

Behind Germany's *Willkommenskultur* and Hungary's Xenophobic Sentiments:  
Responses to the Syrian Refugee Crisis within the European Union

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A senior thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of  
Arts in International Political Economy  
University of Puget Sound  
December 13, 2016

## Abstract

The movement of over 4.5 million Syrian refugees and other migrants fleeing the Syrian civil war has put significant strain on the European Union's (EU) member states both politically, socially, and economically. This tests a state's ability and willingness to continue to accept refugees. This paper aims to answer the question of what determines the willingness and the ability of certain EU member states, specifically Germany and Hungary, to accept refugees. While there are many factors that vary from state to state, there are factors that dominate and heavily influence a state's willingness and ability to accept refugees. Germany's historical presence and moral obligation towards immigrants, strong economy, and actions of Chancellor Angela Merkel have led to its welcoming sentiments towards the Syrian refugees. Hungary's conservative Fidesz government, homogenous state, weaker economy, and actions of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán have led to its restrictive attitude towards the refugees. Analyzing a state's response to the Syrian refugee crisis through its political, economic, and societal influences allows for a better understanding of how the EU can assist each state during this crisis.

## **Introduction**

The 2011 civil war in Syria has created the largest movement of refugees since World War II and has impacted not only Syria's neighboring regions but also Europe, the United States, and Canada (Popescu 2016). The civil war in Syria has been an ongoing conflict with many consequences such as an unstable government, chaos, rise in terrorism and the Islamic State (ISIS), and millions of refugees searching for a safe place to reside. The mass movement of over a million refugees crossing European Union (EU) borders since 2015 has caused tension in the EU over burden-sharing mechanisms and tests the willingness and ability of EU member states to handle this mass influx of refugees fleeing Syria (Popescu 2016). For many reasons, Syrian refugees have come to Europe as a safe-haven, and some even have preferred destinations within the EU such as Germany and Sweden (Ostrand 2015). Many of the reasons why refugees are pulled towards certain states also reflects the factors that determine a state's willingness and ability to accept refugees. Germany, with the highest number of asylum applicants in 2015, has taken in 35.2% and Hungary, with the highest number of applicants in proportion to its population, has taken in 13.9% of the refugees (Altemeyer et. al 2016, 221; BBC News 2016). These two EU member states have received international attention because of their contrasting responses to the refugee crisis. Their responses to the crisis are largely impacted by their different historical backgrounds, social compositions, and economic and political systems.

The ability and willingness of a state to accept refugees are two separate actions but they can influence one another. The factors that will be discussed are the most influential and prominent in Germany and Hungary but determinants are not limited to those discussed. The ability of a state to respond to the refugee crisis can be defined as how much a state can provide the necessary resources and supplies given to refugees from their first entrance to the duration of

their stay, GDP per capita, size and availability of land, stability of labor market, and the overall health of the economy. The willingness of a state depends largely on the public sentiments as well as the political leadership. Willingness encompasses historical experience, ethnic composition, and presence of immigrant communities within a country, political discourse, and leadership within political parties. Willingness can also be influenced by the ability of a state. A state may have the economic ability to take in refugees but be unwilling to accept them for political or social reasons. Hungary for example, is able to take in refugees as they would benefit their aging population but their anti-refugee and nationalist sentiments are stronger which makes them more unwilling (Nixon 2015). The Syrian refugee crisis is a major international issue that involves states around the world—whether it is physically housing refugees, sending money to international organizations, or helping a refugee during their transit—the ability and willingness of all EU member states will be tested.

This paper focuses on the current refugees fleeing the Middle East, and specifically Syria, but this paper will mention other individuals, such as immigrants and asylum-seekers in Germany and Hungary, to explain a state's attitude towards refugees. Defining these types of migrants is crucial as discourse about who these individuals are can affect a member state's willingness or ability. A migrant is one who has moved to a new state for over a year, whether for involuntary or voluntary reasons (Popescu 2016). A refugee is an "individual who owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of 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, is unwilling to avail himself of protection of that country" (Popescu 2016, 109). An asylum-seeker is an individual who flees their origin state out of fear and applies for refugee status in a new state (Popescu 2016). Defining the movement of Syrians into the EU as a

refugee crisis versus a migrant crisis can cause citizens to be more unwilling as refugees are often portrayed in a negative manner. However, this may also have the opposite effect and make citizens more willing as they view Syrian refugees as more deserving of asylum due to the fact that they are fleeing an inevitable crisis (Holmes and Castaneda 2016). While many of the factors that determine a state's willingness and ability are not completely directed towards refugees, any experience with foreigners will provide sufficient insight.

Germany and Hungary were chosen in this analysis of EU member state reactions to the Syrian refugee crisis because of their contrasting responses and roles in the EU. Germany is a much more dominant state and well-known state for its welcoming attitude towards refugees while Hungary is not as prominent in the EU and its outward unwillingness towards the Syrian refugees make these two states an interesting comparison. In this paper, I argue that the most notable factors that influence Germany's willingness and ability towards the Syrian refugees is its duty to fulfill moral obligation, its transition to liberalized immigration policies and liberal values, its strong economy and leadership in the EU, and actions taken by Angela Merkel. The most notable factors that influence Hungary's unwillingness and limited ability are its dominantly homogenous population, Viktor Orbán's nationalist rhetoric, later accession into the EU, its economy transitions and lack of resources. Analyzing the political structure, economic health, public opinion and population provides an understanding of the ability and willingness of Germany and Hungary and their responses to the current Syrian refugee crisis.

### **Burden-Sharing and Harmonization: EU Asylum Policy**

Germany and Hungary are two very different member states within the EU with different roles and attitudes towards the EU, which is significant in whether or not they are more willing and able to take in Syrian refugees. The relationship between these member states and the EU

also influences their responses to immigration and refugee crises. The EU has a significant amount of immigration, asylum, and burden-sharing or harmonization policies that each member state must follow yet policies are also implemented to take the burden off of member states individually. The EU tries to harmonize the asylum policies and ensure that member states work together as an entity.

Beyond policies, the EU is also influential in spreading European norms and values throughout each member state. One explanation for this is the logic of appropriateness, which is based on a norm-based rational theory. This focuses on how actions taken by states are heavily influenced by the institutional norms and identity and actions are taken based on what is appropriate for the circumstance (Thielemann 2003). These values and ideas were especially pertinent during each member state's accession to the EU; being a part of the EU and being accustomed to the systems of the EU have created this European identity and response to refugees. There is trend among old EU member states to be more open towards refugees while the newer EU member states, old former Communist states, are less open (Havlova 2016). Accession and involvement with the EU will influence a state's values and make a state more likely and able to accept refugees.

Another example of burden-sharing of refugees among EU member states is enforcing external borders. This harmonization is just as necessary to the EU; if the EU has strong borders and border regulations then the inflow of refugees is more controlled along the border states. This can ease the burden on member states and not diminish their ability or willingness to continuously help with the refugees. One example of EU border control is the European Agency for the Management of Operation Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union (FRONTEX). This organization provides support to the member states with

controlling their borders (Fernandez-Huertas and Rapoport 2015). A problem with border controls is that it is a public good and no member state can be forced to contribute to it (Russo 2013). This is an especially relevant conflict among member states during the refugee crisis as Germany is opening up its borders, while Hungary wants to physically close its external borders. These two actions will lead to a lack of consensus within the EU and therefore make states less able and willing to handle the refugees.

Although it does not directly involve Germany or Hungary, the Mediterranean routes and states greatly affect the EU and are a big factor in the EU pursuing stronger external forces. Over 670,000 people will have crossed through the Mediterranean into Europe as of October 2015 (Miltner 2015, 213). Because of the mass flow of refugees, the EU created Operation Triton that focuses on border control and surveillance. As there is controversy on the success and effectiveness of the EU's burden-sharing mechanisms and response to the Syrian refugee crisis, the EU must offer protective mechanisms to both refugees and states which may make member states more willing or able to take in fewer refugees (Biondi 2015).

When the EU assists states individually, member states may be more willing to open up their borders and take on some responsibility. Some of the most important EU and international asylum policies include the Geneva Convention, the Dublin Regulation, and the quota system. These laws and standards attempt to assist member states with their abilities in taking in refugees into their sovereign borders. The 1951 Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees was a post World War II reaction on how to deal with the mass influx of refugees and attempted to create a system of burden-sharing among recipient states, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and other international organizations. As mentioned earlier, the Geneva Convention also defines the different types of migrants (Uçarer 2006). The

1990 Dublin Regulation requires refugees to seek asylum in the first state that they enter. The controversy with this is that it can cause inequalities. Small, less able states have to take in the most refugees not because they want to but because of their geographical proximity while the wealthier, dominant member states who are centrally located in the EU will receive the fewest refugees (Thielemann 2012). The Dublin Regulation put a lot of strain on EU border states like Italy, Greece, and Bulgaria because they are the first states that the Syrian refugees enter. This burden can influence states to be unwilling to accept refugees or affect their ability to continuously provide for the inflow of asylum applicants (Havlova 2016).

Currently, the European Commission has different mechanisms to assist the refugees and crises countries; specifically through the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Department (ECHO), this helps transit countries, material support, and humanitarian aid. The European Commission's ability to assist and provide for the member states will allow member states to better respond to the refugee crisis without having to exhaust all of their resources (Popescu 2016). While this is a more long-term program, the EU-funded Regional Protection Program deals with the relocation of refugees within the EU. It even states that for every resettled refugee, member states will receive financial support from the European Refugee Fund (Garnier 2014). This is an incentive for member states to engage in this program because it can ease off burden on individual states and create more cooperation in the EU. While the EU has attempted to have harmonization policies, there is disagreement on how to properly share the burden, what mechanisms will be successful and there is also hesitation about the long term plans from the EU; this limits any progress being made because member states are not willing to contribute. They believe there are high costs and low support (Suhrke 1998). It is now important

to analyze Germany and Hungary's relationships with the EU and understand why this relationship affects their actions towards refugees.

Germany became a member of the EU in 1958 and has played an integral role in the success of the EU (European Commission 2016). Because Germany has been with the EU from the beginning it has been able to adjust to the EU's asylum policies and European liberal ideals and values whereas states that have more recently joined the EU have not had the time. Germany's leadership in the EU has also been a key factor its ability and willingness to take in refugees. The EU puts pressure on the powerful states like Germany, France, and the UK so these states are expected to take in refugees (Schuster 2000). Germany has reacted to the refugee crisis by taking charge of burden-sharing techniques and even disregarding certain EU policies. Germany disregarded the Dublin Regulation in August 2015 and let Syrian refugees apply for asylum in Germany rather than the first state they entered (Holmes and Castaneda 2016; Popescu 2016). While Germany has leadership in the EU, its request for quota systems signifies a decrease in its ability. This push from Germany to have a quota system and asking for more burden-sharing among the EU represents how Germany needs assistance from other states and the EU and its ability to take in all the refugees is decreasing (Heisbourg 2015). Quota systems are important to the EU as it would create a more equal distribution of refugees among EU member states but are an divided issue within the EU.

Hungary's accession to the EU has played an influential role in how willing they are to accept refugees. Because the Central-Eastern European States (CEES) were delayed in their accession to the EU they were not able to implement all the migration policies and were not as prepared as the other EU member states in dealing with in flow of refugees and migrants (Toth 2001). This later accession plays a role in the ability and willingness of Hungary to accept Syrian

refugees as they do not have as much experience with the EU's values and have not been economically stable enough for a sufficient amount of time. The CEES were initially excluded from the EU based on the EU's comprehensive immigration policy and for this reason the CEES also implemented similar policies and restrictions to foreigners coming into the CEES (Toth 2001).

While later accession to the EU hindered Hungary in many ways, there were attempts at making it follow EU values and standards. Because Hungary became a member of the EU more recently, it had to complete a variety of conditions related to minority rights before its accession. This influenced its willingness and policies towards migrants. Hungary went through a process of asylum policies in order to be considered for accession into the EU. The Phare Horizontal Asylum was a two-year asylum system that aimed to incorporate EU asylum policies into CEES (Anagnost 2000). There were also Round Table Processes that were used to evaluate the capacity needs and create an asylum system for each state (Anagnost 2000). Throughout this process it became apparent that there needed to be discussion about the role of the EU in the CEES and that the CEES were not capable of paying the costs for all the asylum necessities such as border controls and centers (Anagnost 2000). All of these conditions and integration into the EU and Western markets were supposed to benefit Hungary but instead caused consequences for its economy and its political stability; this will be discussed later. For this reason, there are now more nationalist ideals and anti-globalist and anti-EU sentiments (Johnson and Barnes 2015). Since the majority of Hungary is unwilling to associate with the EU, as seen through their rejections of EU policies and ideals they are unlikely to be willing to participate in EU efforts in accepting refugees and the quota distribution systems as those with anti-EU sentiments usually have anti-immigrant sentiments (Johnson and Barnes 2015; Kessler and Freeman 2005).

## **The Impact of Historical Experience in Shaping Moral Obligation**

Previous experience with immigration flows and refugee crises will influence a state's actions during a current refugee crisis because states can be comfortable with this inflow and accept refugees without hesitations or it also make a state more restrictive and closed off in regards to migrant inflows. If a state has dealt with refugee crises in its past, this does not always mean that a state is willing to take in more refugees nor does it mean that the particular state has the same resources to deal with the current inflow. A state can be more open and liberalize their immigration policies as in the case of Germany or create restrictive and more nationalistic immigration policies as Hungary did.

Germany's previous experience with a variety of immigrants entering their borders has gradually liberalized to accommodate for further influxes of immigrants. There are two significant periods that shaped Germany's current responses to the Syrian refugee crisis. The first one was post WWII when about 12 million refugees from post German territories returned back to Germany (Green 2013). While this was an example of ethnic Germans moving back to Germany, this still tested Germany's ability and willingness to handle a massive inflow of people. The second period was from 1955 until the 1970s when many young men from Italy, Greece, and especially Turkey, came to Germany looking for jobs as guest workers, *Gastarbeiters* (Green 2013, 333). The large labor shortage after the war required Germany to utilize guest workers in order to boost their economy (Triadafilopoulos and Schönwälder 2006). While there was resistance and restrictions put on guest workers in the 1970s, their presence as well as reunification with their families in Germany led to the start of liberalization of immigration policies in Germany during this time period (Khan 2001). Not only has Germany experienced significant periods of massive inflows of foreigners, but it also has consistently been

one of the top destination countries for immigrants. Since 2010 it has been one of the top three destination countries and in mid 2010 it was the top destination in the world (Craze 2016, 345). There is an expectation for the state to assist with the Syrian refugees because Germany has dealt with immigrants in the past (Heisbourg 2015). This expectation of Germany to take in refugees as it had done in the past is related to both its willingness and its ability. Germany's experience with immigrants and refugees has liberalized its migration policies and has progressively made Germany more tolerant (Havlova 2016). While previous experiences in Germany has influenced the state to be more welcoming and opening to the Syrian refugees, previous experience has also created anti-immigrant and anti-refugee sentiments as some natives were not in favor of foreigners and wanted to protect Germany's borders.

Historical background with immigrants and refugees did not liberalize immigration policies in Hungary as it did in Germany. Hungary and other CEES started experiencing immigration flows during the 1990s, similar to Germany, where ethnic Hungarians in former territories returned back to Hungary. This movement and redrawing of borders influenced Hungary to be more protective about immigration. Similar to Germany, Hungary has also dealt with two waves of refugees; the first wave came from Romania and the second wave from Yugoslavia and Romania. There were a variety of factors that influenced Hungary's reactions with duration of refugees stay in Hungary as the most influential in Hungary's attitude (Nagy 1992). During these refugee crises, Hungary implemented a very structured and organized process on how to handle refugees—from the initial entrance to making an asylum claim—when one was either recognized or denied as a refugee (Nagy 1992). Even though Hungary had these waves of refugees and has also dealt with 4 million people moving from the East to West, this did not open up immigration policies and make Hungary more willing (Behr 2002, 232). Unlike

in Germany where there is an expectation to be able to handle the refugee inflow as they had done in the past, in Hungary, there is no expectation and Hungary feels that their resources have now been depleted due to the previous refugee crises. This belief that they are not as capable as before has influenced their inability to accept refugees in this current crisis (Nagy 1992). These experiences, as well as other factors, instead have made Hungary immigration policies more restrictive in order to preserve Hungarian ethnicity and nationality.

These previous experiences with refugees can also create a sense of moral obligation in a state. Moral obligation encompasses the duty and responsibility states feel in regards to accepting refugees. This sense of moral obligation occurs for a variety of reasons, from previous emigration movements to historical relationships and ties. While it is not a causal factor, being a state that has created refugees or has been an emigrant country can influence a state to be more willing to accept refugees. Germany is more welcoming of refugees and immigrants in the current Syrian crisis because of this moral responsibility, “German president Gauck argued that Germany had a ‘moral duty’ to provide safe refuge because Germans were refugees themselves after World War II” (Holmes and Castaneda 2016, 15). Not only has Germany had their own refugees but their actions in WWII have also pushed Germany to liberalize immigration policies and willingly accept more refugees (Bauder 2016). In 1965, Germany created the Foreigner’s Law, which replaced the *Ausländerpolizeiverordnung* (APVO) a law in 1938, by trying to create benefits for foreign workers. While this law was not successful, it was a step in a more progressive direction. The Nazi past had a significant impact in Germany investing in immigration policies and ensuring that Germany was moving away from its historical ideologies (Triadafilopoulos and Schönwälder 2006). Because of its history, Germany has a moral obligation to liberalize and take responsibility for the international world when they are in need.

This moral obligation is still evident in the mindset of Germans during the Syrian refugee crisis and is a factor as to why Germany has been so welcoming to the Syrian refugees.

The idea of moral obligation has also been discussed in regards to Hungary's actions towards immigrants and in refugee crises, but Hungary rather than act on this moral obligation to accept more refugees has been more restrictive due to its lack of resources (Nagy 1992). This lack of moral obligation is notable because Hungary and other CEES have been major contributors to refugees that moved from the CEES to the West and for these states to disregard any foreigners into their own states has surprised many. This hostility was surprising to most because the West took in over 200,000 refugees from the Baltics post WWII and about 200,000 refugees from Hungary after the 1956 revolt (Heisbourg 205, 11). The lack of moral duty in Hungary seems contradictory due to Hungary and other CEES' historical background (Nagy 1992, 45). Without the need to address this strong moral obligation, Hungary is therefore less willing to take in any foreigners and especially the Syrian refugees.

### **Who are We? The Public's View on Being a Part of the Nation**

The population of a state and definition of citizenship in a state are strong determinants of how willing and how able states are to take in immigrants and refugees. Willingness and acceptance of foreigners depends on whether a state is multicultural or homogenous. These characteristics of a state's societal composition will then influence the public discourse and rhetoric and how strong phobias play in a state. Willingness and ability are also influenced by the origin state of immigrants and refugees—states will either be more or less willing based on where the foreigners are coming from because of the state to state relationship or phobias and hesitations about the origin state. The composition of a nation state is also crucial as they can be defined as territorial, ethnic, or a mix. Germany is mixed which means it has “a cultural or

historical basis for a nation, but requires leadership to foster national identity and state assistance to build the nation (Keely 1996, 1047)” Hungary is an ethnic nation as it is a “community based on descent” (Keely 1996, 1047). The purpose of these definitions is to set the guidelines for the composition of the state and whether or not the state is accommodating to foreigners based on these nation-state models.

Germany has gone through various policies and discourse about whether or not it is an immigration country. Germany while it is known for having a *Willkommenskultur*, a welcoming culture, has many Germans who still believe it is not an immigration country and highly value their ethnically homogenous national community (Gümüs 2015). However, the reality is that Germany has a high foreign population, with the largest ethnicities being Polish, German and Turkish—because of the guest workers in the 1950s-1970s as well as family reunification with these guest workers (Green 2013, 338). Current migration trends among individual citizens are even more diverse. There are two reactions to this large foreign population in Germany, one is immigration policies have to address these multicultural communities and have to liberalize. This liberalization and acknowledgement of foreigners throughout Germany’s history has influenced them to take in the large amount of Syrian refugees. The other is the slowing down of immigration laws and entry of more foreigners as there is already a significant population.

Citizenship is also an important part of acceptance into a state. There was a big shift in Germany’s politics of citizenship as Germany used to have much stricter policies but has opened up due to pushes from the political elite. German citizenship has changed from *jus domicile*, based on residence in the early nineteenth century to *jus sanguinis*, which is blood based and was used during the Nazi period as a racial hierarchy which is why there was a movement away from this after the 1990s. After German unification, when German Turks, former Eastern Germans,

plus natives were all getting mixed together and *jus soli*, birthright citizenship, was put into law, Germany began to acknowledge that it is a state of immigrants (Howard 2008). In 1960, Germany had about 700,000 foreigners and in 2008 there were about 7.3 million foreigners making up about 9% of the population (Howard 2008, 44). The large presence of the foreign population in Germany has influenced it to have more liberalized citizenship laws.

Triadafilopoulos and Schönwälder (2016, 367) have coined the term “new differentialism” that addresses the idea that a country can accept differences among its citizens but still focus on individualism. This describes part of Germany’s public composition, however, there is still rhetoric that Germany does not have multicultural immigration policies. Despite this, the Muslim community is acknowledged and this will make the public more aware and potentially a step in being more accustomed to multiple cultures, “The German Islam conference was established as a means of enabling dialogue between the representatives of organized Muslim groups and the German state with the aim of ‘naturalizing Islam’” (Triadafilopoulos and Schönwälder 2016, 375). Public funding of religious education to Muslims has expanded in Germany and different states are also implementing new policies to work with Muslim communities. Germany taking significant steps to address different cultures is an example of the state broadening its citizenship definition.

Being a homogenous state does not influence a state’s unwilling or inability to accept refugees, but is a key determinant in the case of Hungary. Hungary and Hungarians value socially traditional beliefs and this has greatly influenced their anti-foreigner sentiments (Korkut 2014). In 2001, only 3% of the Hungarian population identifies themselves as a minority, signifying that the population is largely homogenous and this accounts for why immigration is not an important part of the political agenda (Vermeersch 2015, 123). Hungary with 95% ethnic

Hungarians are not only unwelcoming but also anti-immigration (Korkut 2014 621). Hungary was also one of the top 3 countries in thinking that immigrants make a country a worse place and it also scored the highest in having ethnic prejudice (Zick et al. 2008). This consistency in the anti-immigrant rhetoric is dominant among the Hungarian public and has not changed in regards to the Syrian refugees.

Due to Hungary's transition from a post-communist state and the redrawing of its borders, Hungary has focused on preserving its national identity and ethnic homogeneity (Toth 2001). Being a Hungarian is very important to Hungary and is pertinent not only for political policies but also for individual preferences. Being an ethnic Hungarian was most attributed to birth in Hungary and self-identification as being Hungarian (Behr et al, 2002). The Status Law in 2002 that gives "cultural, social, and economic rights to ethnic Hungarians living in neighbouring countries" shows that Hungarians care deeply for preserving their ethnic nation but the other purpose of this law is to prevent immigration to Hungary (Behr 2002, 284). This view of being a part of Hungary greatly influences how willing and able Hungary is to take in refugees.

Treatment of foreigners in Hungary gives insight to the anti-foreigner sentiments felt among Hungarians and political elites. The Roma are the largest minority group in Hungary and are largely disenfranchised and isolated. Marginalized groups such as the Roma, homeless, or the poor are not addressed in the Status Law, "the refusal to distribute humanitarian largesse to other marginalized groups exposes deep divisions in Hungarian civil society" (Kallius et al 2016, 31). The concentration on preserving an ethnic and homogenous nation creates many anti-foreigner sentiments and restrictions on immigration policies. It is important to note that being a homogenous state does not necessarily imply that a state is anti-immigration and are unwilling to

take in any refugees. In the case of Sweden, it has been historically welcoming to refugees and their homogeneity, one-fifth of the population is foreign born, has not been a factor in making them unwilling (Ostrand 2015 and Fredlund-Blomst 2014). While the massive inflow of refugees is causing anti-refugee sentiments and more unwillingness and inability to take in more refugees, Sweden's previous acceptance proves that being a homogeneous state does not solely cause unwillingness.

Phobias and anti-immigrant/refugee sentiments can arise for a variety of reasons-- whether it is economic hesitancy, racial prejudices, or strong traditional national sentiments. There are two theories that explain some doubts citizens may feel towards foreigners. Ethnic competition theory states that "social groups compete for such scarce resources as jobs and housing" (Zick et. Al 2008, 241) and the group-threat theory; which posits that if a nation has a larger immigration population they tend to have greater prejudices (242). One of the main factors for these anti-immigrant sentiments is the preservation of the nation and its ethnicity. In both Germany and Hungary, there are public opinions about wanting to keep foreigners out and defining citizenship strictly on ethnicity and blood as opposed to being born in one's land or being able to apply for citizenship. Hungarians who have these anti-foreigner sentiments believe that there is a threat that comes from immigrants. It is notable that just the perceived threat and proportion of immigrants in a region creates prejudice and anti-immigrant sentiments more so than the actual number of immigrants does. The amount of immigrants currently entering the EU appears to be a large number which makes states apprehensive and feel unable to handle the inflow (Zick et al 2008, 242).

With this recent crisis, half of the German population fears the disruption of German nationality (Vasilyev 2016, 180). One group that has increased right wing sentiments is the

Patriotic European Against the Islamisation of the Occident (*Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes*) an anti-migrant organization that leads movements and protests against the entrance of migrants that originated in Dresden, Germany in October 2014 (Bauder 2016). PEGIDA movements and similar anti-immigrant and anti-refugee movements have spread throughout Europe and they represent the increase of national sentiments and desire to protect the homeland. Their presence and success is seen by the 25,000 people that were present at their demonstration in January 2015 in Dresden and the popularity of their party candidate Tatjana Festerling who received 9.6% of the vote in the Dresden mayoral elections in June 2015 (Kravchenko 2015, 93). The rise and spread of these sentiments creates xenophobia across the public and can make the public uneasy about foreigners entering the border.

The inflow of foreigners and non-citizens can initially make citizens uneasy but certain identities will heighten this fear even more due to stereotypes and phobias. Origins do play a role in how willing a state is in taking in refugees, “respondents are more willing to accept migrants seeking political asylum and those from other European Community/EU countries than they are to accept persons from south of the Mediterranean and Eastern Europe” (Kessler and Freeman 2005, 836). Since Syrian refugees coming from the Middle East, are fleeing war and practice Muslim religious beliefs, phobias are especially prominent. There is fear of terrorism and radicalization of its own citizens in Germany because of these Syrian refugees; this rhetoric creates a perpetual cycle of xenophobia (Havlová and Tamchynová, 2016). Hungary is also highly skeptical of non-Europeans as it excluded non-European asylum seekers in defining refugee status in response to the 1951 Geneva Convention (Nagy 1992, 37). Religion is also a determinant of how willing or able states are to take in refugees. Prime Minister Viktor Orbán of Hungary (who will be further elaborated on later) is a Christian, and uses his beliefs to guide the

rhetoric among the public. It was common for many European leaders to prefer and welcome more Christian refugees as opposed to Muslim (Holmes and Castaneda 2016, 18). The PEW Research study found that EU citizens feel that there is more of a refugee threat higher if they have a negative view of Muslims. In Hungary, 76% of those who have an unfavorable view on Muslims believe that refugees are a threat and therefore are more unwilling to let refugees in while 52% were favorable and in Germany, there were 58% unfavorable with 19% favorable (Poushter 2016). In a study of refugees in EU member states refugees still felt a lot of racism and ignorance on both a personal and institutional level (Mesthenos and Ionnidi 2002, 304). This continued presence of racism and ignorance limits a state's willingness to take in refugees. The population of a country, the citizenship laws, and identities of incoming foreigners will greatly influence the public's reactions towards refugees and whether or not there is a strong presence of phobias.

### **The Power of Individual Leadership: Angela Merkel and Viktor Orbán**

The type of government, ruling political party, and especially the dominant leader in the state are powerful determinants of how willing and able states are to take in the Syrian refugees. Being a liberal democratic state will influence a state to being more welcoming and accepting of refugees. There is an expectation and a responsibility for liberal democratic states such as Germany to help those in need as in the case of the Syrian refugees. Since both Hungary and Germany are member states of the EU, they are required to be democracies, but there are certain aspects of Hungary's government and its democratic legitimacy that are questionable. These democratic qualities along with political parties and political leaders will determine how willing or able a state is to accept refugees. Another interesting point about Germany and Hungary is the

idea of Western Europe versus Eastern Europe and the differences in these states' abilities. Western Europe was much more stable and prosperous which made it a place for refugees to want to go while Eastern Europe had constant political change and instability that made this area a place where refugees were fleeing from as well as why refugees do not seek this area (Khan, 2001). This point allows for a broader understanding of the ability of both states to take in refugees.

There are two views, impartial and partial, that explain different political theories and discuss how the type of government plays a role in a state's willingness or ability to accept refugees. The impartial view includes the utilitarian and the global liberal political theories, stating that liberal democracies have the responsibility to take in refugees and those who are less able to fend for themselves to ensure that they have the same liberties as the state's own citizens (Gibney 1999). However, some impartial views do believe that there should be some restrictions on entry; global liberals do not believe in complete open borders and believe that if the refugees pose a threat to the national security then the state can limit their entrance. Utilitarians believe that if the cost to the state of taking in an individual is greater than the benefits to the individual, then there can be restrictions on entry (Gibney 1999). The costs and benefits of a refugee is harder to determine as opposed to immigrants as refugees are present for a shorter amount of time and do not flee for economic reasons but one way to determine benefits is the growth in the economy due to these refugees finding jobs and bringing useful skills (Nixon 2015). However, economic benefits can be difficult to determine with the Syrian refugees as states also have to provide housing costs and there can be political costs (Nixon 2015). The complexity of the cost and benefits of taking in foreigners constricts the utilitarian theory to fully explain the responses of Germany and Hungary to the refugee crisis. The partial view encompasses realist,

communitarian, and conservative political theories. These theories argue that community and culture are strongly shaped by where one is born and is raised and for this reason letting in foreigners would disrupt national cohesion. These theorists believe in protecting one's culture and for this reason refugees must have a different community separate from the citizens (Gibney 1999). These theories prove that the type of government does affect willingness and ability of states to take in refugees.

Political parties have a significant role in the liberalization and discourse about immigrants and refugees. Shifts in political parties will influence immigration policies and will largely impact the public's opinion on refugees. In Germany, the changes in immigration policy largely correlated with the political party in power. From 1982-1998 when the Christian Democrats (CDU/CSU) and Free Democrats (FDP) were in power, minority rights and immigration policies were rarely addressed as they were against preserving multiculturalism and did not think Germany was an immigration country (Howard 2008 and Green 2013). Even though the majority of the CDU/CSU and FDP coalition was anti-immigration, there were small changes and pushes for more liberalized immigration policies. Some CDU/CSU politicians started opening up policies to include rights for young foreigners and the FDP even included dual citizenship. After Chancellor Helmut Kohl replaced Friedrich Zimmermann, a conservative CSU who opposed liberalization to the 1913 law, with Wolfgang Schäuble from the CDU party, the coalition successfully worked on the 1990 citizenship law that liberalized naturalization laws and made naturalization an entitlement. This meant that German citizenship was no longer based just on German descent as stated earlier (Howard 2008).

Opposition from liberal parties such as SPD and Greens as well as liberalization within the coalition changed German citizenship policies. A major turning point in Germany's

immigration policy came in the 1998 elections. The defeat of the CDU/CSU and FDP government coalition by the SPD-Green Party coalition with Gerhard Schröder as leader of the coalition allowed for a more progressive attitude to dominate and saw a push for implementation of integration policies in the political agenda (Green 2013). After the 1998 elections, there was a liberalization of migration policies and a change in politicians' attitudes and views as they were not as greatly affected by previous events such as 1945 and the division of Germany as previous politicians (Green 2013). All of this political liberalization occurred only with elites and politicians and was kept under the radar of the in order to prevent a strong reaction from the public (Howard 2008). During this shift and move toward liberalization of migration policies, Germany also saw opposition and later a rise in the right wing, anti-immigrant, conservative parties such as the PEGIDA which was discussed earlier.

Political leadership is an even more important factor than political parties in Germany. Chancellor Angela Merkel, leader of SPD and CDU since 2005 has a very pragmatic and modern mindset that influences Germany's actions in the refugee crisis. Merkel, however, has not always been a well-respected leader nor was she as progressive (Noack 2016; Wiliarty 2008). Initially many disapproved of her as a chancellor as they viewed her as lacking leadership and personality. Her ratings as a successful candidate for Chancellor increased since the CDU recognized the benefits of having a female and someone from the East represent their party. Being a female and working with empowering women as well as being successful as a party manager, Merkel gained more respect and approval of being Chancellor (Wiliarty 2008). Merkel's rise to leadership in Germany has influenced her actions to this current crisis.

Currently, Merkel is much more liberal and has led Germany to have an open-door policy. Her turning point towards more progressive actions was in 2011 after the tsunami in

Japan and the nuclear scare when Merkel took action against nuclear reactors and implemented *Energiewende* (Noack 2016). Merkel in August of 2015 solidified her progressive stance in the refugee crisis when she welcomed large numbers of refugees through her open-door policy and earmarked 6 billion euros to assist asylum seekers (Horn 2015). Her powerful slogan is “*Wir schaffen das*” meaning “We [Germany] can do this” (Vick 2016). She has also worked with other ministers to ensure that there is a logical and strategic plan in dealing with the refugees (Vasilyev 2016). Merkel’s actions are the strong political motive behind Germany’s openness and prove that an individual in power has a strong influence on how a state reacts. Merkel’s progressive actions and discourse has not gone without opposition, there is a significant amount of opposition within her party coalition, from right wing groups, and German citizens. The CDU and CSU are having controversy and debates over their conservative outlook on the immigration policy and about 50% of Germans do not agree with Merkel’s actions on refugees (Vasilyev 2016, 181). Even though there is opposition, Merkel’s power and actions are dominant in Germany’s response to the Syrian refugees.

Hungary also experienced a shift in political parties from a socialist party to a conservative party following the 2008 financial crisis that influenced their immigration policies (Johnson and Barnes 2015). As Hungary integrated into the European economy, the socialist government in power implemented many austerity policies and was highly dependent on Western European economies (Johnson and Barnes 2015). These new socialist mechanisms made Hungary especially vulnerable to the 2008 global financial crisis. The details of the economic policies and financial crises will be discussed later, but what is notable is that the socialist party was blamed for all the economic failures, which allowed for the success of Viktor Orbán and his party (Johnson and Barnes 2015). The conservative government in Hungary, the

coalition of Fidesz Hungarian Civic Union and the Christian Democratic Party (KDNP) had a victory in the 2010 election without any opposition or protests against their undemocratic actions. Since 2010 and the election of the Fidesz party there has been an increase in “autocratic laws and reforms...and eroding all checks and balances” (Fekete 2016, 44) which shows the power this party has in controlling policies. The conservative right parties can be highly influential in creating fear against foreigners and this has impacted the attitude toward refugees in Hungary; this conservative discourse has also affected the policies and people’s views on immigration (Korkut 2014). The Fidesz government was a big catalyst in anti-immigration policies and supporting a pro-national and homogenous state (Korkut 2014). This lack of civil society or checks and balances limits any opposition and makes the political party the dominant decision maker in the regards to the refugee crisis. The conservative Fidesz government has been an influential player in preserving Hungarian nationhood, enacting policies that follow this mindset, and having an unwilling response to the Syrians.

In the way that Chancellor Merkel has dominated Germany’s current actions, Prime Minister, for the second time, and leader of the Fidesz party Viktor Orbán, has dominated Hungary’s actions and pushed the Fidesz government to its power in Hungary. In 1998, Orbán was Prime Minister for the first time, and ruled Hungary with a right wing government (Vermeesch 2015). This followed the socialist-liberal Horn government that pushed for the implementation of minority governments to help with the integration of the Roma people who are the largest minority group in Hungary. Orbán’s government continued this approach of discussing minorities rights through a government program where ethnic minorities were listed in one section and another called “those who need help”, where the Roma people were the only ones listed (Vermeesch 2015, 127). This shows that Orbán’s government is not pursuing

liberalization of immigration policies because it disregards the Romas in this program by listing them in separate sections. His strong actions and power throughout his ruling has greatly influenced Hungary in its acceptance of refugees. Some of his most recent actions have included militarizing Hungary's southern borders, rewriting the Constitution, disregarding welfare and the Constitutional Court's power, and his rhetoric has increased far-right and xenophobic rhetoric (Fekete 2016). His goal is to make Hungary a "refugee protection free zone" through spending, wire fences, and armed soldiers and vehicles at the borders (41). Orbán is a strong example of how persuasive rhetoric and actions of an individual leader combined with justifications of actions due to a previous crisis can strengthen one's power as a leader (Fekete 2016; Szikra 2014).

Orbán is leading Hungary away from democratic practices to more illiberal practices and runs his government on financial nationalism, which will be discussed in the next section. One problem of Orbán's questionable actions may conflict with Hungary fully cooperating with the EU's democratic actions toward the refugees. While it has a multi-party system and elections, there are many aspects of Hungary such as the lack of checks and balances, single party domination, other corruption, and especially Orbán's rhetoric that make it appear more illiberal (Fekete 2016). Under Orbán, amendments and policies were used to spread this anti-refugee rhetoric to Hungary and ensure that there was a national consensus. There was an amendment to the Criminal Code and Asylum Law that states that entering Hungary through the border fences is a criminal offence and the creation of the Police Act and Act on National Defense where the army supports policy at the border with defense devices (Fekete 2016). Orbán is an influential leader whose actions and rhetoric contrast to EU values and ideals and is a main determinant of Hungary's unwillingness to accept refugees.

## **The Role of the Health and Size of the Economy**

The economic well-being of a state is the strongest factor in determining its ability to accept refugees, and this then influences willingness. The ability, or lack of ability, can influence a politician's and the public's willingness towards refugees. The inflow of refugees can pose a strain to the economy through housing costs, immediate health materials, and the longer the duration in the host country means integration into the welfare state and the labor market. While the immediate ability of a state to provide for refugees and the health of a state's economy during a refugee crisis is important, the history of economic growth in a state and integration of foreigners into the economy are also strong indicators of how able and willing a state will be in accepting refugees. The ability of a state to take in refugees does not always mean that the state is willing to take in refugees. Even if a state has a high-income and is highly industrialized does not cause it to be the most helpful state in acceptance or resettlement of refugees. For example, Japan, Kuwait, Qatar, Russia, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, China, and India have not offered any resettlement opportunities for the Syrian refugees (Ostrand 2015, 266). Another explanation for this uneven distribution—when developing countries take in more refugees than developed countries—is that developed nations focus more on protecting their own interests rather than the interests of the asylum seekers so they find solutions in the origin country rather than take in refugees (Biondi 2016). This indicates that there must be other factors beyond just economic ability—even if it is a strong indicator—that determines the actions of a state during a refugee crisis.

Costs of immigration vary and affect different parts of the economy from the availability of jobs to the cost of border controls. External border control, such as fences and border patrol, is a public good and no one can be forced to contribute to it, “restricting immigration is expensive:

it requires resources to enforce the border, screen immigrants, contrast illegal inflows and so on” (Russo and Senatore 2013, 4). States may not be able to handle these costs and will be reluctant and unable to take in refugees for this reason. The impact of immigrants on an economy will also persuade a state to question its ability and willingness to assist with refugees. There are two views on the fiscal impact of immigrants on an economy. There are those who see immigration as a positive asset as there is tax revenue from highly skilled immigrants and those who see immigration negatively because they believe that immigrants depend too much on welfare. There are a variety of demographic factors that will affect when immigration will be beneficial or harmful, such as age, duration of stay, fertility, and type of immigrant (Rowthorn 2008). For example, asylum seekers who receive public support but are unemployed and do not pay tax have a negative impact on the economy (Rowthorn 2008). This relates to the perception of who the immigrant is and defining the individual coming into a host state that was discussed earlier. Because the majority of those entering the EU are forced out of their country rather than leaving for economic reasons they will need more assistance and because of this may have a negative impact on the economy. It was discovered that public spending and the dispersion of it on the EU is now a migration cost (Peridy 2006). This can create unwillingness as well as put strain on the ability of Germany or Hungary to accept the great number of refugees coming into their borders.

Germany’s economic size and health are especially relevant in the Syrian refugee crisis as it has one of the most stable and largest economies in the EU which signifies its great ability to handle the refugees (Vasilyev 2016). Being the largest economy in Europe, Germany has a great amount of responsibility and acted as a leader in the EU (Holmes and Castaneda 2016).

Germany has donated about 448 million USD of humanitarian aid and in the past has contributed a significant amount of aid to the UNHCR (Ostrand 2015, 266). Germany has taken significant financial steps in response to the refugee crisis that show its role as a leader.

The economy has been a vital determinant of Germany's actions towards foreigners ever since the mid 1990s. In the 1950s-1970s after World War II, Germany had a shortage of labor so it used migrants as a means to boost the economy (Gümüs 2015). The large influx of guest-workers were single males from Turkey or Italy. As said before, the use of guest workers and the need for economic growth was a big push for the liberalization of Germany's immigration policies. In this postwar period, economic ministers and other officials accepted refugees purely for their economic benefit as they were cheaper labor, more mobile and flexible, and would allow German workers to move from low skill work to more skilled jobs (Triadafilopoulos and Schönwälder 2006). However, guest workers were no longer needed after the 1973 oil crisis and following economic recession so Germany enforced policies that would require them to return to their origin country (Gümüs 2015). Because many of the guest workers brought their families with them, West Germany felt a large toll on their economy and needed to restrict the entrance of more migrants or restrict permanent living. The case of Germany shows that economic crisis will decrease a state's willingness and ability to take in foreigners.

Even though Germany has a strong economy and a reputation of being a wealthy leader the financial stress and inability to take in refugees is still felt throughout the state. There are significant costs that must be put into to help refugees, "[The cost that the average German taxpayer pays to help support the refugees] includes expenditure for accommodation, food, and medical assistance, and refugees who are lucky enough to receive permission to stay will, in addition, be paid allowances for their children such as school and kindergarten costs. All this

adds up to about 10,000 euros per refugee per year” (Kravchenko 2015, 90). Germany is very open and willing to take in refugees because it has the ability to, but it is also aware of the risks that come with it and this stems the anti-refugee rhetoric and unwillingness of some Germans.

Two theories can explain these reactions to the movement of labor: the functionalist theory and the neoclassical theory. The functionalist theory states that countries will be more willing to accept immigrants during a labor shortage, which occurs when there is a loss of workers after wars and use refugees to solve this shortage and the neoclassical theory that states that the supply and demand for labor which influences people to leave low wage, labor heavy places and move to labor scarce places creates movement of human capital (Gümüs 2015, 58-59). The need for labor in the economy will influence how able states are to take in refugees and even though the Syrian refugee crisis is not an example of economic migrant flows, but rather a case of forced migration, the actions of Germany show how economic motives are significant.

Welfare states provide economically for the state’s inhabitants and will draw refugees and foreigners to a state, but it will also cause extra tension among the locals as well as the economy. People might be hesitant to let in refugees because they feel that they are a form of economic competition and will take away public resources such as social welfare (Schmidt-Catran and Spies 2016). Through Schmidt-Catran and Spies’ research on immigration and welfare support, it was deduced that “the share of foreigners has a negative effect on native Germans’ support for welfare” (2016, 256). The other side of this argument is that welfare states are the most accepting because they have programs that help the disadvantaged, such as forced migration refugees (Gümüs 2015).

Hungary does not have as strong of an economy as Germany and their ability to take in refugees has been weakened due to its accession into the Western world and EU that hurt the

Hungarian economy and has led to current policies being financially nationalistic and unstable. Two major events have affected Hungary's economy and influenced its inability and lack of a strong economy to take in refugees. The first was the transition from a command economy to a market economy to an integrated global economy negatively affected Hungary. The World Bank and the IMF shock, structural adjustment program, and deindustrialization from 1988-1995 destroyed Hungary's economy. From 1989-1992 about one third of all the jobs disappeared and in 2014 the number of youth leaving Hungary to find jobs in Western Europe has increased to 46% (Fekete 2016, 46). The second event was leading up to the 2008 Global Financial Crisis when the public debt was at 60-80% of the GDP during the ruling of the socialist party—while austerity worked in helping the debt it stopped the growing of the economy and it did not protect Hungary from the crisis (Johnson and Barnes 2015, 543). Economic crises and a weak economy allowed for the success of Orbán's economic plan of financial nationalism, "an economic strategy that employs financial levers--including monetary policy, currency interventions, and other methods of interaction with local and international financial systems--to promise the nation's unity, autonomy, and identity" (Johnson and Barnes 2015, 536). Because Hungary is pursuing financial nationalist policies it disregards assisting those in need or refugees (Johnson and Barnes 2015, 544).

These economic aspects have influenced not only the welfare policies of Hungary but also its ability and willingness to help immigrants and refugees. Hungary has seen a welfare state retrenchment and a reduction of costs, social spending decreased 13-14% from 2008-2012, and a decrease in helping the most vulnerable in society (Szikra 2014, 488). The shifts in economic policy towards financial nationalism and away from social welfare assistance explains why Hungary is economically unwilling and unable to help the Syrian refugees.

## Conclusion

The largest mass movement of refugees and migrants from Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon since WWII has greatly impacted the EU financially, politically, and socially. The inflow of millions of refugees and asylum-seekers is not a simple task; it requires a state to provide basic survival supplies, set-up housing camps and communities, and review a large number of asylum applications. The problem with this is that some states may not have the same ability to provide and this can cause tension among member states. Ability, or more so inability, to provide for the refugees, can often influence a state's willingness. Other factors such as moral responsibility or political and public liberal discourse can also influence a state to being more willing.

Germany and Hungary are two key players in the Syrian refugee crisis as they have very strong and contrasting responses to this mass movement. Germany is openly welcome towards refugees as it recognizes a sense of moral responsibility to take care of refugees after its causal actions in movements of refugees in the past. This has influenced liberal sentiments and political parties such as the SPD/Green Coalition to enact liberal immigration policies and liberalize Germany. Along with this willingness, Germany has a strong and powerful role in the EU and has the ability to provide for refugees through its welfare state. Chancellor Merkel has played one of the most significant roles in this Syrian refugee crisis. Her openness and optimistic attitude about Germany taking in as many refugees as possible has made sure that Germany is able to provide all these resources. Although Germany has seen periods of conservative and anti-immigrant sentiments in the past, and especially during this crisis, Germany has overall been portrayed as a leader in the Syrian refugee crisis in the EU.

Hungary has also been greatly affected by this crisis and has taken in the most refugees proportionate to its population. Its accession to the EU had a negative impact on its economy and

left a negative impression on the Hungarians. This economic downfall and its homogenous population, influenced Hungary to have anti-foreigner sentiments and unable to have a strong labor market or economy. Prime Minister Orbán took these fears and sentiments and increased nationalistic and restrictive policies towards the Syrian refugees. Hungary is representative of states who are unwilling and unable to accept refugees in the same way as Germany has.

Germany and Hungary are only two member states of the 27 EU member states that have been affected by the Syrian refugee crisis. The major determinants that were highlighted throughout this paper explain that interconnectedness of politics, economics, and society is present in this Syrian refugee crisis. Ability and willingness are not separate concepts and often time willingness of a state can be influenced by their ability or inability to provide for refugees. The reactions of Germany and Hungary are not abnormal and can be explained because of their economic ability, historical experiences with foreigners and refugees as well as public sentiments towards foreigners, and the influence of not only political parties but especially political leaders such as Chancellor Merkel and Prime Minister Orbán, whom are highly valued in their respective states. Understanding what affects the willingness and ability of EU member states to accept refugees allows for more effective EU burden sharing policies. Additional research on determinants such as the role of media, other member state responses and relationships, and the costs and benefits of migrants, refugees specifically, in the short-term and the long-term is necessary for further understanding of the Syrian refugee crisis.

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