primary manifestos of the Revolution, the “Declaration of the Rights of Man” (1789), which together say: “Men are born and remain free and equal in rights. [...] These rights are liberty, property, security, and resistance to oppression.” Note how the last right focuses on the act of resisting oppression, rather than simply not being oppressed. In Revolutionary France, overcoming oppression was viewed as the most honorable political act one could do.

This last principle, the right of “resistance to oppression,” would become the foundation for France’s asylum policy. In Revolutionary France, a refugee was only a refugee if he were fleeing from political persecution. According to Burgess (2008), refugees “invoked [asylum] through their own political actions, their declarations of affinities with the French, and their invocations of the principles of liberty, equality, and the rights of man as the foundation principles of their own political aspirations” (22-23). This was why so many members of the Dutch Patriot Movement, an unsuccessful uprising of the previous decade that shared many of the same goals as the French Revolution, were granted asylum in the First Republic (Palmer 2014). The easiest way to show the worth of one’s asylum request was by proving one was escaping persecution for political actions that line up with French values.

This became entrenched as the method of judging asylum applications even after the First Republic was over. The easiest way to obtain refugee status was to prove that one was fleeing because one had advocated for French political ideals. For instance, the French government on the eve of World War II was reluctant to admit Jewish refugees. In fact, even the Jewish

community of the 1930s was reluctant to help their brethren: according to one strand in the literature, the French Jews “placed their French above their Jewish loyalties” (Caron 1993: 311). These Jews had, in other words, adopted the French notion of asylum as their own. In general, they believed that, although the Jews were escaping persecution, it was ethnic and religious persecution, not political, and therefore they did not deserve asylum.

Fewer than two decades later, this notion was made official. The 1946 French Constitution enshrined the right of asylum in the preamble: “Any persons persecuted for his activities *on behalf of freedom* has the right of asylum in the territories of the Republic” (qtd. in Soltesz 1995: 275, emphasis added). This has been dubbed “a subjective right [that is] more restrictive than conventional asylum” (Lambert et. al. 2008: 18). The reason why it is more restrictive is because it judges asylum-seekers based on political persecution, whereas other definitions take into account characteristics such as religion, race, ethnicity, and social standing (see chapter 1 for a full discussion on the traditional reasons for granting asylum). With both the French Jewish community and the 1946 Constitution one can see how political action is valued in France as paramount for fleeing one’s home country.

These notions persist today. Among politicians, the desire to deport non-political refugees is prevalent both with the National Front’s Marine Le Pen and former President Nicolas Sarkozy (Chassany 2015, September 6; Cross 2015, September 16). Among the citizenry—and therefore public opinion—the story is the same. A poll conducted in September, 2015 found that French attitudes were unfavorable towards every type of migrant other than political refugees: political refugees had a +6% favorability rating, compared to -9% for skilled economic migrants, -18% for environmental migrants, -22% for migrants trying to join families, and -43% for low-skilled economic migrants (Dahlgreen 2015, November 29). The French believed that political

refugee were more worthy of coming to their country than skilled workers who could potentially help their economy.

The French believe that non-political refugees should be admitted without limitation, and they also think that Syrians belong in this unwelcome group. 62% of the French believe that Syrians should be treated like any other migrant (e.g. an economic migrant) (Le Parisien 2015, September 5). This is why a similar number of Frenchmen (55%)¹⁶ say they do not want to lower the barriers to coming to France for “Syrians fleeing the civil war” (Ibid.).¹⁷ Syrians, as people escaping war, do not meet the strict French criterion for being a refugee. Namely, they are not fleeing political persecution specifically. Because of this, the public is unwilling to welcome them with open arms, preferring instead to put a cap on the number of Syrians allowed to enter.

Focusing Events

One theory that does not apply to Germany or Hungary but does apply to France is that of “focusing events.”¹⁸ According to Birkland (1998), a focusing event “is sudden; relatively

¹⁶ The reason for the discrepancy between 55% and 62% is not made clear in the polling data. It is most likely a combination of margin of error and that a small minority of the 62% who responded that Syrians should be treated as economic migrants believe that economic migrants should be let in. Overall, though, the trend of the French not wanting non-political refugees to enter their country is consistent with this polling data.

¹⁷ “Syriens fuyant la guerre civile.”

¹⁸ This explanation is omitted from the second and fourth chapters because it does not apply to Hungary and Germany. In Hungary, officials made no mention of a specific event when discussing their strident asylum policy. If there were an event that had pushed the public into supporting stricter asylum policies, one would expect officials to utilize rhetoric that suggests strict border control would help the refugees, ultimately saving their lives and prevent a tragedy similar to the Lampedusa sinking (Emmott & Croft 2015, April 20). Instead, officials such as the Prime Minister have spoken more towards Hungarian nationalism, relating the fence to the onetime Iron Curtain and saying the fence was necessary for “defending our [Hungarian] lifestyle” (Feher et. al. 2015, September 15).

Similarly, Germany’s policy is more a result of the vast number of refugees attempting to immigrate rather than one specific event. Germany’s decision came several months after prominent ships sank (like the April event in Lampedusa), but before other well-publicized deaths of migrants, like the death of a Syrian boy in Turkey (Withnall 2015, September 2). In

uncommon; can be reasonably defined as harmful or revealing the possibility of potentially greater future harms; has harms that are concentrated in a particular geographical area or community of interest; and [...] is known to policy makers and the public simultaneously” (54). A focusing event can point out policy failures, thereby drawing the public’s interest to one specific event, and has been cited as the key mover of policy change across a number of issues, including environmental regulations, emergency responses, defense structures, and drug regulations (Birkland 1997; Downs 1972; Kingdom 1984; Scavo et. al. 2008; Wood 2006). With respect to Syrians, in current Europe the drowning of 700 asylum-seekers in April led national and supranational governments to enact asylum policy change, such as the EU’s ten-point-plan (Emmott & Croft 2015, April 20).

The timing of France’s sudden shift to accepting 30,000 can be used as a major piece of evidence for the last nationally-centered school of thought: focusing events. Looking at the criteria for focusing events, it is clear that the November 2015 Paris attacks were a focusing event: the attacks happened in fewer than four hours (Martinez 2015, November 14); they were the fifth terrorist attacks of the year, but the first with triple-digit casualties ever (McVeigh & Graham-Harrison 2015, November 14; Sauerbrey 2015, November 17); they only occurred in Paris (Martinez 2015, November 14); and it should go without saying that the government of France did not know about this in advance. They were also, upon the implementation of the new refugee plans, immediately characterized in the press as the reason behind them; a typical headline reads, “After attacks, France increases its commitment to refugees” (Ahmed 2015,

fact, there does not seem to be one single event that has prompted the stark asylum policy in either country; the general rhetoric has mentioned the “wave” or “flood” of refugees without honing in on one event.

November 18). The temporal connection in this headline immediately implies that the two events were also causally connected. Is there truth to this claim?

According to Birkland (1998), the two major ways in which focusing events influence policy are through group mobilization and media propagation. Although this method fits well with many welfare programs, especially American, it does not seem to jibe with French asylum policy. The move to accept 30,000 refugees was not made under significant political pressure unlike, say, in Spain or Germany; it was largely driven by the political elites like President Hollande in charge of Franco-EU relations (Dao 2015, September 9; Withnall 2015, September 7). The switch from 24,000 to 30,000 came just five days after the aforementioned 13 November terrorist attacks; however, in the interim there was little mobilization. In fact, some prominent right-wingers were arguing that France's asylum policies should go the other way: FN head Marine Le Pen said, "Urgent action is needed. France must ban Islamist organizations, close radical mosques and expel foreigners who preach hatred in our country as well as illegal migrants who have nothing to do here" (qtd. in Kennedy 2015, November 15).

This does not rule out focusing events as the main factor, though. Birkland mentions how "[t]he suddenness of focusing events also gives less powerful groups significant advantages in their debates" (56). By highlighting the issues with the status quo simultaneously to policymakers and non-policymakers, neither one is at an advantage. In this sense, the media landscape after a focusing event levels the playing field. It might seem logical that a country with a relatively free and moderate news source like France would be a prime location to have non-policymakers being given a greater voice in the press, especially if those non-policymakers are Syrian refugees, who are routinely characterized as "voiceless" (Lentfer 2013, September 16).

As great as this sound in theory, the evidence does not bear it out. The discourse after the attacks focused on the threat that refugees potentially posed. Although it has since been proven that all of the attackers were European nationals, the biggest topic regarding the refugees was whether a Syrian passport was legitimate (Legum 2015, November 21). This can be seen in the content of France's three biggest daily newspapers, mentioned above. According to LexisNexis, in the three full days after the attack (November 14-17), there were six articles written questioning the relationship between the refugees and the Islamist terrorist attacks.¹⁹ One of them begins: "A Syrian passport, found near the remains of the mysterious Grande Stade suicide bomber, was enough to re-enflame controversy: on migration across the Aegean Sea, Europe is torn on a possible link between terrorists and refugees" (Mével 2015, November 16).²⁰ This article both reflects and contributed to a debate about whether or not it is in the best interest of France to accept refugees *at all*, not whether or not France should accept *more* refugees. This same article was the only hit when "Syrian refugee" was searched in conjunction with "right of asylum."²¹ However, the author only mentioned the right of asylum in order to note how defenders of it are "on the defensive."²² This is not to say that no one in France was saying that France should take on more refugees; however, these discussions had not yet penetrated mainstream discourse. It is hard to give credence to the assertion that the Paris attacks gave Syrians more political power when the majority of French citizens were considering deporting them.

¹⁹ The search used was (réfugié Syrien) AND (terroriste), which gives you the exact same results as (réfugié Syrien) AND (passeport).

²⁰ "Un passeport syrien, retrouvé à proximité de la dépouille d'un des mystérieux kamikazes du Grand Stade parisien, a suffi pour renflammer la polémique : sur fond d'exode à travers la mer Égée, l'Europe se déchire sur un lien possible entre terroristes et réfugiés."

²¹ The search used was (réfugié Syrien) AND (droit d'asile).

²² "[L]es défenseurs du droit d'asile dans une Europe cernée par les conflits sont sur la défensive."

Nonetheless, the timing of the (slight) liberalization of asylum policy does indicate that the focusing event of the terrorist attack played a role. The way to explain the role of focusing events in France's asylum policy is through an individual level of analysis focused on President François Hollande. Scavo et. al. (2008) previously found how George W. Bush used the focusing event of 9/11 to seize more power, and create a new cabinet position, the Secretary of Homeland Security. A national head of state taking more power can happen relatively frequently following a disaster, because quite often "state and local governments are unwilling or unable to deal with a serious crisis. Instead, the national government takes control of the entire recovery effort" (Schneider 1990: 101). The theory here is that Hollande was able to garner more power than usual because of the terrorist attacks, enabling him to manipulate asylum policy in a way that he thought was best for either himself or his country.

The evidence behind this theory is that France's asylum procedures in the past have typically not been highly centralized. France's asylum policy, historically, has generally been determined from agents other than the head of state. Since 1999, it is ostensibly governed by international agreements with the United Nations and the European Union (Tolley 2012). However, as demonstrated above, France often does not follow the regulations of pan-national organizations like the EU. Even in the frequent scenarios in which they act on their own, though, it is almost never the president unilaterally. The 1993 "zero immigration" law that severely limited all forms of immigration, including asylum, was not an executive decision, but rather passed by the legislative branch of government (Anonymous 1993; Viorst 1996). A similar 21st-century clampdown of refugee acceptance came from the bureaucracy, not the presidency: the Ministries of the Interior and Foreign Affairs told guards to by default count refugees as undocumented immigrants (Fassin 2005). Furthermore, the judicial branch of government has

historically played a major role in French asylum policy. A full analysis of the jurisprudence of asylum policy is beyond the scope of this project, as the 2015 Syrian asylum policies of Hungary, France, and Germany were not based on court decision. Historically, though, French asylum policy has been dictated more by the courts than by the president, largely because asylum is a constitutional right in France, and therefore the court must determine how to interpret this clause (Lambert et. al. 2008; Lambert 2009). For instance, in each of 1997, 2003, and 2007 the Constitutional Court rejected parts of immigration law that would have impeded the rights of asylum-seekers (Tolley 2012). In general, asylum law is mediated through the decisions of the legislative and executive branch, as well as occasional non-French bodies like the EU; as a rule, the president alone does not control asylum policy.

Hollande, therefore, is the exception. This is not to say that presidents are impotent figures who hold no sway over policy in their countries. Former president Nicolas Sarkozy, for instance, was president during one of France's anti-refugee, anti-immigration periods (Borrud 2012, March 12). However, no president has dictated asylum policy in such a top-down, unilateral way as Hollande did last November. Under normal circumstances, this should not have been possible, especially when one considers that popular opinion and public discourse were largely opposed to taking on even more refugees. What made the situation exceptional is the focusing event, which immediately gave him the extraordinary abilities. While the attacks were still in question, he declared a state of emergency, which enabled him to execute acts such as closing the French border (Global News Staff 2015, November 13). It also, as with Bush and the creation of DHS, enabled him to reshape asylum policies.

Because this is an individual level of analysis, the potential reasons why Hollande increased the refugee quota are nearly infinite. Any definitive analysis of Hollande's action

would presume that one knows what he is thinking, which once again is an almost-boundless subset. The only empirical evidence we have is based on what he says, and obviously Hollande is able to tell lies and half-truths in press conferences in interviews in order to conceal his actions for political reasons. For example, he has said, “In terms of numbers, today, France is not subject to an influx of refugees and those who argue that we are being invaded are manipulators and falsifiers, who do this only for political reasons, to scare” (McPartland 2015, October 16). Hollande here is criticizing right-wing fearmongerers like FN’s Marine Le Pen. Perhaps he is hoping to garner more votes in 2017 by differentiating himself from anti-immigration parties, especially because at the time he was polling at third (Dabi & Pratviel 2015, November).²³ He could also be attempting to undermine the legitimacy of ISIS. Recruitment for the terrorist organization often centers on the oppression of Western countries like France, one example of which is the reluctance of countries like France to take in refugees (e.g. Ward 2015, June 14). By accepting more refugees than originally planned, Hollande was preemptively refuting this argument. On the other hand, Hollande might legitimately feel an altruistic sense of duty to Syrians, although this seems less than likely considering that his party’s stance on refugees under him has changed so often (Viscusi 2015, September 22). The important thing to remember with any explanations, regardless of which one is correct, is that Hollande was only able to shift from 24,000 to 30,000 refugees because of a focusing event.

V. Conclusion

Among all the theories this chapter has discussed, there are three tiers of explanans. The first consists of those theories that can explain no aspect of France’s selective entry asylum

²³ This might seem not to fit with the previously discussed theories of interparty competition theories espoused by Han (2013) and Thränhardt (1995). However, those theories spoke primarily of political parties introducing legislation; focusing events empowering individuals to unilaterally act is something entirely different.

policy. Firmly in this tier are the three relations this chapter examined. Franco-Syrian relations would make sense based on the numbers, but only if the surrounding rhetoric focused more on the adversarial relationship France has to the Assad regime. France's relationship to the EU also has no effect on its asylum policy, as France generally does not follow the letter of EU law but, unlike Hungary, also does not flaunt its laws in order to undermine its legitimacy; almost all of France's policies are wholly its own. A similar phenomenon occurs with Franco-German relations, where France's policies neither converge nor diverge with Germany's.

A couple nationally oriented theories also fit within this first tier. Economically, the greying of Europe cannot explain France's asylum policy, as accepting the number of refugees it does will not significantly mitigate the problem. Furthermore, France's and Hungary's old-age rates are not significantly different enough to explain their differing refugee acceptance rates. Interparty competition also cannot explain France's asylum policy, as the ruling Socialist Party is far enough on the left that a far-right party like the National Front won't pull it to a more conservative position.

Necessary but insufficient conditions comprise the second tier. All of these theories empirically fit with France's selective entry rules, but no one of these theories is strong enough by itself to explain why France's refugee policy was to let in either 24,000 or 30,000 refugees. Economically, France's absorption capacity, as measured by land availability (population density and arable land), indicates that France has the ability to take in refugees, but because France is generally rated lower than Hungary in these metrics, absorption capacity is by contrast demonstrably insufficient.

Cultural makeup and the media affecting public opinion are also necessary but insufficient. The vast majority of French citizens were in favor of a quota system in which they

take in a limited number of Syrian refugees. France, in contrast to Hungary, has a strong Muslim presence of almost one in ten, the highest in Europe, although there is significant Islamophobia. Also unlike Hungary, the French media is relatively independent and moderate, even in the face of tragedy. If either one of these factors were the opposite, though, it seems likely that France would have a more restrictive asylum policy. If the media were highly conservative, it would enflame the already-present Islamophobia, drowning out the interests of the existing Muslims. If the converse were true, and there were moderate journalists but not relevant ethnic population, then the issue of asylum would probably not receive much positive press coverage, as there would most likely not be a significant readership that would be willing to purchase or consume primarily pro-asylum newspapers, magazines, television shows, etc.

The third tier consists of sufficient theories that account for the shift in policy from taking in 24,000 Syrians to 30,000. The only theory that can explain this rapid, albeit slight, liberalization in asylum policy is that of focusing events. The terrorist attacks in November 2015 did not lead to mobilization or positive press coverage, but it did allow President François Hollande to consolidate even for a small window of time power in his hands. This allowed him to change the asylum policy unilaterally, an exceedingly rare occurrence in French history. Speculating on individual actor's motives can often lead to incorrect conclusions, but the most likely reasons are that Hollande was taking a political gamble in distancing his political party from more xenophobic parties in preparation for the next election, where he is a heavy underdog, or that he hopes not to contribute to ISIS recruitment characterizing France as unwelcoming.

Chapter IV: Germany

“Right now it’s just one country – Germany. Where are the others? It’s only Germany. Only Merkel” – Syrian refugee Mouti (qtd. in Kingsley 2015, September 7).

“We can’t take them all in. There are too many” – AfD European Member of Parliament Beatrix von Storch (qtd. in Ramm-Weber 2015, October 10).²⁴

“Thank you Germany. You are saving Syrian lives. Long live Germany!” – Syrian refugee Ribal Kousa (2015, August 25)²⁵

I. Introduction

On August 25, 2015 at 7:30 AM, the German Federal Agency for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) sent out an unheralded message from their twitter account: “#Dublin procedures for Syrian nationals at this current point in time will, to the greatest extent possible, no longer be enforced by us.”²⁶ This tweet, although “obscure” and largely unknown at the time, signaled the end in Germany of the so-called Dublin regulations, which restricted both the number of refugees in an EU country, and the ways in which refugees could enter (Thomas et. al. 2015, September 10). Starting that day, Merkel’s regime would accept all Syrians, regardless of their port of entry. In doing so, Germany became the only country in Europe to adopt unrestricted entry rules for Syrians. Even at the time, German officials understood the sheer number of people who would come: public estimates estimated about 800,000 Syrians coming in the four remaining months of the calendar year, but classified documents had the number at almost double that, 1.5 million (Huggler & Holehouse 2015, October 5). Beyond 2015, Germany was confident it could take half a million refugees a year for “several years” (Smith & Tran

²⁴ “Wir können nicht alle aufnehmen. Es sind zu viele”

²⁵ “Danke Deutschland. Du rettetest [s]yrische[s] leben ... Hoch leben [sic] Deutschland.”

²⁶ “#Dublin-Verfahren syrischer Staatsangehöriger werden zum gegenwärtigen Zeitpunkt von uns weitestgehend faktisch nicht weiter verfolgt.”

2015, September 8). With little fanfare, Germany had made one of the most important decisions in the history of asylum policy.

A decision this momentous is almost impossible to explain with just one theory. This chapter, therefore, will seek to evaluate the relative strengths and merits of each of the previously discussed theories in the three main schools of thought. It will first examine the necessary but empirically insufficient theories in the economic school of thought: absorption capacity and the greying of Europe. Next, Germany's foreign relations with both Syria and the EU will be discussed. Lastly, two main aspects of Germany's national culture will be examined. The first is the lack of strength in the right-wing party, the *Alternative für Deutschland* (Alternative for Germany). The second is the current pro-refugee public mood, and how it is affected by current demographics, the media, and the nation's history with National Socialism.

II. Economic School of Thought

Absorption Capacity

In France, it was clear that a country needed to have certain economic resources in order to pay the initial costs of accepting refugees. With Germany, all of these necessary conditions are met, as Germany has one of the most robust, thriving economies in the EU. The only category in which Germany's resources pale in contrast to France's or Hungary's is land availability. As Jacobsen (1999) noted, a country must have enough land and raw resources, as measured by population density and arable land per capita, available to host refugees. Germany has maybe the least amount of available land of any EU country. With a population density of 232 people/km², they have the fifth-most densely populated EU country, trailing only the UK, Belgium, the Netherlands, and the island nation of Malta. While Germany is not a mathematical outlier, its position in the EU is still in the highest quartile. Even from a global perspective, Germany is

densely populated. The average country (as measured by the arithmetic mean) has a population density of 366.85, but this number includes outliers such as Monaco, which has a population density of 19,073.²⁷ Eliminating outliers like Monaco shifts the average population density to 156, about 75 people fewer per square kilometer than Germany's.²⁸

Arable land furthers the notion that Germany is not a resource-rich country. Germany has 0.18 hectares per person of arable land, per the World Bank. This is fewer than 17 other EU countries, including France (0.28) and Hungary (0.45). Globally, Germany has only the 94th-largest amount of arable land. Ironically, even Syria, with 0.21 hectares, has more arable land than Germany.

What Germany lacks in land resources for refugees, it more than makes up for with its thriving economy. (For a full comparison of key economic metrics see Figure 4.1.) Unemployment is the key metric to analyze here, as shrinking labor markets shifts a government and its populace's attention away from helping refugees and towards ameliorating the high rate of employment, or even towards denouncing asylum-seekers (Joly 1996; Neumayer 2005; Scheinman 1983). Germany, at around 5% unemployment, had the lowest unemployment rate in the entire EU in the summer and fall of 2015 (Faiola 2015, September 10; "Unemployment statistics"; Weissmann 2015, July 17). Moreover, unemployment had been consistently dropping for the previous six years, going from 7.9% in July 2009 to 4.6% in July 2015 (Ferreira 2016,

²⁷ This method of calculating the average population density using arithmetic mean is based on individual country's density instead of simply looking at the world's population density because world population density estimates typically do not account for inhospitable areas, and therefore are misleadingly low. My method implicitly assumes that all countries have an equal amount of inhospitable land, an obviously false assumption; however, the large sample size minimizes the issue of inhospitable land, especially in contrast to simply looking at global population density.

²⁸ These figures come from independent calculations done on the software program R. Metadata comes from the World Bank's website. Outlier here is defined as $1.5 * (Q3-Q1) + Q3$, which in this case was 2047.635. The four outliers eliminated in the second calculation of the mean were Macao (19,073 people/km²), Monaco (18,812), Singapore (7,736), and Hong Kong (6,897).

March 1). In describing this economic boom, one German economist said, “The outlook for the German labor market remains robust. The economy is strong, job creation should continue and employment figures should continue to rise” (Speciale 2015, December 1). Even though Germany has less land available than France or Hungary, the prosperous state of the economy means Germany can take in refugees. In this way, a strong market economy can make up for meager resources.

Metric	Germany	EU Rank	World Rank
Population Density	232 people/km ²	5/28	41/219
Arable Land	0.17 hectares/person	18/28	94/198
Unemployment Rate	4.6%	1/28	55/174
Old-age Dependency Ratio	31.5	3/28	4/193

Figure 4.1: Economic findings in Germany

Ageing of Europe

Germany, as with Hungary and France, has been afflicted by the so-called Greying of Europe, which has led some to call this the main driver of asylum policy. The rapid ageing of Germany specifically has been a sort of synecdoche for the general Greying of Europe. Commenters have noted since nearly the turn of the century that Germany was on pace to become one of the oldest countries in the world, with potentially disastrous consequences for the economy (Bernstein 2003, June 29; Hewitt 2002). In analyzing European populations, Hewitt (2002) predicted that “the early twenty-first century could turn out to be every bit as tumultuous as the first half of the century just ended.” Early pundits like him have, in terms of the demographics, accurately predicted the future. According to Eurostat, Germany’s old-age dependency ratio in 2015 was 31.5, much higher than Hungary’s (25.8) or France’s (28.4). In the context of the European Union, Germany’s ratio is in a virtual tie for Greece (31.6) for second, behind only Italy (33.1). Germany’s value was the only one of the three countries to be in the highest quartile, even though it is not a mathematical outlier. This can be seen in a modified

boxplot (see Figure 4.2), in which Germany’s value is high enough to be outside the “box,” but still low enough to be part of the “whiskers.” Germany’s ageing workforce was reflected not just in population share, but also in the potential labor rate, which was expected to drop 20% by 2030 (Dettmer et. al. 2015, August 27).²⁹ In general, the overall greying of Germany was expected to get much worse: in the past ten years, the share of pensioners has increased, while that of both 0-14 year-olds and 15-64 year-olds has decreased. The situation was critical enough for the Interior Minister Thomas de Maiziere to say, “We need people. We need young people. We need immigrants. All of you know that, because we have too few children” (Chu 2015, September 10).

Old Age Dependency Ratio for the EU

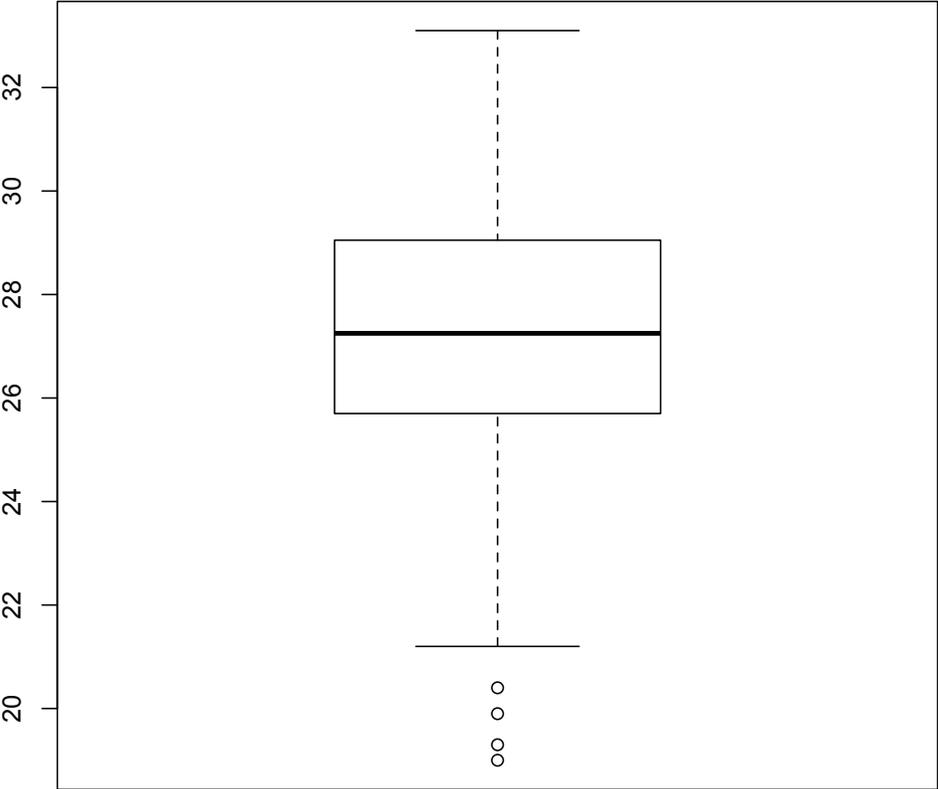


Figure 4.2: Old-age dependency ratio of the EU

²⁹ This estimate came before Germany liberalized their asylum policy.

Germany's ageing workforce was enough of an economic issue that the business community had previously called for a loosening of bureaucratic restrictions. Many of them were indifferent to the ethnicity or nationality of the workers, especially in a post-Schengen Europe in which workers come from all over the EU. One businessman said simply, "We've had employees from all over Europe. All skin colors are welcome. The focus is on the work. Everything else is unimportant" (Dettmer et. al. 2015, August 27). This argument is furthered through the demographics of Syrians: the majority were between 18 and 35, and 81% of all Syrians are under 35 (Desilver 2015, October 8). Because of this, the director of the Berlin Institute for Population and Development, an expert of German demographics if there ever were one, said: "As the asylum seekers are fairly well qualified, there is a good chance they will become valuable parts of our workforce in the coming years. We won't reverse our population loss, but we could shrink less" (Faiola 2015, September 10).

Although this theory seems to make some sense, it can be criticized for lack of specificity to Syria, indicating that there are other, non-economic factors involved. In order for a theory to fully explain Germany's asylum policy, it must explain why Syrians specifically are being accepted. The ageing of Europe theory would be paramount if Syrians were especially able to help Germany's economy, but in fact the opposite is true. Syrians, as a whole, do not possess the requisite skills to immediately improve the German economy, even though they are among the best-educated refugees in the world: 86% have secondary education or higher (Besheer 2015, December 8). One primary reason is the differing standards of education between Syria and Europe, both in traditional academic settings and in vocational schools. Syria's education is lacking compared to Germany's: "On average, an eighth-grader in pre-war Syria had a similar level to a third-grade student in Germany" (Delcker & Karnitschnig 2016, January 6). In addition

to education gaps, Syrians will not be immediately prepared to step in and fill employment vacancies: further training will be required, perhaps through some of Germany's famed vocational schools (Sirkin 2013, April 29). Because of the misperception as to how much Syrians could help Germany's economy, one prominent German economist, Ludger Wößmann, said: "Let's not delude ourselves. From everything we know so far, it seems that the majority of refugees would first need extensive training and even then it's far from certain that it would work out" (qtd. in Delcker & Karnitschnig 2016, January 6). It is not guaranteed by any means that Syrians will practically be hugely beneficial to Germany's economy.

Syrians who do not receive the proper training in a timely fashion will, in fact, probably hurt Germany's economy. In Germany there is a stark divide between unskilled and skilled employment: about 20% of German unskilled workers, some 1.2 million, are without jobs despite, or maybe because of, the plethora of jobs for skilled workers (Delcker & Karnitschnig 2016, January 6; Dettmer & Ludwig 2013, November 6). If what Wößmann predicts is true, and refugees will take a significant amount of time to integrate into the workplace, this could exacerbate the short-term costs to Germany, putting a severe temporary strain on Germany's coffers, as refugees earn about 359€ per month in welfare (Hiller & Greig 2015, September 4). Even though this is less than that of a German citizen, it could still lead to millions of euros a year as Syrians scramble to meet the education level of their new neighbors. Beyond learning technical skills, Syrians must also learn German, a process that could take several months, if not years. Even the official government comments regarding labor demographics have noted that it would take time before Syrians are capable of helping the German economy. Chancellor Merkel said, "They need help to learn German, and they should find a job quickly. Many of them will become new citizens of our country" (Faiola 2015, September 10). Merkel here, while trying to

promulgate the benefits of her new refugee program, shows how much uncertainty there is with the newest residents of Germany.

Moreover, it is not clear whether immigration in general could replenish Germany's ageing workforce. Germany has decided to let in a near-unprecedented number of Syrians, but even this pales in comparison to Germany's current ageing predicament. Germany, a nation of over 80 million people, has not only one of the highest shares of retirees, but also the highest number, with about 16 million eligible for pension.³⁰ When describing the problem, Hewitt (2002) claimed, "Immigration will help, but only at the margins." Hewitt might not have been able to predict the massive numbers of people Germany has decided to let enter, but even the million-and-a-half Germany expects will not solve Germany's problems for at least a generation, if not longer.

A broader critique of the economic school of thought follows from these specific criticisms: if economic considerations alone drove asylum policy, one would expect a convergence between asylum and general immigration policies. If Germany were really in such a dire demographic predicament, one would expect them to have not only liberal asylum policies, but also liberal immigration policies. For example, the greying of Germany could be quickly solved if Germany flung open its doors for anyone under a certain age. However, this is not the case: Since the turn of the millennium, Germany's immigration policy has progressed only incrementally leftward, if at all; before opening its doors to Syrians, Germany was known as a relatively unwelcoming country for immigrants, especially after the 9/11 terrorist attacks and the 2008 financial crisis. One scholar characterized the immigration culture of the new century as a shift "from refusal to reluctance" (von Stritzki 2009). In describing economic theories in general,

³⁰ This number comes from a population of 80.2 million, 20.8% of which are over 65.

Downs (1957) claimed that “[a]ny attempt to deal with all forms of government by means of a single economic theory is bound to be either self-contradictory or too general to be meaningful” (279). The lack of similarities between Germany’s asylum and immigration policies is an illustration of this, as any economic model that drives asylum policy would also drive their immigration policy. Rather than being the main force behind Germany’s asylum policy, Germany’s economic situation is just part of the overall explanation of its expansive asylum policies.

III. Foreign Policy School of Thought

German-Syrian Relations

Unlike France, Germany cannot claim a rich relationship with Syrian history. The only major interaction between the two countries was during World War II, as is reflected in the scholarship: most of the literature surrounding German-Syrian relations focuses on the rise of the National Socialist party, and how this affected Germany’s relationships with various Arab countries (see Wien 2010 for a summary of recent literature). Syria and Lebanon during WWII were under the control of France, which for four years in the 1940s meant they were indirectly under the control of National Socialist Germany (through Vichy France). Although some scholars, such as Mallmann and Cüppers (2006) and Gensicke (2007), have implied an ideologically connection between the anti-Semitism of the National Socialists and Arabs in countries like Palestine, this was not the case with Syria. A strong and vocal opposition to anti-Semitism in Syria countered any anti-Semitic tendencies or rhetoric that overlapped with the Third Reich, which resulted in a decline of anti-Semitism once WWII started (Nordbruch 2008). Inasmuch as there was any anti-Semitism, it did not originate due to direct contact between Syria and Germany; rather, it was mediated through the puppet Vichy regime. Even the most

influential contact between Syria and Germany was still not purely bilateral, indicating that the history of German-Syrian relations is not rich enough to affect the present.

Because Germany does not have a long history with Syria, they do not feel as strongly hostile towards the Middle-Eastern country as France does. Syria was not as high a priority in German foreign policy as with French international relations, and their relations were not strong enough in the first place to have experienced the complete falling-out that Franco-Syrian relations did. Currently, Syria and Germany are adversaries, but not nearly to the extent that France and Syria are. Although Germany is an early member of the “Friends of Syria” group that supports a democratic transition of power to the non-ISIS/ISIL, non-Assad National Coalition, the contemporary relationship between Syria and Germany is actually the friendliest among all three of the case studies. Germany’s main strategy for Syrian relations in general seems to be walking a middle ground among the various international actors, hoping that a compromise strategy will win out. For instance, Germany has advocated for Russia to play a greater role in the Syrian Civil War, while France has said Russia should stop military operations in the Middle Eastern country (F.A.Z. 2016, January 24; Reuters 2016, January 11). Germany here is compromising between giving Russia free reign in Syria, and attempting to bar them altogether from engaging in military operations in the Middle East. Unlike countries like France, Germany is not strident in its belief that its vision should be enacted in Syria.

Also unlike France, Germany has neither taken an active role in the international coalition against ISIS/ISIL nor the international denouncements of Assad’s regime. Germany was not as hawkish as early as France, increasing its role in the international coalition against ISIS/ISIL only after France had requested support for its military operations in the Mediterranean (Stuster 2015, December 1). With respect to President Assad, Germany was

definitely not an early denouncer of his regime. In fact, as late as September 2015 Chancellor Merkel saw negotiation with Assad as the best way to ensure peace in Syria (Dick 2015, September 24; Noack 2015, September 24). This was not a mainstream or popular European policy at the time: at around the same time France was criminally investigating Assad for torture (Nossiter 2015, September 30). Germany was going against popular European sentiment to the extent that the German newspaper *Der Spiegel* said that Merkel's strategy "would be an about-face in Western Syrian politics" ("Bürgerkrieg in Syrien" 2015, September 24).³¹ Similarly, in December the German federal intelligence agency *Bundesnachrichtendienst* was exchanging information with its counterparts in the Assad regime, although Germany's military committed to not cooperating with Assad's (Copley 2015, December 18; Reuters 2015, December 1). Given that Germany is not as strictly opposed to Assad's Syria as France or Hungary, one would expect to see Germany taking in the fewest number of Syrian refugees, when in fact the opposite is true.

*German-EU Relations*³²

Some have looked at Germany's relationship with the EU as an explanation of their asylum policy.³³ By accepting an anomalously large number of refugees, Chancellor Merkel

³¹ "Ein Zugehen auf Assad wäre eine Kehrtwende in der Syrien-Politik des Westens."

³² This section discusses only the current, political role of Germany in the EU context. The historical debt Germany owes to EU countries such as Greece, and how this has led to Germany's current asylum position, I have chosen to group with the rest of Germany's National Socialist history in the national politics and culture section.

³³ Many of these analysts have focused on an individual level of analysis, seeking to explain Germany's actions through the politics and attitudes of Chancellor Angela Merkel. Although it can sometimes be problematic to analyze a country's policies by focusing on an individual, there does seem to be a basis for doing this in Germany. Although BAMF, the German migration agency, was the one that announced the decision, the BAMF minister was appointed by Chancellor Merkel in 2015 and is directly responsible to her (Astheimer 2015, September 17). Just as France's President Hollande was the key voice that raised the quota of refugees, so was Merkel the key figure in dropping the strict EU Dublin regulations.

There is also an argument to be made that individual leadership should be its own theory. However, individual levels of analysis can often be viewed by using another theory; in the last

hoped to position Germany as the undisputed leader of the EU, thereby cementing her political legacy. Even before Merkel radically altered Germany's asylum policy, Germany was a "semi-hegemonic" power in the EU (Webber 2014). At the same time, the EU, due to financial difficulties and a connected wave of Euroscepticism, had been under threat to collapse for at least three years prior to Merkel's historic decision (Bruton 2013; Webber 2014). This escalated in 2015, as the potential of the death of the Eurozone due to a failing Greek economy hung over most of Europe. During Eurozone crises, the EU has come to rely more and more on Germany's leadership: according to one observer at the Carnegie Europe think-tank, "Because the EU has been so abysmal at anticipating crises, it has fallen to Merkel to prevent the implosion of the EU" (Kemp 2015, November 19). The international discussion about refugees gave the so-called "Queen of Europe" an opening to cement Germany's role as the strongest power in Europe: If the EU had followed Germany's lead and radically reshaped its asylum policies, it would have positioned Germany as the country that could single-handedly determine the future of many important and divisive European issues.

The strength of this theory is that Chancellor Merkel has not historically shown radical left-leaning asylum tendencies. Her previous strategy regarding asylum was to pressure the EU to distribute refugees proportionally among its member states (Huggler & Marszal 2015, April 24). This strategy, though pragmatic, does not indicate someone passionate about national asylum reform. In general, she has not been a staunch advocate of immigration or multiculturalism: in a somewhat xenophobic moment, she famously declared that "the basic

chapter, one saw how President Hollande's decision can be viewed within the context of focusing events. In this chapter, one will see how Chancellor Merkel's decision can be viewed within certain other contexts, including Germany's relationship to the EU. The one exception to this would be leadership as its own theory. Leadership as its own theory, while a major factor in other scholarly fields, does not appear in the literature on refugee studies.

approach to multiculturalism has failed. Absolutely failed” (Posener 2015, February 27).³⁴ Her newfound radicalism can then be explained by her relationship to the EU. Considering the discourse to the refugee situation centered around it being a crisis, Merkel saw an opportunity to use the issue of refugees to increase Germany’s political standing in the EU.

The main critique of this is that it does not fit with modern German history. In recent times, Germany has not shown overt inclinations to control the EU, which is of course a stark contrast to its twentieth-century past. Some see a direct link between the two. Because Germany’s quest for European domination in the past led to tragedy in the past, it does not want to repeat the mistakes of previous iterations of Germany. In the words of one analyst, “Germany has long been known as Europe’s ‘reluctant hegemon,’ for its reluctance to be too assertive in diplomacy given its history of militarism” (Irwin 2015, July 29). In line with this, Merkel is known on the international stage as a rational actor who pushes for mutual agreements. During the Eurozone crisis with Greece, for instance, she pushed for a compromise among a Greek exit, crippling Greece with debts, and allowing Greece to escape without paying the majority of its debt (Cassidy 2015, July 7).

This moderate position has not been on display with Germany’s asylum policy. Germany’s decision to drop the Dublin protocol is, of course, inconsistent with EU policy. Germany actively chose to go against the official EU regulations for asylum seekers. Even beyond that, Germany went against the general trend among EU countries. Just before Germany changed its asylum policy, most member nations wanted a moderate position compared to what Germany would eventually have. The EU set a European-wide quota at 20,000 people in May 2015, a plan that was immediately deemed too radical by the UK, which opted out (Emmott &

³⁴ “Der Ansatz für Multikulti ist gescheitert. Absolut gescheitert.”

Guarascio 2015, May 13). Merkel's approach to the increased numbers of asylum applicants was not at all consistent with her previous, largely middle-of-the-road EU negotiations, indicating that a factor beyond German-EU relations was the key driver of Germany's asylum policy.

IV. National Politics & Culture

Interparty Competition

As with most European nations, Germany has a highly nationalist, right-wing party, the Alternative for Germany (AfD); unlike countries like Hungary, Germany's was far less fervent in its xenophobia before Merkel's decision. Currently, AfD has exceedingly xenophobic rhetoric and ideology. Their asylum policy consists of "immediate banning of asylum applicants, abolition of family reunification, [and] better control or emergency closing of the borders" (Reible 2015, October 9).³⁵ Their rhetoric matches their ideology. Frauke Petry, AfD's speaker, has said, "[The police have to] also use firearms. It's in the law" (Meiritz 2016, February 1).³⁶ In this sense, the current iteration of AfD is the German equivalent to Hungary's Jobbik or France's National Front.

Before 2015, though, AfD was not as vehement with its rhetoric or policy. AfD actually rose to prominence not through its asylum policy, but rather through its Euroscepticism. Although nativism was a part of the party's platform, especially on a local level, its main national position was being "pro-European but anti-Euro" (Grimm 2015). This is a contrast to Hungary, where Jobbik capitalized on a wave of anti-immigrant sentiment to become politically viable. The "alternative" in Alternative for Germany originally stood for an economic

³⁵ "Sofortiger Aufnahmestopp für Asylbewerber, Abschaffung des Familiennachzugs, bessere Kontrolle oder notfalls Schließung der Grenzen."

³⁶ "auch von der Schusswaffe Gebrauch machen. So steht es im Gesetz." It does not state in German laws that police are allowed or encouraged to shoot refugees or anyone else violating border laws.

alternative, not an asylum one: a 2014 AfD press release proudly states, “There is only one party in Germany that stands in the way of the corrosion of our financial system and our competitiveness. That is the Alternative for Germany” (Henkel 2014, July 14).³⁷

AfD adopted Euroscepticism as its main policy to serve as an unconventional option when compared to the widespread pro-EU sentiment among German parties. Other than AfD, there “are no political alternatives to the prevailing pro-European integration doctrine” in the German parliament (Grimm 2015: 267). In positioning itself as an economic alternative AfD sought to tap into a widespread fear of financial disaster, a historically rooted fear that reemerged during the Eurozone crisis. According to some German observers, the “desire for monetary stability...[has] become deeply entrenched in the mind of the German people,” especially after the rampant hyperinflation of the interwar years (Beyer et. al. 2008: 9). The media in Germany had no problem with exploiting German “stability culture,” as Beyer et. al. (2008) named it. For example, the *Bild* published the headline “Where is my money still safe today?!” (Bild 2012, May 11).³⁸ Even the more even keeled *Spiegel* published an issue titled “Beware inflation! The insidious expropriation of Germans” (Dyck et. al. 2012). AfD’s political goal was to tap into this German fear of economic disaster by promising to reduce Germany’s commitment to the Eurozone and thereby create a robust, crisis-proof German economy.

Although AfD at this point primarily focused on economics, they still had an asylum policy, but one that was more moderate than what they would later adopt. During the early stage in AfD history, the party believed that refugees should stay as close to their country as possible: their official website says, “Humanitarian aid...should happen as close to the homeland as

³⁷ “Es gibt nur noch eine Partei in Deutschland, die sich der Aushöhlung unserer finanziellen Stabilität und unserer Wettbewerbsfähigkeit entgegenstemmt. Das ist die Alternative für Deutschland.”

³⁸ “Wo ist mein Geld heute noch sicher?”

possible.”³⁹ The party line is that more money should be given to countries like Turkey, but the refugees themselves should not come into Germany. Because of this logic, they were anti-refugee but generally measured with their rhetoric, especially in contrast to FN and Jobbik (e.g. Leber 2014, October 27; Pirkl 2014, October 22). Their stance was squarely anti-refugee acceptance, but still in line with center-right parties in non-extreme countries like the UK.

AfD’s previously moderate conservative position can, at least in the eyes of political analyst Dietrich Thränhardt, be explained by Germany’s political culture: “Germany’s conservatives do not play the race card like in France or Britain. Anti-immigrant positions like those of [U.K. Prime Minister David] Cameron or [former French President Nicolas] Sarkozy would be considered extremist in Germany” (qtd. in Bershidski 2015, September 9). Germany’s history determines this: “Given the experience of National Socialism, extreme right parties will clearly have to moderate their discourse and distance themselves from fascism even more explicitly than elsewhere to attract more than a handful of extremists and protest voters in Germany” (Bonschier 2012: 125). This “general stigma” has led to a “historically contaminated environment” in modern Germany (Decker 2012: 22).⁴⁰ AfD assumed that a harsh position on refugees would trigger memories of the National Socialists. Therefore, they made national and European economies the centerpiece of their platform, unlike the xenophobia-based campaigns of Jobbik and the FN (Phinnemore & McGowan 2015).

Before May 2015, it was not even clear if an extremist political party could survive in Germany. That month there was an intra-AfD schism, but before that AfD was considered by some analysts a center-right party, in line with the British Tories (e.g. Waterfield & Vasagar 2013, April 12). They were, however, an unsuccessful party. The previous year, they had

³⁹ “Humanitäre Hilfe...sollte nach Möglichkeit heimatnah geschehen.”

⁴⁰ “einem generellen Stigma... Das historisch kontaminierte Umfeld.”

achieved their only electoral success based on anti-immigration policies, winning three seats under the slogan “Immigration needs clear rules” (Leber 2014, October 27).⁴¹ Even after these victories, though, they were not the brazenly xenophobic party they would become; then-party Chief Bernd Lucke stressed the economic, rather than cultural, detrimental impact of refugees, insisting that AfD would allow political refugees into the country (Pirkl 2014, October 22). They were not against the right of asylum, only against the liberal usage of it (Behrmann 2015, August 27). This may be thinly veiled racism, but is still not the overt racism that would come to pervade the party the following year.

The turning point towards extremism came in 2015, when it became clear that Germans would not reject out of hand an anti-refugee party. Immediately after Merkel’s decision, AfD was still reserved, afraid that they would lose the little support they had if they attacked refugees too strongly, especially in lieu of wide press coverage of German citizens welcoming refugees (Scholz 2015, September 8). Their most pointed statement was to ask, “How many refugees can a society bear?” (Ibid). This is actually a reasonable question to ask of a country intending to take in over a million, and was widely discussed even within Merkel’s CDU party. However, after Merkel’s decision, polls came out indicating that not all Germans were happy with the dropping of Dublin. For instance, one poll indicated that two-thirds of Germans thought refugees could divide society, and about the same number (64%) wanted a referendum on the issue, rather than the top-down decision that was made (“Mehrheit fordert Volksentscheid zu Flüchtlingen 2015, October 15). These anti-refugee rumblings, combined with the previous hard right turn AfD had made, enabled the now far-right party to make inflammatory statements, such as encouraging police officers to shoot refugees. In late 2015 and early 2016, AfD looked like the

⁴¹ “Einwanderung braucht klare Regeln.”

sort of Jobbik-esque party that could influence German asylum policy, but this was not the case in the first half of 2015. In this sense, Germany did not have an extreme right-wing party to the same extent that France and Hungary did.

Suppose AfD had taken a gamble and embraced anti-refugee platform earlier, hoping that the aforementioned prevailing wisdom about Germany's political culture on refugees and asylum policy was incorrect. Even in this hypothetical scenario, AfD would still have been unable to exert influence over Germany's asylum policy. Han (2013) has shown that far-right radical asylum policies can enter the mainstream, but before late 2015 AfD was too far on the fringes to affect the mainstream. AfD was, for the most part, a politically inconsequential party. AfD has had virtually no hard political power in their three-year lifespan. They have never held a seat in the German parliament, having failed in 2013 to win even 5% of the votes (the threshold to gain one parliamentary seat in Germany) in the 2013 national election, and finishing seventh overall in total votes (Solms-Laubach 2013, September 22). They did slightly better in the following year's European Parliament election, winning seven of the 96 seats, but that was still over three times fewer than France's FN (Spiegel & Canegy 2014, May 26). AfD's virtually nonexistent political victories are contrasted with the modest successes of France's and Hungary's far-right parties in Figure 4.3. Not only did AfD choose not to influence German asylum policy, they would have been unable to regardless, as their lack of political might made them—in 2015—too much of a bit player to significantly contribute to interparty competition.

Country (Party)	State Elections				National Election Seats				EU Election Seats			
	Year	Seats won	Total seats	Vote %	Year	Won	Total	%	Year	Won	Total	%
Hungary (Jobbik)	2010	81	419	9.1	2014	24	199	20.2	2014	3	21	14.7
France (FN)	2015	356	1,758	27.7	2012	4	925	13.6	2014	21	74	24.9
Germany (AfD)	2015	49	1,857	5.5	2013	0	631	4.7	2014	7	96	7.1

Figure 4.3: Far-right party successes in Hungary, France, and Germany

Although Thränhardt (1995) and Han (2013) have noted that *conservative* parties tend to use interparty competition to amend asylum policies, some have argued that Chancellor Angela Merkel pursued this radical shift in asylum policy to shore her own moderate base. For example, Tony Czuczka, author of a biography of Merkel, said that liberalizing asylum policy is “a strategy she’s pursuing in my mind to try to get voter support back up to what it was before this summer” (Yohannes & Waters 2015, December 24). Espousers of this theory think that Merkel hopes to use a liberal asylum policy to bring in some potentially disillusioned voters back to the Christian Democratic Union (CDU). Part of the reason why Merkel could be so desperate to win back voters is because her approval rating had underwent modest losses throughout 2015. In 2013, Merkel boasted the “highest approval rating during a chancellery election” (2013, December 13).⁴² Just before Germany’s decision to open its borders, Merkel’s approval rating had dropped from a lofty 74.4% two years earlier to 63%, including a four-point drop from August to September 2015 (Reuters 2015, September 4).

Although Merkel’s approval rating is a reason to ascribe to this theory, other evidence runs counter to it. Prime among them are opinion polls about the upcoming 2017 federal election. These polls are just as important as Merkel’s approval rating, if not more, as Germany is a parliamentary republic: citizens vote for the political party, not individual candidates. Opinion polls also ask questions that more directly regard the elections, such as “Whom would you vote for if the elections were held today?” rather than asking for generally favorable or unfavorable, as is the case with approval rating. Virtually every opinion poll had the CDU with a double-digit lead the entire run-up to Merkel’s decision. The CDU was polling in the low 40s throughout 2015, according to the polling companies Emnid, Forsa, Infratest dimap, and

⁴² “Höchste Zustimmungquote bei einer Kanzlerwahl.”

INSA/YouGov. Looking at a graph of weekly polls conducted in 2015 by Emnid (Figure 4.4), one can see that CDU's polls only started dropping around week 32, which is August 22. (Ironically, CDU poll numbers only started falling once their party leader made the asylum announcement.) Merkel might have felt some pressure to act decisively on the issue of how many refugees to accept. However, if the primary concern for Merkel concerning asylum policy were to secure her party's reelection—thereby claiming her own fourth term as Germany's head of state—she would not have enacted such a radical policy, as her party continued to dominate the polls.

Emnid Poll: 'If the elections were next Sunday...'

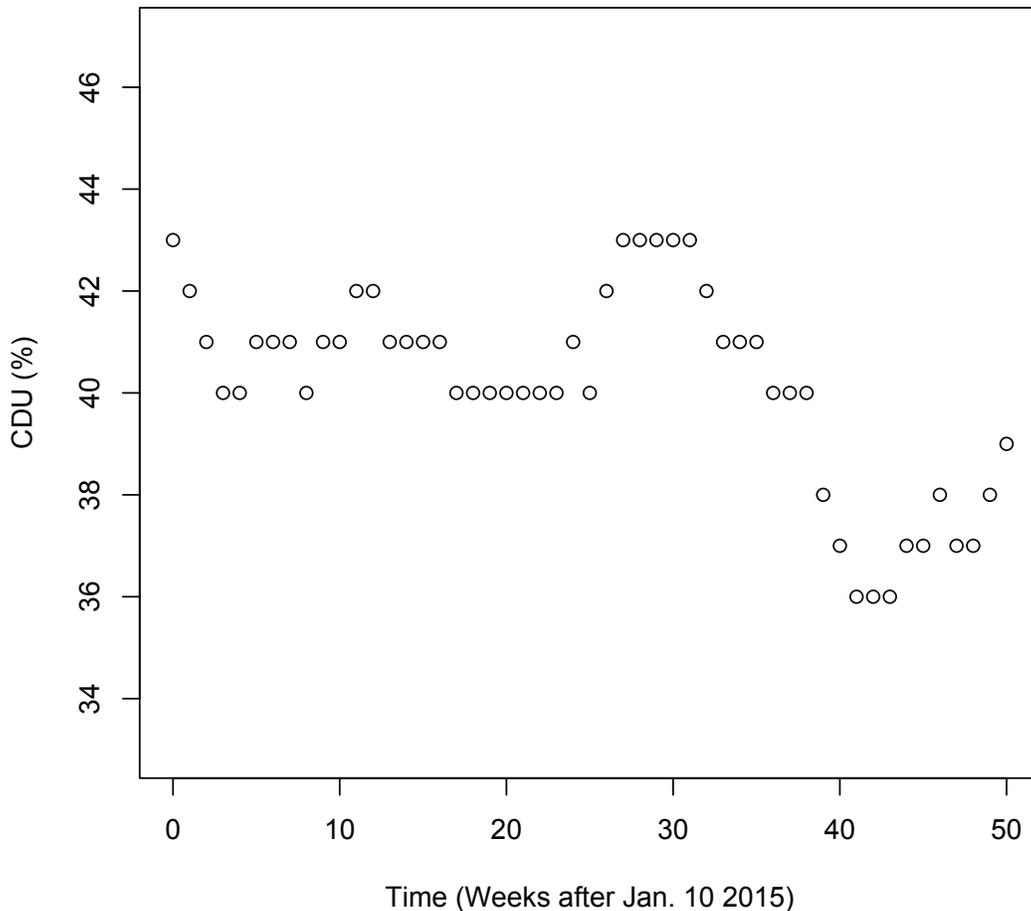


Figure 4.4: CDU poll numbers

Public Opinion

That Germany opened the door to Syrians appears at first to disrepute the theory, espoused by scholars like Adams et. al. (2004), Burstein (1998), and Cobb & Elder (1972), that public opinion affects public policy. Considering that Germany dropped all barriers to Syrians entering, one might expect the German populace to have been overwhelmingly in favor of letting in more Syrians, similar to how 88% of Hungarians were against letting in any Arab refugee. However, this is not the case. In April 2015, only 50% of Germans were in favor of letting in any more Syrians—not necessarily letting in all Syrians, just more than 30,000 they had already promised to take in (“Jeder Zweite für mehr Flüchtlinge”; Rampen 2015, March 13). A full 44% of Germans were against letting in *any* more Syrians.

It could be that public opinion does not matter, an assessment that runs counter to decades of scholarship. More plausibly, it could be that public opinion must not be viewed as a monolithic block. That is, there is not necessarily a direct, one-to-one correlation between what percentage of the citizenry believes in welcoming more refugees, and how many are actually let in; just because German polls indicate that Germans are 50% more welcoming than Hungary does not mean that Germany will welcome 50% more refugees. Although polls are a concise way to objectively measure public opinion, most scholars agree that they should not be used exclusively to measure public opinion. They *can* be used in countries like Hungary, with a relatively homogenous public view on asylum, but in countries like Germany, one must look more at the general national spirit and mood, as polls are an insufficient gauge for nations with diverse viewpoints.

According to scholars like Kingdon (1984), public opinion is reflected not in polls, but in national mood, which is “really more a type of *zeitgeist* [spirit of the times] that is reflected in

commentary, opinion pieces, thought and knowledge patterns, and is observed and verified in policy” (Rüb 2009: 356).⁴³ Public opinion is fundamentally different from a one-time political process like an election or an opinion poll, because what matters is how involved the populace is over a long period of time in attempting to change policy. 44% of Germans were against letting in Syrians, but this reduces their opinion to a yes/no binary. How important of an issue was this for the 44% who were against it, versus the 50% who were for it? This sort of question cannot be answered by opinion polls, but rather by looking at the national mood, which is, in the views of multiple-streams scholars, necessary but insufficient for policy change (e.g. Kingdon 1984; Rüb 2009; Zahariadis 2007).

In Germany, although each individual was not in favor of more refugees, the national mood had swung towards liberalizing asylum policy. One can see this in the “Refugees Welcome” movement that sprang up all around Germany, a classic example of a country-wide thought pattern. This movement at first focused more on refugee integration than refugee acceptance: their four main demands were the elimination of inhospitable refugee camps, the halting of deportation, the abolition of the *Residenzpflicht* (mandatory residence law), and guaranteeing the right of refugees to work and study in Germany (Aikins & Bendix 2015, November 16). The initiative was actually originally conceived as a way to house the thousands of refugees that were already in Germany (“Flüchtlinge willkommen 2015, April 23). What started as a simple charitable event soon became a rallying cry and slogan for those who wanted to show solidarity with refugees in all issues, not just integration, whether that meant buying refugees groceries, letting them sleep in extra rooms, or unfurling banners during soccer matches (Aikins & Bendix 2015, November 16; Harding et. al. 2015, September 2). Exact figures as to

⁴³ “vielmehr eine Art Zeitgeist, der sich in Kommentaren, Stellungnahmen, Denk- und Wissensmustern niederschlägt und von der Politik beobachtet und wahrgenommen wird.”

how many participated in the Refugees Welcome movement are difficult to determine, but by one estimate, “*Zehntausende*” (tens of thousands) of Germans had already participated in April 2015, four months before Germany decisively changed its asylum policy (Reimann 2015, April 17). Just a few days after Merkel’s decision, 780 Germans had already committed to housing refugees in Berlin, the center of Refugees Welcome (Elgot 2015 September 1). The welcoming response to the plight of the refugees was such that at one point the Munich police were actually overwhelmed by the number of donations and were forced to ask the public to stop (Dearden 2015, September 1; Harding et. al. 2015, September 2). The Refugees Welcome phenomenon perfectly illustrates how the national mood and public opinion cannot be encapsulated by simple public opinion polls. There is even a specific German word to capture the pro-refugee national mood: *Willkommenskultur* (culture of welcoming).

Not everyone is a part of this *Willkommenskultur*. There exists in Germany also the polar opposite of welcoming refugees, the xenophobic denunciations and even physical attacks on asylum-seekers. In 2015, there were approximately 1,000 attacks on refugee shelters, five times more than the previous year (Hill 2016, February 22). Attackers of refugees even went so far as to throw a hand grenade in the building of 20 refugees in Villingen-Schwenningen, although the general weapon of choice was a Molotov cocktail (Dearden 2016, January 29; Staufenberg 2015, December 7). 90% of these attacks were “motivated by far-right ideology,” such as that espoused by the *Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes* (Pegida, Patriotic Europeans against the Islamification of the West) (Schumacher 2015, January 29). This movement, which has been called “the dirty side of civilization,” was started in Dresden in October 2014 in Dresden and is different from entities like AfD in that its entire goal revolves

around xenophobia and Islamophobia (Geiges et. al. 2015).⁴⁴ Many of these attacks came after the August decision to let in Syrian refugees, but some came before. There were well-publicized arsons throughout Germany, from Bavaria to Hamburg, Munich to Berlin (Hengst et. al. 2015, April 11). The arsons were so bad that the governor of Saxony-Anhalt labeled them “a national problem” (qtd. in Spiegel Online Staff 2015, April 7).

The reason why this “national problem” did not become a part of the national mood is that the numbers of those perpetrating these attacks or supporting the sentiment behind it were too few, especially before the adoption of unrestricted entry rules. According to Zahariadis (2007), the “national mood refers to the notion that a *fairly large number* of individuals in a given country tend to think along common lines” (73, emphasis added). In 2015, the attacks generated much publicity, but did not reflect the ideology of a large number of Germans. Pegida has drawn much attention for holding mass demonstrations, some with as many as 25,000 participants (Khan 2015, January 12).⁴⁵ However, counter protests often dwarfed Pegida protests. In Berlin and Cologne, for example, thousands of counter protesters drowned out the mere hundreds of Pegida followers following the attacks on *Charlie Hebdo* (BBC Newsbeat 2015, January 13). This sentiment can also be found in polling data: on December 12, 2014, 85% of Germans have said they would not demonstrate for the goals of PEGIDA, with only nine percent saying they would (“So viele Deutsche würden bei Pegida mitmarschieren”). This number was verified when Pegida formed a political party and had a candidate in the 2015 Dresden mayoral race. Even in the bastion of the Pegida movement, candidate Tatjana Festerling could only claim 9.6% (France-Presse 2015, June 7). This poll and election result numbers are strikingly large for

⁴⁴ “die schmutzige Seite der Zivilgesellschaft”

⁴⁵ Even in this scenario, though, the attendance was far less than the projected 40,000 (Ibid.). This is a common trend: a few months ago, the police expected 15,000 participants, but only 8,000 showed up (Reuters 2016, February 6).

any pro-refugee activist. In terms of an absolute percentage, though, it is almost identical with the 9% of Hungarians who claim that all asylum-seekers should be admitted to the Central European country. As weak as the pro-refugee group is in Hungary, the xenophobic, far-right movement in Germany is equally weak.

The main difference between Pegida and the pro-refugee movement in Hungary is the amount of coverage Pegida has received.⁴⁶ One might assume this makes it a movement more in line with the national mood: after all, Rüb (2009) specifically said that the national mood can manifest itself in “commentary [and] opinion pieces” (356). In Germany, though, not all press is good press. Most of the commentary and opinions on Pegida has been extremely negative, contributing to the anti-Pegida, pro-refugee *Willkommenskultur*. Many have equated the Pegida movement with a return to National Socialism. The Council of Jews chairman, for instance, deemed them a combination of “neo-Nazis, parties from the far-right and citizens who think they can finally let out their racism and xenophobia” (“German Council of Jews chairman” 2014, December 20). This assessment is, by and large, accurate. According to Pfeifer (2015, January

⁴⁶ Unfortunately, this claim is almost impossible to verify empirically. As noted in Chapter II, searching for newspaper of a particular issue among Hungarian media is extremely limited, as most databases do not contain Hungarian-language newspapers. This makes a direct comparison between Hungarian and German press nearly impossible. Searching among neutral third parties, such as *The New York Times* or *The Guardian*, is also impractical. First, Germany, as the larger and more internationally powerful actor, will garner more coverage than Hungary almost regardless of the issue. Secondly, and more methodologically challenging, there is no catch-all name for the pro-refugee movement in Hungary, unlike “Pegida” in Germany. Any search would necessarily be too broad or too narrow to make a comparison between the Hungarian and German media useful.

This is not to suggest that the claim that Pegida receives more coverage than the pro-refugee movement is entirely without basis. The main logic for this comes from the media landscape of the two countries. Hungary, with a conservative, semi-controlled press, is unlikely to devote much time to anti-government, liberal coalitions. Furthermore, Pegida, as a far-right movement, has many parallels to National Socialism (as mentioned above), and sometimes even includes rioting and arson, making it a somewhat salacious and therefore profitable story to sell. The pro-refugee movement, meanwhile, is almost always peaceful and uncontroversial, which in the opinions of publishers often means boring.

25), “neo-Nazis form a kind of rearguard” to Pegida marches. Many prominent politicians, such as ex-Chancellor Helmut Schmidt (SPD) and current Chancellor Angela Merkel (CDU) have denounced Pegida unequivocally (BBC 2015, January 13; Spiegel Online Staff 2015, April 7). The latter said in a New Year’s Eve speech, “Many of these refugees are literally fleeing death. It goes without saying that we will help them, and that we will take in people who seek refuge here.... It is important for us not to let ourselves be divided.... [D]o not follow those who have called the [anti-refugee] rallies. Because all too often they have prejudice, coldness, even hatred in their hearts” (“The Chancellor’s New Year’s Address” 2015, December 31). Here one can see how Merkel speaks directly counter to Pegida, hoping to bring Germans together to a pro-refugee point of view. This speech is indicative of the broader anti-Pegida movement that went hand-in-hand with *Willkommenskultur*.

Willkommenskultur is important because it served much the same function as overwhelming, homogenous public opinion in countries such as Hungary. As Zahariadis (2007) has found, a unified national mood is one way to ensure that a policy issue is put on the legislative agenda, and this is exactly what happened in Merkel’s Germany. On a micro level, two-thirds of citizens believed in July 2015 that asylum was Germany’s most pressing problem, a trend occurring across the EU (Hille 2015, July 28). On a macro level, pressure mounted on the government to address the issue of asylum with each new, well-publicized refugee-related scandals. The most famous of these was the drowning of over 400 migrants off the coast of Lampedusa that led to a temporary EU 10-point-plan (Emmott & Croft 2015, April 20; Hall 2015, June 10). However, even a relatively minor event, such as Chancellor Merkel rationalizing potential deportation when speaking to a Palestinian girl, was met with significant backlash (al-Wazir 2015, July 18). Not only did most people believe that asylum policy was an urgent

problem that needed addressing, but the national mood, as indicated by the Refugees Welcome movement, thought it had to be made less restrictive. The combination of the two meant that the liberalization of asylum policy was one of the most pressing political issues of Merkel's agenda in mid-2015.

Cultural Makeup

In France and Hungary, there seemed to be a correlation between the Islamic cultural makeup of a country and how liberal its citizenry was towards refugees. In Germany, this effect can also be found to a certain extent. Germany has a relatively large number of Muslims (primarily from Turkey), especially in contrast to Hungary. Germany's main period of Muslim inclusivity came between 1961 and 1973, when they had the so-called *Gastarbeiter* ("Guest worker") program. After the *Wirtschaftswunder* following WWII, Germany needed as many workers as possible. Starting in the 1960s, they made bilateral agreements with a variety of countries so that temporary workers could come to Germany to fill an economic need. Germany made such agreements with three predominantly Muslim nations: Turkey (1961), Morocco (1963), and Tunisia (1965) (Münz & Ulrich 1999). Germany became especially dependent on Turkish labor after the 1961 construction of the Berlin Wall, after which the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) lost access to labor from their Eastern counterparts (Carle 2007). At the peak of this program, over one thousand laborers arrived per day (Martin 2004). When West Germany stopped its guest worker program in 1973, amidst a higher minimum wage and the OPEC oil embargo, some 800,000 Turks had already come to Germany (Ataman 2007, March 11; Münz & Ulrich 1999). When the program was first started, the theory was that foreign workers would only work for one year before rotating out for another laborer (Martin 2004). Practically, this financial ideal was not met: once the German guest worker program was halted,

about 30% of laborers stayed behind (Ibid). These workers, many of whom were Turks, brought their families to Germany and started settling down, often having children born on German soil (Castles et. al. 1984; Wilpert 1988).

Although this history with Turkey has given Germany a relatively large number of Muslims within its borders, the number is still significantly less than that of France. Estimates peg the number of Muslims in Germany at around four million, around three-quarters of a million fewer than in France (Gesemann 2006; Pew Research Center 2011; “Studie: Deutlich mehr Muslime in Deutschland” 2009, September 6). Because Germany has a higher total population than France, this translates into Germany having 5% Muslims, about 2-4 points lower than France’s.

Both Germany and France have liberalized their asylum policy in the past couple years, unlike Hungary, which has virtually no Muslims and wants no refugees. (A comparison of the three countries’ cultural makeup and public opinion is provided in Figure 4.5.) However, Germany is one level more welcoming than France despite having fewer Muslims. This indicates that cultural makeup alone is not the sole driver of public opinion. If it were, one would expect France’s populace to have a greater *Willkommenskultur* than Germany. Instead, having a non-negligible number of Muslims in a country is a necessary but insufficient condition to accepting Muslims refugees. This is consistent with the other case studies in this thesis, as well as the existing body of literature. Countries with overwhelming monolithic populations will be inherently inclined to discriminate against refugees who do not match their cultural makeup, a finding that was especially true of “White Australia” after WWII (Carens 1998). Countries with almost no cultural diversity like post-WWII Australia or contemporary Hungary will not be welcoming towards refugees. Germany (and France), on the other hand, *can* be more welcoming

based on their cultural makeup. Germany’s diverse populace, unlike Hungary’s, will not be negatively biased towards refugee acceptance. Having Muslims in its country enabled Germany to make its asylum laws less stringent, without that in and of itself being the only explanation.⁴⁷

Country	Public Opinion	Muslims (% population)
Hungary	88% opposed to any refugees	0.077%
France	69% for set quota system ⁴⁸	7-9%
German	50% for more refugees	4-5%

Figure 4.5: Public opinion and cultural makeup in Hungary, France, and Germany

Media

As with France, German media is free from the state control and pressure that exists in Hungary. The government does not control the press in order to make its laws seem more appealing or palatable. Although the former German Democratic Republic (East Germany) was notorious for censoring the media before its formal reunification with West Germany, the new German media is one of the freest in the world (Boyer 2003). Its most recent Freedom House “press freedom score” was 18, better than France’s 27 and more than twice as good as Hungary’s score. Germany overall was the ninth-freest press in Europe, and 22nd in the world (out of 199) (Freedom House 2015). Clearly the German media has its own agency, able to show whatever it wants and potentially influence public opinion.

The framing of asylum has the potential to shape public opinion, as noted not only in previous chapters but also in the literature (e.g. Greensdale 2005). Some have argued that

⁴⁷ The exact point at which a country has enough Muslims to meet this necessary condition is unclear. Would Germany have been able to abandon Dublin if they consisted of 4% Muslims? 2%? Would Hungary’s policy be different if they had even 0.5% Muslims within their borders? A complete answer to this question would require a multi-country quantitative analysis, and even then there is no guarantee that the sample size would be large enough to be statistically significant.

⁴⁸ This assumes that the quotas would be equal to or less than what France currently had at the time (“Accueil des migrants” 2015, September 5).

German newspapers lack the violent rhetoric of countries like Hungary, and that conservative newspapers in Germany are more sympathetic to refugees than other EU countries: according to one observer, “even right-leaning tabloid newspapers in Germany have balanced critical coverage of migration into Germany with sympathetic reportage on the plight of refugees crossing the Mediterranean” (Harding et. al. 2015, September 2). The empirical evidence bears this argument out: German newspapers are at least as moderate in their depiction of refugees as their French counterparts, if not more so, meaning that both countries meet the necessary requirement of having newspapers that are not overtly anti-asylum. The top three daily newspapers for which LexisNexis data is available are *Die Welt*, *Der Tagesspiegel*, and *Frankfurter Rundschau*.⁴⁹ Searching for the same combination of “Syrian refugee” and “insecurity,” “danger,” “terrorism,” or “terrorist” as before, the three papers had about the same results as each other, even though *Die Welt* is considered conservative, *Frankfurter Rundschau* liberal, and *Der Tagesspiegel* in between the two (Eilders 2002; Jäger & Jäger 2003).⁵⁰ *Die Welt* recorded 27 hits, *Der Tagesspiegel* 32, and *Frankfurter Rundschau* 32, giving credence to the theory that German conservative newspapers depict the news in a way more similar to their liberal and moderate counterparts. This is in contrast to France, where the farthest-left newspaper *L’Humanité* recorded 11 times fewer hits than the right-wing *Le Figaro*. Also in contrast to France, Germany had slightly fewer hits overall than their western neighbor, registering 91 overall compared to 108.

In addition to not portraying Syrian refugees negatively, German newspapers also tend to portray them as needing help. This is the opposite of what Greensdale (2005) found in Britain,

⁴⁹ Unfortunately, data was not available for the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* and *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*.

⁵⁰ The exact search was: (syrische Flüchtlinge) AND (Unsicherheit, OR Gefahr OR Terrorismus OR Terrorist).

where the press use xenophobic language to emphasize that refugees are dangerous. In contemporary Germany, the press is more likely to discuss or at least mention the dangers both of remaining in Syria and undertaking a significant dangerous journey to Europe. This leads to a public mindset in which many Germans, including those of the Refugees Welcome movement, associate Syrians with people who need assistance in order to live, rather than as people who are there to steal their jobs or commit acts of terrorism. To quantify this, one can search in LexisNexis for key terms that emphasize the personal safety that Syrians no longer had, as well as the need to give them aid: “dying,” “help,” “journey,” and “war.”⁵¹ The numbers for each of the three aforementioned newspapers were almost as high individually as they had been in total for the previous exercise: *Die Welt* had 89 hits, *Der Tagesspiegel* 99, and *Frankfurter Rundschau* 110, summing to 289. This is slightly higher than France’s, which had 257 hits for the same search. A full breakdown of the portrayal of media among the three countries is presented in Figure 4.6. Some of the contrast between the positive and negative portrayal of refugees can be explained through the relative vagueness of these search terms, but even a glance at the content of these newspapers shows that German newspapers make an effort to accurately depict the horrors and dangers of being a Syrian refugee. Even a short article will stress the terrible uniqueness of this situation: a *Rundschau* article noted that “for a generation, no other conflict has produced this type of great suffering, and pushed so many women, children, and men to escape” (“Immer mehr Syrer fliehen ins Ausland” 2015, July 10).⁵² Both qualitative and quantitative evidence indicates that Germany’s press is relatively free and unbiased.

⁵¹ Exact search: (syrische Flüchtlinge) AND (sterben OR Hilfe OR Reise OR Krieg).

⁵² “Seit einer Generation habe kein anderer Konflikt derart großes Leid erzeugt und so viele Frauen, Kinder und Männer in die Flucht getrieben.”

Search Terms		Total Hits		
First Term	Second Terms	Hungary	France	Germany
Syrian refugees	Security	12	108	91
	Danger			
	Terror			
	Attack			
Syrian refugees	Dying	7	257	289
	Journey			
	War			

Figure 4.6: Media portrayal of refugees in Hungary, France, and Germany

History

In Hungary we saw how its history with asylum-seekers, especially Jews during the Holocaust, was a foreboding for its current attitude towards refugees. Similarly, France's historical notions of asylum have persisted up through today, as their mindset since the French Revolution has been to favor political refugees over war or economic refugees. In Germany, one can also observe how its particular history affects its current public opinion, albeit in a different manner than France or Hungary. Those who believe that history impacts contemporary German norms towards asylum policy typically point the most famous period of German history: namely, the National Socialist (NS) era and its immediate aftermath. Because Germany had come to terms with its past around the end of the 20th century, there was a collective psyche that was more sympathetic and open than the previous generations, contributing to the current *Willkommenskultur*.

One must look at the historical, postwar psyche of Germans in order to understand their current mindset. Over the past several decades, one of the dominant strands in scholarship on Germany was how Germans work through guilt over their NS past, which has spawned the so-called *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (coming to terms with the past) studies. The consensus view is that immediately after the fall of National Socialism, Germans began a collective repression of

the NS-era, leaving them psychically paralyzed and incapable of working through what had occurred in the previous decade (Benz 1990; Confino 2000; Kansteiner 1999; Kramer 1996). This can be seen for about the first fifteen years after Hitler's death in everyday life, in which there was something of a taboo on speaking of the tragedies of war in the public sphere (Mitscherlich & Mitscherlich 1967).

It took reunification between East and West Germany in 1990 for Germans to come to terms with their National Socialist past. Partitioned Germany was a literal barrier between the east and west, which led to a block in the collective psyche in terms of coming to terms with the past (Olick 1999). How could Germans come to terms with the past when they were still a divided nation? The removal of the barrier between the two Germanys led to the gradual dissolution of an us-versus-them mentality that had been present in the psyche of Germans throughout both WWII and the Cold War (Figlio 2011). During the 1990s, there was “an intense period of memory work” in which the past was somewhat normalized (Lagenbacher 2010). The taboo on public discussions of Germany's past had been lifted, allowing Germans to fully come to terms with the past for the first time since the National Socialist tragedies occurred. This occurred in multiple ways. One method of coming to terms with the past was through public discussions on the role of German guilt for the Holocaust and World War II. Noted author Martin Walser comments on the “instrumentalization of Auschwitz,” for example, set off a national debate on the current guilt of Germans for past atrocities (Kamenetzky 1999). Both the initial comment and the subsequent national discussion would have been impossible during the implicit taboo of the previous half-century. This new ability to discuss and come to terms with the past is symbolized through various Holocaust memorials that were constructed in the 1990s, including a 2,700-pillar monument adjacent to the parliamentary building in Berlin, as well as an

education system that specifically dealt with Germany's troubled past (Kansteiner 1999; Rodgers et. al. 2012). Monuments like these lead the Germans to be attuned to not only past atrocities, but also more aware of current sufferings.

The current *Willkommenskultur* stems from this 1990s movement. Germans, by coming to terms with the past through education and collective discussions, have a certain welcoming and sympathetic mindset in their collective psyche. This can explain the difference in welcoming culture between Germany and France. France, which has not had to come to terms with its past like Germany, has an ambivalent reaction to refugees, with almost two-thirds of the French believing that Syrian refugees should be treated like economic refugees (Le Parisien 2015, September 5). Germany, meanwhile, had tens of thousands of demonstrators take to the street in order to create a more welcoming culture.

In fact, the difference in *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* can even explain the subtle difference in *Willkommenskultur* within Germany. As a nation, Germans have been welcoming towards Syrians; however, this has not been evenly distributed across the nation. According to polls, the difference in xenophobia between East Germans and West Germans is more than ten percent: 59% of East Germans are worried about the number of refugees coming into the country, compared to 48% in West Germany ("German poll notes rise in fear" 2015, October 2).⁵³ This difference is due to the opposing levels of public discussion between the two countries. East Germany, as a communist state, stood for the ideological opposite of Hitler's fascism (even though in practice it was a fascist state), and therefore took no accountability for the legacy of National Socialism. East Germany as a whole lags behind its western counterpart in terms of coming to terms with the past, as can be evidenced through the poor education of the former

⁵³ The reason this poll does not disqualify the earlier argument about the national mood is because it occurred after Germany changed its asylum policy.

communist state (Morina 2004). As East Germany fully comes to terms with its past, one would expect them to embrace the *Willkommenskultur* as fully as West Germans do.

V. Conclusion

Germany is expecting to accept millions of Syrian refugees in the course of less than a year, a monumental decision that cannot easily be explained by just one or two factors. To be sure, not every factor mentioned in the literature is relevant to Germany's asylum policy. The role of the now hyper-conservative nationalist Alternative for Germany cannot explain Germany's asylum policy change in 2015, as AfD was neither politically powerful nor extremely xenophobic before late 2015. Angela Merkel's Christian Democratic Union fear over reelection is also an inadequate explanation. Not only were CDU's poll numbers extremely strong throughout the first two thirds of 2015, but the next federal election was not due for another two years, making this theory unable to explain the timing of Germany's decision.

Similarly, there is little of the theory that espouses bilateral relations between Germany and Syria as the primary explanation that can be salvaged. Germany is the least hostile towards Assad's regime of the three case studies in this project, and one of the friendliest Western nations towards the current, dictatorial iteration of Syria. Given that Germany accepts millions of refugees more than other EU countries, the best that can be said of this theory is that it is necessary but insufficient not to be allied with a country in order to take in a large number of refugees.

Some might argue that Germany also needed to have a leading role with EU asylum policy in this particular moment in time. Because Merkel is the leader of the EU during a tumultuous and precipitous time in EU history, this theory espouses that she hoped to use asylum policy to cement Germany's role as the strongest power, capable of keeping the EU from

collapsing. This theory is certainly not without merits; however, this is neither a necessary or sufficient condition for Germany's asylum policy, as Germany has not actually measurably changed asylum policy in the EU. Merkel's role in the EU, therefore, is unchanged or—more likely—even weakened because of this. While Germany may gain more political power in the future, this would be only an indirect result of their asylum decision, rather than the main contributing factor.

The most comprehensive explanation of current asylum policy is through a combination of relevant economic realities and the national mood. Both schools of thought serve as necessary conditions. Germany needed both a thriving economy, which is by far the best in Europe, as well as an ageing populace in order to consider making this decision, although economic decisions by themselves cannot come close to fully explaining asylum decisions.

Moreover, Germany as an individual nation required a unique cultural makeup, media landscape, and history in order for its national mood to be so welcoming of refugees. To avoid negativity, Germany needed to have a minority representation in their populace and a fair press, which they do. The descendants of Germany's foreign workers from the 1960s ensured that the populace's knee-jerk reaction would not be to ban refugees. Likewise, the relatively balanced, unbiased coverage of the refugee situation kept Germans from thinking that all refugees are villains.

To go beyond just not rejecting refugees (as France does) and actively accepting them, Germany needed a singular history. The last few generation of Germans have had public discussions about how to come to terms with their National Socialist past, a far cry from the first postwar generation. This *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* culture led to Germans feeling more

sympathetic towards those in need. Combining this national sentiment with Germany's economic state led to Germany's historic decision to adopt unrestricted entry rules for Syrians.

Chapter V: Conclusion

I. Findings

This thesis sought to explain three levels of Syrian refugee acceptance rates in the EU: unwanted entry rules, selective entry rules, and unrestricted entry rules. These various rates are reflected in the asylum policies of Hungary, France, and Germany, respectively. The differences among the three categories should not be understated. Hungary hopes to keep out all Syrian asylum-seekers, France has committed to taking in 30,000, and Germany dropped Dublin II protocol in preparing to accept millions of refugees over the next couple years. The difference between unrestricted entry rules and unwanted entry rules with Hungary and Germany alone amounts to over 1.5 million refugees in 2015 alone.

Because the asylum policies of the case studies varies so greatly, there is no grand unifying theory that can explain every aspect of EU member states' asylum politics. This thesis has looked at numerous theories that exist in the literature to explain asylum policies in varying geographic or historical contexts. Broadly speaking, the majority of theories mentioned in the literature can be conceptualized as economic, foreign policy, or national politics theories, with the differing schools of thought applying to varying degrees to the three case studies. Among these three countries, the school of thought that can most broadly apply to all is that of national politics and culture.

The first relevant theory of national politics is interparty fighting. Previous scholars have found that right-wing parties' ideologies can penetrate mainstream politics to an extent beyond their hard political power. Right-wing parties can make a national, governmental discussion about an issue like asylum by "introducing the issue in parliamentary debates, election manifestos and party conferences" (Adams et. al. 386). By introducing issues even in intra-party

settings such as party conferences, these issues garner coverage and eventually percolate into national, mainstream politics. Countries with notable right-wing political presences will use whatever political capital they have to guide the discussion surrounding refugees in such a way that it leads to more restrictive asylum policies, even if the policies restrict entry for a minority population that is already in the country (Givens & Luedtke 2005). Therefore, a far-right party with the will and political power can have restrictive asylum policies enter mainstream politics.

Hungary, France, and Germany all had far-right, populist, xenophobic parties that can influence mainstream politics. This is especially true of Hungary's Jobbik party, one of whose main platform positions was being anti-refugee. Jobbik had enough political power to have their restrictive asylum policy ideologies enter mainstream politics, where the fundamental, anti-refugee ideology was eventually adopted by the ruling Fidesz party. The difference between Hungary on the one hand and France and Germany on the other is how powerful and ideologically extreme the right-wing parties were. Neither France's National Front (FN) nor the Alternative for Germany (AfD) had as much political say as Jobbik on the national or local level. For instance, Hungary had won 23/210 national seats, compared to 4/925 for France and zero for Germany. (For a full table comparison see Figure 4.3 in the previous chapter.) Moreover, AfD was not even espousing the harsh, xenophobic rhetoric that the other two parties were. While Jobbik advocated for a "zero tolerance" refugee policy, AfD had not even crystalized their official stance.

Furthermore, various scholars have discussed how conservative—not far-right—parties tighten refugee policies before an election. Thränhardt (1995) described this phenomenon as right and center-right parties using xenophobia as a "weapon of last resort" before contesting an election (337). This was found to be true with Margaret Thatcher's Conservative Party in 1978,

the CDU in 1979, and with the anti-Socialist right in France in the last 1970s (Ibid). Although the latter campaign did not result in a conservative French government, the first two did, and all three parties at least attempted to use anti-refugee sentiments to bolster their electoral chances.

Consistent with the literature, the ruling party in the country with the most conservative asylum policy (Hungary) was also the furthest right among ruling parties in the three case studies. Victor Orbán's Fidesz party is much more conservative than either the center-left Socialist Party (PS) in France or the moderate Christian Democratic Union (CDU) in Germany. Because of this, Fidesz embraced xenophobia as a means to shore up electoral support, both in rhetoric and in policy. Meanwhile, PS did not have an explicit position on asylum, having been both pro- and anti-refugee during the first half of 2015. Similarly, Merkel's CDU party did not adopt an open border policy, but also did not go so far as to promote deportations or completely closing the borders. Both PS and CDU were not nearly as conservative as Fidesz in the run-up to their elections. Embracing anti-asylum policies would therefore have been a radical shift inconsistent with their previous statements or even general political platform, potentially alienating voters. With Hungary, the interparty fighting between Fidesz and Jobbik pushed Fidesz's asylum politics from somewhat to highly unwelcoming, especially because Fidesz was trying to secure votes ahead of an election.

Public opinion is the other nationally oriented theory that can account (at least in part) for all three countries' asylum policies. The importance of public opinion has previously been chronicled in almost every public issue, including civil rights, defense spending, economic growth, EU politics, and welfare (see e.g. Anderson 1998; Bustein 1998; Cobb & Elder 1972). In the words of Adams et. al. (2006), "mainstream parties' policy shifts... correspond strongly to shifts in public opinion" (513). In fact, parties are more likely to change their political position

based on public opinion than on past electoral results (Adams et. al. 2004). Asylum policy has not been found in the past to be an exception to the influence of public opinion. For example, Steiner (2000) found that public opinion was one of the major drivers in Swiss, German, and British asylum policies in the 1970s, '80s, and '90s.

Just like Steiner's book, this thesis has found all three countries' asylum policies to have been responsive to and reflective of public opinion. Hungary's populace overwhelmingly wanted to keep out refugees, especially those from the Middle East: close to nine in ten Hungarians were against letting in any Syrian asylum-seeker. Germany, in contrast, saw a national movement, Refugees Welcome, spring up in the opposite direction of Hungary's public opinion. Refugees Welcome reflected the *Willkommenskultur* of Germany, ensuring that liberalizing the asylum policy was a high priority on the government's agenda. France is between the extremes of Hungary and Germany in terms of both public opinion and policy results; the majority of Frenchmen wanted a capped quota of refugees in between Hungary and Germany's acceptance rates.

The first primary influencer of public opinion is the cultural makeup of the country. Homogenous countries will be biased to accept refugees of their own ethnicity, race, religion, etc. This theory was most obviously confirmed in post-WWII Australia. There population, according to official government reports, was less than one percent non-white ("Year Book Australia, 1940"). Because the populace was overwhelmingly white, public opinion was similarly for taking in only whites.

This trend continues in Hungary, and in France and Germany it remains but to a diminished extent. Because Syrians are predominantly Muslim (some 90%), this analysis focused primarily on religion as the marker of cultural makeup. Hungary is just as mono-ethnic

as White Australia, if not more so. Less than one-tenth of one percent of Hungarians define themselves as Islamic, and almost 98% are either Christians or Jews. By contrast, France has a Muslim population of some 9%. It should come as no surprise, then, that France has the more liberal asylum policy. What is somewhat surprising is that Germany, despite accepting hundreds of thousands of refugees more than France, has a lower absolute number and proportion of Muslims in its country, with only 5% of German residents being Muslim. There is no one-to-one correlation between percentage of Muslims and number of Syrians admitted. However, having a diverse populace is a precondition for making asylum policy more liberal; states with totally monolithic populaces, like Hungary has and Australia had, will be too biased against other groups of people to grant them refugee status.

The second explanation for the public opinion present both in the literature and in the case studies was the media. How the news is presented, rather than what the news actually contains, can influence an audience's mindset immensely, and thereby affect public opinion. This is true of a number policy issues, including elections, the aftermath of natural disasters, court decisions, and immigration (Collins & Cooper 2012; de Vreese 2004; Givens & Luedtke 2005; Hayes 2008). With asylum, the portrayal of the refugees themselves has been the main aspect of media framing that can influence public opinion. In Britain, for instance, the high-selling tabloids said that refugees were "no-goods," "brothel-keepers," and "threats," among other slurs, leading to an anti-refugee backlash and a subsequent tightening of asylum policy in the 1950s (Greensdale 2005). In this way, press can reflect while simultaneously reinforcing or furthering popular sentiment.

All three countries had the media significantly affect their public opinion. Hungary was a situation similar to 1950s Britain. The Hungarian media is only partly free; the government can

influence how the media portrays matters important to the regime in power. Largely due to the media fears of heavy fines or even violence for criticizing the government, Hungarian media keeps its audience under- or misinformed about asylum policies. France and Germany, on the other hand, face no such government intervention, and are free to portray refugees as they wish. Because of the freedom this affords them, France and Germany have more balanced and moderate coverage of refugees, emphasizing the aid refugees' need over the dangers they present. Empirically, the evidence obtained using LexisNexis searches finds that positive portrayals of refugees are more likely to occur than negative ones in France and Germany, but the opposite is true in Hungary (see Figure 4.6 in the previous chapter for a summary of the data).

Lastly, history has proven to be a major influencer of public opinion. Scholars such as Downs (1972) have argued that the history of a country can recur at certain moments. In multiple policy fields, the collective sentiment of a populace can remain relatively unchanged from era to era, or a populace can rebel against a previous epoch. Scholars such as Burgess (2008), Caron (1993), Knight (2014), and others have shown how the asylum norms a country has had with refugees can persist across eras.

Across the three case studies, the history has had a noticeable affect on the minds of the current populace. With Hungary and France, they have followed in the steps of their forefathers, albeit in different ways. Hungarians have continued to be hostile towards refugees, especially non-Christian refugees, whether they are Jews during the early 1940s, Yugoslav in the 1990s, or Syrians in the 2010s. France has continued to think of asylum in the same way they did during the Revolution. The French have believed since the late 18th century that their country should take in refugees, but the refugees should ideally be political rather than war refugees, as the

Syrians are. Because of the tension between these two ideas, and the view from the French that Syrians are not political refugees, the French want a cap on the number of refugees who can enter their country. Germans, on the other hand, have their history to thank for a welcoming asylum policy: the *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* movement of the 1990s has engendered a culture more receptive towards helping refugees.

The last major theory that belongs in the national politics and culture section is that of focusing events. This theory claims that a sudden, uncommon, harmful event can lead to policy change, as such an event will “focus” the public and government’s attention on failure in current policy (Birkland 1997, 1998). This theory has been espoused in a wide variety of policies, from environmental regulations to defense structure (Downs 1972; Scavo et. al. 2008). For instance, after 9/11, President George W. Bush was able to virtually single-handedly add a new department to the US Cabinet, creating the Department of Homeland Security as a way to incorporate 22 different government agencies (Scavo et. al. 2008).

This theory was applicable to France, but not to Hungary or Germany. In the latter two countries, there was not a specific event that immediately preceded the change or implementation of asylum policy. Hungary and Germany were both responding more to the general influx of refugees rather than to any specific event involving refugees. The continuing arrival of the refugees may have pushed these two countries to address their asylum policy, but a long-term event such as this cannot by definition be a focusing event. France, unlike Hungary or Germany, did respond to a focusing event: the November 2015 Paris shootings. This event, even though it did not involve Syrian refugees, sparked a major French and international debate over the refugee situation. The state of crisis afterwards allowed President François Hollande to seize power in a manner similar to President Bush post-9/11, where he slightly liberalized France’s

quotas from 24,000 to 30,000, possibly in an attempt to win voters over ahead of the 2017 French elections and ideologically refute the assertions of ISIS that France is a hostile country.

In contrast to nationally based theories, the economic findings of this thesis do not always line up with or even refute the literature. This can be seen with the absorption capacity theory, which cannot single-handedly account for variations in current European refugee policies. This is a contrast to previous works by Bolderson (2011) and Da Lomba (2010), which argued that a country's ability to take in refugees is the main cause of asylum policy. Absorption capacity is measured twofold, in land availability and economic resources. All three of this work's case studies have enough land to take in refugees, as is to be expected with Western nations. Having a high amount of available land, though, does not guarantee that a country will have a welcoming asylum policy. Hungary actually has the most arable land of the three countries, and 2.5 times more than Germany. The positions should actually be swapped if land availability were the prime mover of asylum policies. It is a necessary condition that a country has land for housing and feeding refugees, but insufficient to fully explain asylum policy.

A thriving economy will also not always lead to accepting more refugees, although it can explain some of a country's policy. Germany is the best example of this. Their economy is, by far, the best in the EU, with an unemployment rate of under five percent. Germany's booming economy and need for workers to maintain it is therefore a contributing factor for its liberal asylum policies. Hungary's asylum policy, on the other hand, is largely unaffected by their economy. Its unemployment fell throughout 2015, eventually reaching 6.1%, and its asylum policy remained consistently unwelcoming. Just because a country is gaining economic resources does not necessarily mean it will use those resources to welcome refugees. France, meanwhile, had double-digit unemployment and welcomed some 30,000 more refugees than Hungary. There

is no direct correlation between unemployment and refugee acceptance rate. This theory is therefore insufficient to explain the contrasting acceptance rates among the three countries, although it is a part of the answer in Germany: because Germany's economy was so strong, it was able to make up for a relative lack of arable land.

Similarly, the ageing of Europe cannot be perfectly applied to all three case studies. This theory is rooted in the idea that countries with faltering demographics will bring in refugees to bolster certain labor sections. Post-World War II Britain illustrates this theory especially well: because of the casualties of war, they essentially "imported" refugees so they would have enough factory workers (Kay & Miles 1992). Theoretically, it would seem as though this model should apply perfectly to Europe, as most European countries—including Hungary, France, and Germany—have been experiencing since the turn of the millennium the so-called "greying of Europe," in which pensioners will outweigh laborers in the near future if current demographic trends continue.

Empirically, though, there is only some correlation between how old a country is and how liberal their asylum policy is: Germany's old-age dependency ratio of 31.5 outstrips France's (28.4), which is itself greater than Hungary's (25.8). (A full comparison of the three countries' economic situations is provided in Figure 5.1.) The difference among the three countries, though, is not nearly stark enough to account for the wide range of policies they have. All three countries' old-age dependency ratios are within one standard deviation of the EU average (28.1), and just 1.5 standard deviations separate Hungary from Germany. Having an elderly populace can explain some of why Germany took in so many refugees, as they do need to revitalize their labor force. However, it fails to explain why Hungary or France accepts so many fewer than Germany. This does not mean that economic theories should be dismissed as

outdated. As the absorption capacity theory showed, economic theories still serve as valuable tools in analyzing asylum policy, especially considering that many economic conditions are necessary conditions for accepting refugees.

Metric	Hungary		France		Germany	
	Number	EU Rank	Number	EU Rank	Number	EU Rank
Population Density	109	13	121	11	232	5
Arable Land	0.45	5	0.28	11	0.17	18
Unemployment Rate	6.1%	13	10.5	20	4.6	1
Old-age Dependency Ratio	25.8	21	18.4	9	31.5	3

Figure 5.1: Economic findings in Hungary, France, and Germany

Foreign relations have been shown in the literature to be a key driver of some countries' asylum policies, but it is only selectively useful in these case studies. Bilaterally, antagonistic relations, such as between the US and Cuba or the US and Vietnam, can be an incentive for a country to accept refugees from one of its enemies. The US taking in Cubans and Vietnamese served as a further denunciation of the communist countries' regimes for being so oppressive that the US had to take in significant number of refugees (Scanlan & Loescher 1983; Suhrke 1983). On the other end of the spectrum, allies may be reluctant to take in refugees from each other, as this could send the message that the country of origin is mistreating its citizens. This is one major reason why the Reagan administration initially erected barriers to keep out Haitian refugees (Zucker 1983).

Unlike these countries' asylum policies, Hungary, France, and Germany's are largely not driven by antagonism or friendship with Syria. If these three countries operated in the same way that, for example the US did in the 1980s, one would expect that the most hostile country towards Syria would take in the highest number of refugees, and the friendliest would take in the fewest. However, the opposite is true. Hungary and France are much more antagonistic towards Syria than Germany. Hungary closed its embassy in Syria in 2012, and its support of the anti-

Assad coalition group indicates that it would not be supportive of a post-war Syria with the former leaders at the helm. Similarly, Franco-Hungarian relations have been deteriorating since 2003, and France has been possibly the most vocal western nation in calling for the resignation of Assad. This is largely because France feels especially betrayed by a nation and leadership group that they once touted as a symbol of modernization in the Middle East. Germany, meanwhile, does not feel as strongly anti-Assad, even going so far as to cooperate with his government's intelligence agency. The trend with these three case studies is generally the reverse of what theory predicts, indicating that the relationship with the refugee-giving country does not apply to this thesis.

Relations with an entity other than the refugee-giving country can be enlightening when the previous theory does not succeed, in the literature as well as in the three case studies. Historically, one of the best examples is Australia and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Australia did not want to risk the Preferential Trade Agreements with countries such as Indonesia and Malaysia, who were trying to accommodate and integrate a large number of Vietnamese refugees. Australia took in refugees to take pressure off ASEAN countries, preserving the important plurilateral economic agreements.

The most logical third party that would dictate the asylum policies of any of the case studies would be the European Union, as it ostensibly controls the flow of refugees to its member nations. This relationship is most present with Hungary, although in the opposite manner as with Australia and ASEAN. Hungary, a country with a history of strong Euroscepticism, has undertaken many recent political actions with the goal of undermining the European Union, rather than strengthening ties. Hungary has openly flouted certain EU policies, including giving Russia a controversial nuclear contract that violated EU procurement procedure.

Similarly, Hungary has eschewed the quotas set by the EU, opting instead to build an intra-Schengen fence on its border with Croatia. This attempt to stop migration within the EU is a major violation of the free movement of peoples, a central tenet during the EU's founding, and a transparent attempt to undermine the ability of the EU to govern its member nations.

Comparatively, France and Germany have been relatively unaffected by their relations with the EU among a variety of policies. Both countries are two of the most powerful voices in the EU, and as such have a strong incentive to keep the status quo intact. If every country followed EU policy to the letter, France and Germany would have the strongest say in any European matter. Instead, France and Germany have both disregarded the EU-assigned quotas. France originally followed the prescribed number of 24,000, but later increased it by 25% to 30,000. Germany neglected the EU quota to an even greater extent, having opened their borders to any and all Syrian refugees. Both policy moves send the message that EU member nations can disregard official regulations almost whenever they wish, a signal that hurts the political influence that France and Germany will have in the future.

Many theories that were true in other contexts are not applicable to this work's case studies. For instance, Germany and Syria's relationship exists somewhere in the murky territory between allies and adversaries, making their bilateral relations a less-than-perfect case study. The same can be said for Hungary. Even with a relationship that does hew to a traditionally adversarial relationship, as is the case with France and Syria, the situation does not match the model. Some of this may be due to the many variations associated different with international relations, and the difficulty of comparing relationships between countries across time and space. No two countries' relations are exactly the same, meaning that France and Syria's hostility could be of a different enough nature when compared to the US and Cuba's (for example) to negate the

applicability of this theory in this scenario (see Scanlan & Loescher 1983 for information on the latter's refugee relations). The general theory, therefore, most likely holds true in some situations, even if this thesis' case studies are not exemplary.

After examining the schools of thought in these countries, one can see that how each tier of welcoming is influenced by different factors, with national politics and culture remaining the school of thought that most applies to all three levels. The most unwelcoming countries, as evidenced by Hungary, have the most conservative national politics and the most hostile foreign relations. Not only does Hungary have a right-wing party, they have one of the most powerful ones in all of Europe. They are also unique among the case studies as having both a prominent far-right party and a firmly conservative ruling party. Similarly, it is not just that most Hungarians are against refugees, but that almost all of its citizenry is. This arises from a homogenous ethnic landscape, a conservative media that portrays refugees negatively, and a history of turning away asylum-seekers. Lastly, Hungary does not merely dislike the EU, they want to see it weakened to the point of near powerlessness. All these factors combine to make Hungary one of the most restrictive asylum regimes in all of Europe.

Countries like Germany with unrestricted entry rules have more liberal national politics and culture, a stark contrast to nations with unwanted entry rules. Germany had one of the weakest right-wing parties across the continent: AfD won fewer than 5% of the national vote in 2013, and therefore failed to garner even a single seat of the 598 in the German parliament. Moreover, AfD did not even become a strongly xenophobic until well after Germany opened its borders to refugees. The national mood was likewise firmly pro-refugee, with the Refugees Welcome movement springing up in cities around the country. The sentiment behind Refugees Welcome was engendered by a liberal media that offered a balanced portrayal of refugees, as

well as a significant number of Muslims already in Germany. The Refugees Welcome was also an indirect result of the previous century's National Socialism, as coming to terms with this past created a new, more welcoming culture. Obviously, not every country with unrestricted entry rules requires Adolph Hitler to be a past leader. However, every country with such openness should have some extreme factor influencing its national mood, whether that is its history, media, or cultural makeup.

A country with unrestricted entry rules needs not just extremely liberal national politics, but also certain economic markers. Absorption capacity is a necessary condition: a country needs both the land and economic resources in order to take in refugees. This is measured by land availability and unemployment rate, the latter of which for Germany is the lowest in the entire EU and can compensate for Germany's relatively low amount of arable land and high population density. The workforce demographics of Germany (i.e. the ageing workforce), while not necessary for a country to have unrestricted entry rules, do play a role in Germany's decision to open its borders. A country with a liberal national culture and politics will have even more incentive to liberalize its asylum policies if it has an economic situation like Germany that requires an influx of a younger generation in the immediate future.

Selective entry rules come about from more moderate positions than unwelcoming nations like Hungary or open nations like Germany. This is especially true of national culture and politics, in which France was neither as xenophobic as Hungary nor as pro-refugee as Germany. France's politics featured a party that is not as politically powerful as Hungary's but it is not as impotent as Germany's. Similarly, France's populace has been in between the ardently anti-refugee sentiment in Hungary and the pro-refugee movement in Germany. This is because France's media and history have been in between the extremes of the other two countries. France

has a highly liberal press in comparison to Hungary, but a more conservative one than Germany's. In contrast to Hungary, France does not have a history of deporting refugees, but France also does not have a major national trauma that it needs to come to terms with through its asylum policy. These factors mean that even though France is Germany's equal or superior in certain markers, such as cultural diversity or land availability, it will not take in as many refugees. Countries with moderate national politics and culture tend to have moderate asylum policies i.e. selective entry rules.

National politics is the common strand among all three countries for a few reasons. The first is that the economic situation of these three countries is not dire enough to dictate asylum policy. The contemporary European situation is a contrast to previous historical moments, such as in post-WWII Britain. The key difference between these two time periods is the extremity of the demographic situation. Britain after World War II was one of the most brutal wars in British history, with nearly half a million identified deaths in addition to over 300,000 injured (Axelrod 2007; CWGC 2014). Additionally, the UK was trying to reconstruct its post-war economy through programs like the Marshall Plan, which injected money into the UK while forcing modernization, meaning they needed even more workers than typical (Hogan 1989). These two events combined to engender an economic landscape in which Great Britain desperately needed workers, and was willing to relax its asylum laws to obtain them. The current ageing of Europe, while still a potential crisis, does not contain the same confluence of near-unique events that post-WWII Great Britain—and postwar Europe in general—had.

Similarly, the foreign policies of these three countries—especially the bilateral relationships with Syria—are not hostile enough where Hungary, France, or Germany shape their entire asylum agenda around their attitude to the Middle Eastern country. Judging from the

previous scholarly results as well as this thesis, it appears as though the most general statement that can be made about this school of thought is that the intensity of a country's hostility towards either the refugee-giving country or a third party determines whether or not this school of thought will apply in a given situation. The US was willing to modify its asylum policies towards communist countries because it was locked in an ideological battle with the USSR that was viewed by Americans as an existential threat. None of these three countries—especially Germany—feel that strongly towards Syria, largely because Syria in 2015 was in such a state of flux. It was—and as of writing, still is—unclear which faction in the Syrian Civil War will win out. This means that even a country like France, which is the most hostile towards Assad's regime, will not let this antagonism dictate their policy, because Assad might not even be in power in a year. This is a contrast to, say, Cuba, where Fidel Castro since the 1960s was an entrenched leader when the US took in refugees from his administration.

If one of the Syrian factions starts gaining a significant amount of power, one might see an uptick in refugee acceptance among EU countries. This is especially true of France. France has been very public in its denunciations of ISIS, especially after the November terrorist attacks. One observer said that “pulling out all the stops as François Hollande scrambles to fulfil [*sic*] his ambitious pledge to build a global military coalition to defeat [the] Islamic State” (Tisdall 2015, November 23). If it appears as though ISIS is going to become a serious state actor, one of the “stops” France could “pull out” is expanding its asylum policy to be more welcoming, a theory that was hypothesized as one of the reasons why Hollande increased the acceptance rate from 24,000 to 30,000 Syrians. Increasing not just the number but the category (i.e. going from selective to unrestricted entry rules) could serve the symbolic purpose of showing ISIS that their ideological war is not impinging on French values.

Relations to a third party, i.e. the EU, also does not play a major role in refugee acceptance rates. The major reason why is because the EU has little power to enforce its policies. One scholar described the EU as more a “gatekeeper” than “an agent pursuing a set of policy objectives” (Bechev 2011: 414). The EU (like the UN) has little power to enforce its policies. One can see this with the issue of asylum clearly: even though none of the three case studies followed EU regulations, none were punished. Essentially, each member can do as it wishes without major repercussions, meaning that by and large countries do not worry about the EU when determining refugee acceptance rates. The one exception to foreign policy not playing a major role in asylum policy is Hungary and the EU. This is because Hungary wants to weaken the EU, giving Hungary itself more autonomy while still having infrastructure in case of a crisis (like the 2008 financial collapse).

II. Further Research

Further research should be conducted into these three countries as the political and economic climates change. A primary example of this is German national politics. If the far-right party gains enough power, they could overturn Germany’s liberal asylum policy. Although the far-right AfD did not have much power before Germany announced unrestricted entry rules, the populist party gained many state seats in the March 2016 elections, including nearly a quarter of the vote in Saxony-Anhalt (Chambers & Bellon 2016, March 13). In fact, AfD ideas appear to be entering the mainstream. More and more politicians have been espousing, or at least considering, the highly restrictive tone of AfD’s policies. In particular, there are many center-right politicians who are amenable to strict asylum policies like Hungary’s. Interior Minister Thomas de Maizière, for instance, said, “If countries observed existing rules, perhaps Hungary would not need to build” a fence (qtd. in Smale 2015, August 24). Going one step further, the head of CSU

(Merkel's sister party) held a joint press conference with Hungarian PM Viktor Orbán, saying "We need Hungary to secure the outer borders of the EU.... [Orbán] deserves support, not criticism" (qtd. in Delcker 2015, September 23).

Hungary's policy could similarly become less extreme if certain aspects of its country were to become different. Unlike Germany, whose political landscape could change radically in just over a year, there is no obvious part of its national culture that is liable to change dramatically for the next couple of years. The conservatism of Fidesz and Jobbik appear to be relatively well entrenched. The next national election will only take place in 2018, and even then there is reason to believe Fidesz and Jobbik will remain powerful. Recent polls still give Fidesz a double-digit lead in the polls, with Jobbik within a few points (depending on the source) of the socialist MSZP for second (Publicus 2015, March 25; Századvég February 25).

The one piece of Hungary's national culture that could cause a significant shift in asylum policy is public opinion. Hungary's public opinion was primarily mediated through three factors: its media, cultural makeup, and history. If the media were allowed more freedom to public what it wishes, one might see a slightly more balanced coverage of refugees, leading to a situation in which Hungary faces public pressure to admit more refugees. There is no guarantee that a freer media would portray refugees more favorably, especially considering the anti-refugee national mood. Still, the media can play a major role in shaping public opinion, so a less controlled media could have far-reaching ramifications.

The other influencer of Hungary's public opinion that could change is its cultural makeup. Currently, Hungary's citizenry is a near monolith of white Christians. However, the cultural makeup in Hungary could be different in the future. Germany's decision to accept refugees could play a part in this. As refugees in Germany learn workplace skills, saturate the job

market, and are forced to look for work in countries, they could turn to Hungary. Unless Hungary completely isolates itself from the rest of the EU, there may be no way for the government to stop business owners from employing these refugees. This scenario is obviously speculative, but still warrants monitoring over the next few years.

Hungary's relationship with the European Union could radically change in the future. If the UK on June 23—or, further down the road, another country—decides to leave the EU, it could lead to the dissolution of the Union: A Brexit (British exit) “could trigger chain reactions [and] encourage national exit movements elsewhere” (Buitter et. al. 2016, March 2; Wheeler & Hunt 2016, April 13). In this scenario Hungary would have contributed to the collapse of the Union. Hungary's continual flaunting of the rules has severely compromised the legitimacy of the EU as an entity capable of enforcing its rules and regulations. Exacerbating the EU's relative powerlessness is the fact that Germany's ability to keep the EU together has been undermined, as their decision to welcome millions of refugees has had little impact on their fellow EU members. Although Hungary wanted the best of both worlds—that is, both the infrastructure to be bailed out and the autonomy to enact whatever policy they wish—they may be overextending themselves, and eventually contribute to the fall of the EU. This may lead to a situation in which their harsh asylum policy becomes a little more moderate, as they will no longer have the extra, EU-inspired incentive to reject Syrians.

Outside the realm of these three countries, countries with vastly differing economic situations or systems should be studied. Among Hungary, France, and Germany, economic factors played only a slight role in their asylum policies. For example, an ageing workforce was part of the larger explanation in Germany, but was virtually unimportant in France and Germany. This might not be true of countries in an even direr situation. A country even more desperately in

need of young workers than Germany may ignore all other factors—including public opinion—in accepting refugees to bolster its workforce. This hypothetical could become a reality for certain European countries as their workforce continues to age without replenishment. Countries that fall under this category are countries that currently have old-age dependency ratios above 30, including Finland (30.2), Greece (31.6), Italy (33.1), Portugal (30.3), and Sweden (30.2). Unless these countries act soon to replenish their youth, they will need to dramatically alter their population demographics. This would make these countries more like post-WWII Great Britain, in which they must import workers in order to save their economies. This situation is worth following to confirm or deny the findings of this paper.

Further research could also be done into the exact quantitative turning points at which a necessary condition has been met. This paper has tended to examine specific metrics by placing them within a group. For example, when analyzing cultural makeup as an influencer of public opinion, this paper has tended to simply present the percentage of Muslims in a country and state whether this is a high or low percentage. There is nothing inherently incorrect with this method of analysis, as there are objective ways to determine whether a country has a high or low percentage of Muslims. It is apparent that Hungary's Muslim population of 0.077% is negligible. It is also obvious that France has a large ratio of Muslims when one hears that France has the highest proportion of Muslims of any EU country that has over a million total Muslims. What is not easily ascertained is the point at which a country has a necessary amount of Muslims in order not to reject Islamic refugees. Would Hungary be more amenable to taking in refugees if its populace was 3% Muslim? What about 1.5%?

This quandary exists not only for cultural makeup, but also for absorption capacity (as measured by population density and arable land), the state of the economy (unemployment rate),

workforce demographics (old-age dependency ratio), strength of a far-right party (number of parliamentary, local, and/or transnational seats), and public opinion (opinion polls). To some extent this problem can be mitigated through qualitative analysis; for example, public opinion can be verified through research into primary sources such as opinion pieces. However, determining the exact line between good and bad, high and low, powerful and weak—or if such a line even exists—is beyond the scope of this project, which focuses on three countries. A more comprehensive survey would need to statistically analyze dozens of countries, if not more. Such an analysis would further the research done in this thesis, and contribute immensely to the overall literature on asylum policy.

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