The Impact of the Refugee Crisis on the European Union

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The Impact of the Refugee Crisis on the European Union

by

Andreea Elena Galan

A thesis proposal submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts
in
Conflict Resolution

Thesis committee:
Harry Anastasiou, Chair
Robert Gould
Vandy Kanyako

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Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to focus on the impact of the influx of refugees on the European Union taking into consideration the challenges, threats and opportunities that arise from this persistent crisis. The examination of the above-mentioned issue presents and analyses pertinent findings derived from the relevant literature in the field, ranging from diverse case studies, public statistics, data of European Union institutions as well as NGO’s, associations and other entities that have addressed issues of human rights and refugee integration in European Union countries. The thesis discloses how this complex matter, referred to as the ‘current European refugee crisis,’ gives rise to complex problems and divergent concerns ranging from Islamophobia, terrorist attacks and threats, economic challenges, cultural conflicts, and social clashes. It concludes that there is a need for new perspectives and strategies for better addressing the long and short term causes and challenges of the European refugee crisis.
Dedication

I would like to dedicate my thesis work to my family. A special feeling of gratitude to my loving parents, George and Niculina Galan, whose words of encouragement pushed me to become a better version of myself. I wouldn’t be here today without my parents’ courage to leave their native country and call America our new home; without their willingness to learn a new language and acculturate into a new way of life. Not once did they look back, but only forward, focusing their energy on my success. Thank you for always instilling the idea that anything is achievable through hard work.

I am also dedicating this dissertation to my loving husband, Michael, who supported me throughout this process as well as in my career. Thank you for accepting to sacrifice our time together in favor of my research. This year marks our tenth anniversary since we started dating, and at our first date you said you would “follow me wherever the world may take me.” After all these years, your words have a strong meaning as I am grateful today that you shared the ride with me to this destination.
Acknowledgments

About six years ago, I was taking an elective class for my undergraduate requirements with a professor whose background was not known to me at that time. Throughout that term, I realized that I was turning into a follower of this man as he created the space for me to learn and want to absorb more information. He would respond to my questions with more questions, allowing me to explore the answers and discover the path I wanted to follow in life. Years later, I am extremely thankful for his mentorship, as most of my work would have not been possible without the support of Dr. Harry Anastasiou, Conflict Resolution Director. As my teacher and mentor, Dr. Anastasiou has taught me, by example, how a good person should be.

A heartfelt thank you goes to all the professors of Conflict Resolution that, throughout the program, helped shape the adult I am today. As most of Master’s programs may uplift an individual, the Conflict Resolution department is genuinely inspiring its students to step out of their comfort zone, learn and become better human beings through volunteering and studying the art of peacemaking and peacekeeping. I am grateful to all professors I have had the pleasure to learn from during this program: Mary Zinkin, Rachel Cunlife, Barbara Tint, Amanda Byron, Robert Gould, and Vandy Kanyako.
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Glossary:

Asylee: a person that is seeking to be granted political asylum in order to find protection and human rights.

Economic migrant: an individual that travels from a country to another in order to seek better life opportunities.

Hezbollah: Shi’a Islamist military group based in Lebanon.

International Refugee Law: a branch of International Law that focuses on protecting the rights and the interests of refugees.

Islamophobia: is a political prejudice towards Islam and/or Muslims.

Jus cogens: means to compel law, the basis of the international law, binding all countries.

Nationality swapping: an illegal process through which one steals the identity of another individual for the purpose of using it to enter another country.

Non-refoulment: the practice of not forcing refugees and asylees to return to their native countries from which they fear persecution.

Radicalism: for the purpose of this paper, it refers to the extreme actions taken by some Muslim communities in order to retain or restore the Islamic religion.

Refugee: a person that is forced to leave their home country due war, natural calamities or fear of persecution. These people are often displaced in camps from which they are assigned to different countries.

Right-wing nationalism: conservative political affiliation in which it is believed that social order and hierarchy must be respected.
Chapter 1 Introduction

Since 2015 the European Union has been facing the greatest refugee crisis since World War II. This crisis is persisting into the following years with many repercussions on the European Union’s societies. This excessive refugee influx created a lot of tensions within the European societies and this is due to the problems accumulated as a result of the crisis. Currently, the greatest concerns presented by the European Union are as follows: security and combating of terrorism; the overall economic situation of Europe and the integration of refugees into the labor market; and finally, the demographic changes that will take place in the future.

If 2015 represented a wake-up call for Europe, 2016 and 2017 seem to be the years in which strategies of controlling this crisis were and continue to be implemented in order to assure that the human rights of these refugees are fully respected and that Europe’s citizens will be prepared to embrace a more diverse society. Furthermore, one important point to be noted in association with the newest cultural blend is that many European citizens have adopted a very nationalistic mentality that is encouraged by the right-wing leaders of Europe. These people are very conservative and opposed to accepting refugees in their societies. On this matter, author C. Caldwell (2009) noted that:

Some kind of ethnic conflict simmers in every country where there has been mass immigration. Understanding why requires looking back at the intellectual and moral climate of Europe over the last six decades. The Europe into which immigrants began arriving in the 1950’s was reeling in horror from World War II and preoccupied with building the institutions to forestall any repetition of it […] Avoiding another European explosion meant, above all, purging Europe’s individual countries of nationalism, with ‘nationalism’ understood to include all vestiges of racism, militarism, and cultural chauvinism – but also patriotism, pride, and unseemly competitiveness. (p. 68-69)
Technically, the new European project ran by the European Union was built with an open mind to immigration. The European Union provided a specific immigration process of entering its countries, but the influx of huge number of refugees fleeing war-torn countries, was unpredictable. Given this situation, the leaders and citizens of Europe are facing new challenges and, ultimately, become polarized on how to approach this issue.

There are Europeans that are pro refugees and their integration, as well as Europeans that are in favor of banning them. As the Union stands strong in defending human rights, the negative events that took place on the European grounds, as result of this crisis, raised the number of nationalistic European citizens who want to defend their territories and ultimately eliminate the newcomers. The European Union has always promoted harmonization between respecting human rights and assuring national security at high standards. Unfortunately, the attacks that keep taking place since the beginning of this crisis, have created an imbalance between human rights and national security, reason why we have countries as Germany and Hungary that can support just one of the two elements which constitutes the fundamental rights of any European citizen. I will further address in this research how Germany sacrificed its national security in favor of human rights, while Hungary favorites national security by ignoring the needs of the refuges and their right to travel freely through their country.
Brief history of refugees in Europe

The refugee problem is not new to Europe, but the way this emerged over the years brought new challenges to the European Union leaders. The United Nations Refugee Agency states that:

the practice of granting asylum to people fleeing persecution in foreign lands is one of the earliest hallmarks of civilization. References to it have been found in texts written 3,500 years ago, during the blossoming of the great early empires in the Middle East such as the Hittites, Babylonians, Assyrians and ancient Egyptians. (Unknown Author, The United Nations Refugee Agency, 14 December, 2016).

Furthermore, the history of refugees becomes more prominent during the 20th century when Europe encountered the largest wave of refugees as result of the two World Wars. At that time, history taught us that many minorities and ethnic groups, such as the Rroma people, the Jewish, along with other war and political prisoners, sought human rights and protection in America. These people had to seek asylum or refuge to run from threats of death and physical punishments. Lehmann (2015) noted that, in the past, there were more Europeans emigrating in North and South America, rather than Europe and thus that the European migrants contributed to the rise of population in America.

in the period 1857 to 1943, about 45% came from Italy, another 30% from Spain, at a time when both countries were undergoing traumatic economic and political transformations. There were also quite a few Germans, Poles, Frenchmen, British, as well as some Swiss, Belgians and Dutch. And apart from a handful of Japanese, there weren’t any non-Europeans. After World War II, a fair number of Germans went into exile in Argentina. (Lehmann J. 2015)

As history proves, this is a deja-vu since the current asylees of Europe wish to migrate to more democratic countries, where they can find protection. Despite the fact that,
after World War II, Europe learned to shift towards a multiculturalist mentality, the current situation does not present a Europe ready to handle a refugee crisis, as most of the refugees would like to arrive in the United States ultimately.

Europe has a long history of receiving and integrating refugees fleeing war zones, but the past influx arrived in controlled numbers, whereas with the current crisis, their number is almost impossible to keep track of. After World War II, the European Union was truly doing a fantastic job at integrating refugees and asylees that were entering its territory. In this context the United States is a political actor that deserves to be praised for integrating people with diverse cultural backgrounds arriving in a substantial number, which may serve as a model for the European Union, giving the current situation.

In 2007, John McCormick published the book “The European Superpower” in which he differentiates the European Union from United States and technically lays it on a golden pedestal, as if nothing could shake or change this great political international actor. McCormick states that he:

was deeply conscious of the contradictions in the US view of itself and of its place in the world, and repeatedly reminded of the failure of so many citizens of the ‘world’s last superpower’ to understand the international system. At the same time, my regular trips to EU have made me a strong believer in the idea that European integration is far more important and successful than most of the pessimists would have us believe. (McCormick p. 7)

McCormick’s work from 2007 may seem irrelevant for today’s case, but in my view, it adds value since, within that period, the European Union was strongly competing with the United States. It was regarded as a strong political actor, inclined towards achieving peace and ready to promote its values globally. Currently, the European Union
is slowly adopting the U.S. mentality of integrating future migrants, by applying stricter immigration rules.

Historically, Europe demonstrated its capability of integrating mixed cultures successfully. Regrettably, the current refugee influx has been handled in a very chaotic and divisive manner, proving that the European Union was not prepared to welcome as many people seeking help and protection.

When it comes to militarization, the European Union has a very peaceful approach. Since its foundation, the European leaders wanted to make the Union a global political actor through peaceful means, in which communication and good deeds would prevail in favor of using arms and violence. Unfortunately, for the European Union, the refugee influx shook the grounds of strong beliefs that Europeans used to have in regard to free trade and traveling.
Chapter 2 Methodology and Research Question

In Creswell’s (2003) book titled *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, he defines qualitative research as being “fundamentally interpretive. This means that the researcher makes an interpretation of the data” (p. 182) As an European who lived there for 18 years, and now seeing the struggle of my fellow European citizens, it hurts immensely. When I moved to the United States, I left behind a strong and prosperous European Union which now is unrecognizable due to the current refugee crisis.

My intention for this thesis is to analyze the current European crisis by conducting qualitative research in order to demonstrate the impact of the refugee crisis on the European Union. To do so, my sources will include the official websites of European Union and United Nations Human Rights Agency Commission reports; relevant current media articles; and significant literature in the field that focuses on this particular issue. In addition, I will be using public statistics and data of European Union institutions, surveys, and information published by different NGOs, associations and other entities that focus on human rights and the refugee integration in European Union countries. One challenge encountered during my research was that in order to address specific issues in Europe, I had to rely on articles found via online media. As the refugee problem is relatively new and constantly changing, there are not many books available that focus on the current political issues from Germany and Hungary, two politically polarized countries which I will focus on throughout my paper.
Thus, my research question will basically focus on: How did the influx of refugees, from war-torn countries, impacted the European Union, since 2015? More specifically, what can be learned about the refugee impact by examining and comparing the case of Germany vs Hungary? In addressing these matters, the focus is on the challenges currently faced by the European Union: respect of human rights, terrorism, national security, and refugee integration.

The limitations encountered during my research are the following: first, as the refugee crisis is relatively new, there are not many books available that have as their focus the current political conflict between Germany and Hungary. Therefore, I had to rely on articles published through the mass-media and books that addressed the general perspective of the refugee crisis, and then narrow down and compare the differences between the above mentioned polarized countries. Second, the complexity of the problem provides certain limitations on this type of research due to the very dynamic transition of the refugees and their impact. The political and socio-economic aspects of the European societies change at a very fast pace which makes it hard for the researcher to find tangible results. And third, the current European refugee issue is a problem that moves and changes in time. The available sources present information in real time, which restricts the researcher in forecasting the outcome of this refugee crisis, as the future of Europe is very unpredictable.
Chapter 3 Literature Review

In regards to literature review, there are a couple of authors that helped me shape my views and understandings of the refugee situation in Europe, either through their past works and their opinions on how the present should look or through their criticism of current political events. Researching a topic of current interest, which is constantly fluctuating due to socio-political factors, it challenges the researcher in addressing the right sources given the fact that most of the information can be grasped from mass-media reports and broadcasts.

The first author that helped me set forth some of my views with regards to the refugee crisis is Christopher Caldwell. In his work titled Reflections on the Revolution in Europe. Throughout his book, Caldwell does an exceptional job describing a post Christian Europe that is constantly changing due to the increasing number of Muslims who come to live on European soil. As Caldwell noted, the immigration issue comes with pros and cons. In the past, Europe’s appetite for low-cost laborers has attracted many immigrants from third world countries. At that time, this seemed a comfortable solution for all the parties involved. What was not expected is the fact that these people have settled and they brought every aspect of their culture with them, which obviously did not match the European standards. Due to this cultural discrepancy, Caldwell sees Europe as a very nationalistic territory that is not very welcoming of the new immigrants. It appears that Europe is not yet open to this cultural clash as many values and norms differ significantly.
The second book that helped me get a better view of Syria’s issue is titled *Syria* *Burning: A Short History of a Catastrophe* by Charles Glass. The author describes the problem of Syria through the lenses of his direct experience while visiting the country. Glass explains how the conflict started in 2011 with the punishment of the youngsters who ventured to express their political opinions through graffiti. He defines the citizens of Syria as being a group of people that were afraid to express their real thoughts. Although they did not embrace the idea of a totalitarian regime, under terror, they did support the Assad regime. Glass is also drawing attention to ISIS, the rebels, and the current Syrian regime which, while fighting, produces nothing but collateral victims and destroys the economy of the country and the future of the Syrian children. One of the most striking statements from his work in regards to the future of today’s children is: “what will Syria’s youth, when they are old, tell their children? All will have stories of cowering in the flimsy houses while bombs fell, of the deadening existence of refugee camps, or of escapes through treacherous seas and perilous highways to uncertain lives in strange lands.” (p. 131) Without doubt, in his book, Glass presents all the facts as to why the people of Syria need to flee their country to seek better chances in safer places.

*The New Odyssey* is the third book used for the purposes of this research and is one of my favorites as the young author Patrick Kingsley, in 2015, took the initiative of traveling and experiencing the refugee migration as a journalist. His work is a perfect blend of compassion and authority and redirects the reader towards the reality of the events, far from what the media presented. Kingsley started his journey where traffickers made it possible for refugees to flee their countries. He had the opportunity to interview the
smugglers and sailed with the refugees to the coast of Italy. He describes in detail each inhumane situation that migrants encountered during their transition to Greece and while crossing the Balkans. In the end, he concludes that the crisis was not a result of the great number of refugees fleeing their countries, but more a result of heartless and brainless border management. Kingsley refers to the refugee settlement in Europe as a utopia and noted that “the utopian system will nevertheless function only if refugees can be persuaded to stay in the countries to which they’re allocated” (p. 295). Despite the unfair treatment they received in Hungary, the refugees find means to transit towards their desired destination.

The fourth book by Helbling Mark, titled *Islamophobia in the West: Measuring and Explaining Individual Attitudes* talks about the early immigration of Muslim Europeans. The author is addressing common issues such as the attempts of Europeans to integrate the Muslims as well as the reasons why prejudice towards the Islamic culture has slowly increased within the past decades. As Helbling points out through the surveys he conducted, Islamophobia remains a complex phenomenon which is automatically linked to xenophobia, prejudice, and racism. The resentment that non-Muslims expressed toward Muslims became aggravated as a result of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Helbling discovered, within the niche he surveyed, that most of those people thought of Muslims as pertaining to the Arabs or Middle Easterners, while being clueless that Muslims could be natives of their country. His work has helped my research in presenting a post-9/11 Europe in which the Muslims were trying to acculturate.
The fifth book used for the purposes of this research is entitled *The Middle East Conflict* by Alan Axelrod. This is a book I would recommend for any student willing to study about the issues of the Middle East conflict. As the author explains, the current situation cannot be observed just through the lenses of the current events as it is important to understand how much history has helped shape what happens today in that part of the world. The ancient conflicts still drive most of the current events as the religious and political differentiations play a dramatic role in keeping middle easterners blocked in certain nationalistic views. This work is relevant for my research, as the author describes in detail how ISIS functions and what role religion plays when it comes to *Islamisation*.

The sixth book used as reference for the purposes of my research is titled *The European Superpower* by John McCormick. I was introduced to this book during one of my political science courses at Portland State University and at that time this work had a great impact on my opinion on the European Union as becoming the next great international superpower. While for most of us it became routine to describe the U.S. as a great superpower, in the year of 2007 when this book was published, the European Union was flourishing in terms of power and international peace influence before the economic crisis of 2008 hit. The way I applied this work on my research was by focusing on the European Union before the refugee crisis. McCormick argues that military power is overrated, a concept that the European Union encourages through their pro peace actions. While the author was arguing that the European Union was about to become the next superpower, the current events will only demonstrate that the European Union was never prepared politically and financially to embrace a large number of refugees.
In terms of articles, I attempted as much as possible to use published works that are posted on the European Union and United Nations’ official websites. For some references on the current events, I relied on sources published by the mass media. I used the works of Lehman, Lawrence and Ruffer which focused on the past refugee history and explain in detail how crucial the procedures of screening refugees were prior to their admission into the U.S. Through their work, we could interpret that, part of the crisis, was mainly the result of porous borders and lack of proper screening of those attempting to enter the European Union. Screening the asylum seekers must become a discipline with vigorous standard operational procedures applied worldwide. By implementing an international standard of screening, the asylum and refugee seekers, we would eliminate the “gray area” that comes with law interpretations, depending on the hosting country. Therefore, all countries should abide to the same procedures of accepting people in need.

In situations such as the refugee crisis, the world must come together and act as a united front. But instead, as we can witness through mass-media, it turns apart, resulting in more conflicts as politicians can’t find a solution in helping these asylees. My interpretation of a standardized operational procedure would imply that all countries are open to receive a certain number of asylees and help them accommodate and succeed, depending on the countries’ internal resources. The United Nations set the tools on respecting the human rights and how such crisis should be handled worldwide, and yet the methods of accepting and screening the asylees differ in each country, which leads to more chaos at the international level. As the media presented, the United States imposed a certain number of
asylees to be accepted, Australia is not very inclined to help very much, therefore Europe remained the only safe place for those people.
Chapter 4 Case Study: Germany vs. Hungary: Political Polarization Between Countries and Within the Countries’ Political Parties

Before we focus specifically on the polarization process between Hungary and Germany as well as within those countries, let’s turn to the European Union. The refugee crisis created tensions among European Union countries which caused many of them to opt out of certain terms of integration within the European Union and Schengen area. Despite the struggle resulting from the economic crisis of 2008, the European public was inclined to stand united, while cherishing the freedom to travel and work throughout Europe. The refugee issue created disparity between those European Union members “that seek an ever-closer union through greater integration and those that prefer to keep the European Union on a more intergovernmental footing in order to better guard their national sovereignty.” (Archick p. 4)

By focusing on one’s country political and economic problems, the politicians failed to address the most important challenge: integrating the new migrants in their societies. If these migrants would be properly screened and identified, then they could obtain legal documents and work to improve the economy. It is easier said than done, as none of the sources found convinced me that the Union took proper steps in integrating these refugees or conducting their background checks before they entered Europe.

Most of the European Union’s members carried a xenophobic mindset which blocked them from embracing an unfamiliar perspective in such situations. Their immediate reaction was to protect the interests of their own country and therefore withdraw
from certain terms proposed by the European Union, as a method of protecting their citizens. This is considered to occur mostly due to a frail leadership in the European Union. For instance,

German Chancellor Angela Merkel has played a central role in responding to the Eurozone crisis, Russian aggression in Ukraine, and the migrant and refugee flows, critics view her as being too hesitant and tactical in many instances, rather than acting as a leader of Europe writ large…others argue that too much power in the EU now resides with Germany alone, in part because both French President Francois Hollande and UK Prime Minister David Cameron have been constrained by domestic politics and economic preoccupations. (Archick p. 7)

Frequently, the media presented the German Chancellor Merkel as a strong supporter of the refugees and their integration, which resulted in attracting many opponents. Simultaneously, she was viewed, by the anti-refugees’ supporters, as the main enemy of the European Union and its principles. The refugee crisis did not only threaten Europe’s security but it also puzzled people’s trust in their politicians and the political parties represented within their societies. This divergence in opinions created the process of polarization among the countries and within countries. When a group of people loses their trust in one political party they tend to shift to the opposition party in the hope of better promises.

What happened in Europe was that the countries affected by the refugee crisis have tended to show more support for the right-wing nationalist parties, such as Alternative fur Deutchland, French National Front, and Dutch Freedom Party. Those that complain about the refugee crisis tended to point their fingers at Merkel, who created the open-door policy for over 1.1 million asylum seekers within the last year. Merkel’s decision to welcome this
unexpected number of guests into Europe has prompted her opponents to launch protests and rallies against her. Within the world of European politics,

Merkel’s Christian Democratic Union (CDU), whose support has eroded across the country as a direct result of the refugee crisis, is expected to take a bashing, struggling to stay in power in Saxony-Anhalt and failing to take back either Rhineland-Palatinate from the Social Democrats (SPD) or Baden-Württemberg from the Greens. The winners are likely to be the rightwing populists whose presence has shifted the tectonic plates of Germany’s political landscape. (Connoly, K., 12 March, 2016, with three German states voting on ‘Super Sunday’, the chancellor’s Christian Democrats are braced for a rough ride)

Looking at the European map provided by Express UK Newspaper, we can observe the number of countries that shifted, in 2015, towards right-wing nationalism due to the immigration crisis. More and more European politicians are starting to share the same rising nationalistic political opinions as the U.S. president, Donald Trump, who firmly believes that harsh immigration reforms would aid the National Security of any country. As a result, banning refugees was believed to increase the security. However, it diminishes the value of human rights. This created an ambiguity around the most important values of the European Union. Harmonization among the European Union members is distorted by this problem and holds a very unpredictable future for Europe.
In each European country, there are very strong nationalistic parties. For example, among the parties that stood up for their anti-refugee views, is the Netherlands’ Party for Freedom, led by Geert Wilders. During a parliament speech, he referred to this situation as ‘Islamic asylum tsunami’ and labeled the refugees ‘testosterone bombs’ who threaten the young European women. (Sims A., 2016) Similar views were shared by the French National Front, Dutch Freedom Party, and UK Independence Party. Also, the far-right Freedom Party (FPO) has stepped into the chaotic political vacuum that has ensued, quietly but confidently positioning itself as a protector of Austria's heritage and borders against the tide of refugees. In late September, the party stormed to success in local elections, doubling its share of the vote to more than 30% and securing 18 seats in Upper Austria, second only to the ruling regional conservatives. (Gutteridge N., 2015)

Since the beginning of this crisis, the right wing nationalist parties started rising, again while receiving support from the nostalgic citizens that have always been against multiculturalism and acceptance of refugees. One important detail to be noted in regards to the right-wing nationalists is that they are anti-immigration and anti-European Union, while completely ignoring the Rule of Law which is based on democratic agreements among all European Union members, one of which is the agreement to accept and protect people that flee war countries.

Nationalists do not want to share their countries nor accept any blend with the culture of foreigners. Besides Alternative for Deutschland and Fedesz, other right wing nationalist groups existing in Europe can be mentioned:

- Golden Down: These Greek neo-fascists use Nazi-style symbolism and have expressed admiration for Hitler’s regime. Their leader, Nikolaos Michaloliakos – who in 2012 called the gas chambers “a lie” – rejects
the label “neo-Nazi”, preferring “Greek nationalist”. Exploiting the
fallout of austerity and the migration crisis, Golden Dawn came third in
Greece’s September 2015 election, winning 7 per cent of the vote.

- Front National: The French party is enjoying a renaissance after a
successful move to “detoxify” the brand under Marine Le Pen, the
daughter of its first leader, Jean-Marie Le Pen. Anti-immigration
rhetoric brought the FN huge gains in the 2015 local elections – it came
first in six of France’s 13 regions, beating the two main parties.

- The Finns: The nationalist True Finns emerged from near-obscurity to
become the third-largest party in Finland in 2011. “Revolution!” the
press declared, as they won 39 of the 200 seats in parliament, adding 34
to their 2007 tally. But failing to work in coalition with governing
parties condemned them to obscurity. Now known as The Finns, they
returned strongly, becoming the second-largest party in parliament in
2015 and joining the current coalition. Led by Timo Soini, The Finns
are Eurosceptic and anti-globalist.

- Lega Nord: Italy’s neo-fascists have enjoyed a bounce after slumping to
a historic low of 4 per cent in the 2013 election for the lower house. But
the party that used to be a partner in Silvio Berlusconi’s coalition,
winning 10.2 per cent of the vote in the 2009 European parliamentary
elections, has been given new life by Matteo Salvini, 43, who became
its leader in 2013. It has also proved adept at exploiting the migrant
crisis, which has hit Italy hard, and it has been polling fourth among
Italian parties (about 13 per cent) for much of this year. (Chakelias,
2017)

As much as the refugee crisis should be Europe’s wide problem, many countries
have no desire in supporting this project and decided to stand strong in their anti-refugees
views. And so, among all the European countries, there are two that stand strong in their
beliefs and continuously present opposing arguments in regard to the refugee problems,
respectively, Germany and Hungary. Germany was the country to implement the largest
collective admission programme in the European Union for Syrian refugees, admitting
36,000 people between 2013 and 2015. At the same time, individual asylum requests from
Syria exceeded this number by far; in the first ten months of 2015 alone 104,000 Syrian
applications were registered in Germany. (Kietz D. 2015)
With this open-door mentality, Germany intended to stand pro human rights and help those who seek peaceful places to live. Regrettably, this plan was not welcomed by all the citizens of Germany as the influx of refugees got out of control and created a lot of unpleasant events on European Union’s territory. More so, the victory of President Trump encouraged the right-wing nationalists to stand even stronger in the belief that they would have the support from a newly empowered politician that shares the same desire for banning refugees from their countries. Former premier of Bavaria, Edmund Stoiber made an exceptional comment with regards to Merkel’s open-door policy, saying it “resulted in many European countries, for instance, Eastern European ones, but also Italy and France, understanding the refugee problem as primarily a German problem. The refugee crisis is a Europe-wide issue and has to be handled through collaborative effort.” (Unknown Author., RT News, 29 February 2016, Bavaria ex-leader: Govt’s refugee policy bolsters rise of European far-right)

In Germany, one of the most notable right wing nationalistic party is the Alternative fur Deutschland (AfD), which translates to the Alternative for Germany. This party wins its popularity among those German citizens that want their country only for themselves. As presented by news, the truth is that the AfD belongs to Germany — as bad as that sounds. It has emerged from within German society. The AfD is not just popular among people who were left behind after the German reunification, with lost patriots, or flag-wagging fairground demagogues — even if it appears that way after watching Björn Höcke on TV. The AfD’s strength comes from the fact that it has managed to attract followers not merely from communities with radical right-wing positions, but also from mainstream German society. (Christ, 2017)
This party was and is in a strong opposition to the Chancellor Merkel’s political party: the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), a political party with an international open vision towards human rights and peacekeeping. In 2016, the CDU party was standing strong on influencing the European countries in allowing access to the refugees into Western Europe. Due to the unfortunate terrorist attacks and the negative image created by those events, in 2017, we are witnessing CDU having a slightly different approach to the refugee crisis. Thus, they encourage more control from the law enforcement in order to keep discipline within their country. But the aspect that Alternative for Deutschland is ignoring is that the birthrate and the labor force are extremely low in Germany. The refugee crisis can also be seen as labor for rebuilding Germany’s economy and increase its population. An article published by DW Newspaper noted that:

The large influx of refugees to Germany over the past two years has thrown long-term prognoses into confusion. In 2015, Germany recorded net migration of more than one million people as a result of the arrival of refugees from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan. In 2016, that figure was 750,000 people. By way of comparison, between 1990 and 2008 more people emigrated from Germany each year than moved there. "The migration events of recent years have contributed to the fact that the population as a whole has increased," Germany's Minister of the Interior Thomas de Maiziere (CDU) said at the presentation of the report in Berlin. Statisticians recently announced a new population high: At the end of 2016 there were 82.8 million people living in Germany. (Fuchs, 2017)

By helping refugees integrate in their societies, Germany will help create a new generation of workers that come with certain skills from their native countries. Therefore, Germany’s focus should be on helping the new migrants understand the system of their host country and prepare them for different domains of work.
But regardless of the benefits that the refugees may bring on Germany, the Alternative for Deutschland party will continue to be against Merkel’s efforts to integrate refugees. To better strengthen the explanation with regards to the rivalry between these two political parties, in 2016, *The Guardian* noted that:

Angela Merkel has suffered a sobering defeat in regional elections in her constituency of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, with her Christian Democratic Union (CDU) coming third behind the Social Democrats (SPD) and the rightwing populists Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) […] For the past 10 years, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern has been governed in a “grand coalition” between the SPD and CDU, mirroring the current power structure at federal level. But an increasingly divisive debate over the consequences of the German government’s strategy during the refugee crisis has spurred support for AfD – fronted in the state by Leif-Erik Holm, a radio presenter based in Berlin’s multicultural Prenzlauer Berg district – even though the state has been largely insulated from the refugee crisis. (Oltermann, 2016)

Under these circumstances, Chancellor Merkel was to be blamed for each terrorist attack that occurred on European soil and for being the main political leader encouraging the refugee crisis. After facing a year of accusations, Chancellor Merkel took the decision of strengthening the security of Germany in order to comply with the requirements of nationalist German citizens. As a result,

Merkel's Christian Democratic Union (CDU) has taken an important step in positioning itself for the parliamentary election campaign next fall. The party's federal presidium has approved a white paper for the party conference on December 6 in Essen. The 21-page paper, titled "Orientation in difficult times – for a successful Germany and Europe," is the party's reaction to the country's growing right-wing populist movement […] Isolationism, protectionism and populism have never worked before, the paper says. But it doesn't delve too much into complexities. […] Merkel's party also says it is committed to improving domestic security, suggesting increased video surveillance and better equipping the police as options. (Kiesel, 2016)
This response was influenced by the AfD right-wing party, as well as the Bavarian democratic sister party, Christian Social Union, a party that shares the same views as CDU, only with more focus on security. At a political level, Germany’s parties went back and forth trying to influence people’s votes until the elections in September 2017. Ironically, this looked more as a competition for power and prestige, and less as a battle for human rights and peace achievements. This conflict presented a tension between the need to respect human rights versus strengthening the national security of Germany.

Hungary stands in firm opposition to Germany’s objectives of aiding the refugees. Right from the very beginning of this refugee crisis, Hungarian media were eager to present Hungary’s stands and methods of keeping the refugees as far as possible from its borders. Patrick Kingsley, who experienced in person the refugee crisis throughout Europe, noted that:

Nevertheless, once they’re on Hungarian soil, the refugees are not being treated in anything like a human way. They’re being allowed to pass through the country towards Austria and then Germany, which has promised to welcome them with open arms. But only after being registered- and in the process robbed of their dignity. After entering Hungary along the railway at Roszke, most of the refugees are then herded into an empty field, and forced to wait there in the cold for several days until space opens up in the registration camps nearby. Once they get to the camps, life is hardly better. As they wait to be registered and fingerprinted, the refugees are kept in cages, and fed like animals. (Kingsley p. 267)

The author also mentioned in his book that there is a video leaked on the Internet of the 2015 incident he mentioned. Out of curiosity, I check the source of his statement. The video is available on The Telegraph website with the report “The video, shot secretly by an Austrian volunteer who visited the flashpoint Roszke camp on Wednesday, shows some
150 people wildly scrambling for bags of sandwiches thrown at them by Hungarian police wearing helmets and hygiene masks in a fenced-in enclosure inside a big hall.” (Spritzendorfer-Ehrenhauser, 2015)

Courtesy to The Telegraph newspaper, the photo on the right speaks of itself; an image that instantly brings tears to any human being capable of respect and appreciation for human’s rights.

This is the most revolting way of treating humans in need. We can conclude from this event that nothing was learned from past conflicts and that many are still inclined to repeat tragedies of the past.

Now refraining from further criticizing this 2015 event and refocusing on the political polarization, all the events that occur on Hungary’s territory occurred under Prime Minister Viktor Orban’s orders. What Mr. Orban started could be described as a war against refugees by violating the human rights of the individuals fleeing war-torn countries. Human Rights Watch noted that:
the Hungarian Government has stirred up xenophobic sentiments against refugees and migrants and has gone to great lengths, and cost, to spew hateful messages nationwide. Along with restrictive new laws making life difficult for asylum seekers and refugees, anti-migrant rhetoric by decision makers and high-ranking politicians is commonplace. Asylum seekers and refugees are called, “intruders,” and “potential terrorists,” all bent on destroying Western civilization, burying Christianity and the Western culture. Prime Minister Viktor Orbán himself in July referred to migration as “poison” (Gall, 2016)

Viktor Orban’s political party is the right-wing nationalist party called Fidesz, which holds a position on refugees similar to the AfD in Germany. In comparison to Germany’s citizens which were pro refugees before the attacks occurred throughout Europe, the Hungarians were firm believers of banning the refuge seekers right from the beginnings of the crisis. The Huffington Post stated that

while human rights groups and the United Nations have condemned Orban’s actions as inhumane and unacceptable, the prime minister’s response to the crisis has shored up his popular support at home. A poll conducted earlier this month showed that a massive 82 percent of Hungarians favor tighter immigration controls, according to The Wall Street Journal. Orban’s Fidesz party commands strong support from the public, which shows the prime minister’s recurring knack of turning crisis into political opportunity. (Robins-Early N., 2016)

Prime Minister Orban is a severe opponent of Merkel’s leadership and refuses to implement an open-door policy when it comes to migration. As a leader, Orban puts his nation’s security above the importance of helping people fleeing from war-torn countries. As we can see, his nationalistic mindset is also praised by the citizens of his country, which creates a paradox when it comes to respecting human rights and the unity of Hungary within the European Union. As well as the AfD, Orban and the Fidesz party created the
idea that Hungarian citizens could become a minority within their own country and that the
refugees will settle and impose their values, and eventually take over their countries.

On the opposite side of Viktor Orban’s party, with very little influence in Hungary, the
democratic parties, such as Hungarian Social Democratic Party and Democratic
Coalition, encourage the entry of refugees into Hungary and stand by the NGO’s that aim
to help those transiting from their country towards Western Europe:

The Hungarian Social Democratic Party (MSZP) remains in determined
opposition to Viktor Orban’s Government. Its members voted against the
new anti-immigration laws criminalizing crossing of the border fence and supported by far-right Jobbik but the party remains “positively neutral”
towards the refugee issue, not to irritate their electorate. Democratic
Coalition (DK) has proved to be most sympathetic to the asylum seekers
with its leader, Ferenc Gyurcsány, hosting refugees at his home during
Budapest’s Keleti Railway Station impasse. It, however, has little say in the
Hungarian Parliament. (Skora, 2016)

In his book, Kingsley also made a reference about the Jobbik party, stating that they
are the strongest opponents of Viktor Orban’s immigration policies and that “Orban wants
to prove that he can be every bit as reactionary as his rivals. First, he erected a series of
billboards, nominally aimed at immigrants, telling them they couldn’t take the jobs of
locals. Later Orban argued that migrants endanger the very foundations of Christian
Europe.” (Kingsley p. 225) As we can see, there is a small percentage of democrats in
Hungary but Orban’s plan of keeping the refugees away succeeded well into 2017. As
reported by Human Rights Watch:

A draft bill proposed by the Hungarian government would allow the
authorities to automatically detain asylum seekers in transit zones and to
summarily return asylum seekers to the Serbian border from anywhere in
Hungary, Human Rights Watch and the Hungarian Helsinki Committee said in a February 24 letter to the European Commission calling for it to intervene. These provisions would apply under the current immigration “state of crisis,” in effect since September 2015 and in force until September 2017, and any such declared emergency in future. (Unknown Author, Human Rights Watch, 7 March, 2017)

Similarly, the deputy director of Human Rights Watch (2017), Benjamin Ward, commented that “using transit zones as detention centers and forcing asylum seekers who are already inside Hungary back to the Serbian side of the razor-wire fence is abusive, pointless, and cruel.” The same source argues that Hungary saw a decrease in asylum application in 2016. The law passed to diminish the entries at the border with the Balkans, as well as the violent acts of Hungarian cops, discouraged the refugees from seeking asylum through Hungary.

With these facts being presented, my interpretation is that the nationalistic mindset is very strong in Hungary as no one seems to be above their nation. While Orban’s acts can be blamed and associated with violations of human rights, they are also commended by his nationalist supporters. As result, avoid transitioning through Hungary, I perceive it to be safer for refugees.

Thus, as response to Hungary’s ardent decision of treating the refugees poorly, in early 2017 the European Commission decided to apply sanctions on countries that didn’t support the rights of the refugees. Poland, Hungary, and Czech Republic are held accountable for their decisions, as European Union leaders acknowledge the need for solidarity and a humane response to the refugee crisis. As Euractiv noted:
The EU launched legal action yesterday (13 June) against Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic for refusing to take in their share of refugees under a controversial solidarity plan. The move shows the frustration in Brussels over the slow response to the scheme, which aimed to relocate 160,000 migrants from frontline migrant crisis states Italy and Greece but which has so far seen only 20,000 moved. EU Migration Commissioner Dimitris Avramopoulos declared “I regret to say that despite our repeated calls, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland have not yet taken the necessary action.” (Unknown Author, Euractiv, 13 June, 2017, EU opens sanctions procedure against Hungary, Poland and Czech Republic over refugees)

Germany and Hungary taking opposite sides, when it comes to dealing with the refugee influx, created a strong political polarization between them. While in Germany, Chancellor Merkel has great chances of keeping the country democratic and to regain the trust of its citizens, in Hungary it’s exactly the opposite. The right-wing nationalist party of Viktor Orban is victorious in keeping the refugees away from Hungary. The irony of the situation stands in the misbalance between human rights versus national security. Therefore, let’s acknowledge Germany’s situation versus Hungary’s. Through Chancellor Merkel’s decision, Germany sacrificed its national security to advantage the respect of human rights. Although the plan succeeded, it brought numerous divergences among the citizens but gained the respect of the United Nations due to its attempts to save the individuals fleeing war zones. In Hungary, on the other hand, at Prime Minister Orban’s dictation, Hungary chose national security over human rights. This decision is appreciated by most Hungarian citizens, but highly unappreciated by the United Nations.

Given the prevailing conditions, there is no recipe for harmonization between countries and among its citizens due to personal beliefs and political influence. Although the conflict reached high stakes between Hungary and Germany, under the European
Union’s rules, they must function as a whole and find ways to keep an easy flow of refugee seekers. More importantly, both countries’ leaders should acknowledge that it is necessary to create the balance between human rights and national security. The refugees are a byproduct of war. Therefore, if the problem is unmanageable leading to a polarization between human rights and national security, then the problem of war needs to be addressed expeditiously. No one would put their children in a boat, attempting to leave their home, unless the sea is safer than their homeland. Politicians are drowning in debates and regulations with regards to this crisis, while ignoring the most important aspect of this problem, which is the respect of human rights. Individuals fleeing the war countries bring all sorts of concerns with them. Their human rights must be respected while the national security of their new countries must be maintained. The lack of documentation leads to identity theft which benefits the terrorists wanting to enter the European Union by all means.

**The Function of War**

Before continuing in more depth, it is relevant to understand the difference between a refugee and a migrant. The Geneva Convention of 1951 defines a refugee as a person that has a 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 the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it. (Unknown Author, United Nations Human Rights Convention, 2016)
On the other hand, a migrant is an individual who by choice seeks better education and economic opportunities in more prosperous societies of the world. But in regard to the differentiation between migrant and refugees, Kingsley noted that:

When you’re describing a large group of people whom you don’t know, it makes sense to define them by what they’re doing and rather why they’re doing it. Migrant is the most efficient way of achieving this: in its purest sense it simply means someone on the move- and casts no aspersions, positive or negative, on why they set out in the first place. Secondly, many of those who push for the use of ‘refugee’ do so by defining refugees in opposition to migrants. Refugees, they say, deserve rights, whereas migrants don’t. Refugees had good reason to leave home; migrants did not. This is a problematic differentiation. (p. 262)

With the classifications between refugees and migrants being established, the current Middle East situation has massively impacted the number of asylum seekers in Europe. We cannot look at the refugee crisis without considering the current conflict situation in the war zones. The Middle East has historically proven to be a problematic area of the world due to its uniqueness and modality of interaction with other international actors. Sadly enough, from a human rights perspective we must acknowledge the suffering of civilians that become victims of some Middle Eastern atrocities regularly.

From a global perspective, due to political and economic reasons, it will always be us versus them— “us” being the privileged white people born in Western civilizations, “them” being the asylum seekers, the less fortunate humans on the planet who end up seeking justice and protection through the rule of law implemented by World’s superpowers. When these people seek justice and their fundamental human rights to be respected, they should find a feasible way to present their position, given the discrepancy
between their cultures and the western culture. As noted by Benjamin Lawrence and Galya Ruffer:

In the adjudication of asylum cases, with their potential life and death repercussions, we are all truly children of Babel, struggling to overcome the linguistic, racial, religious, ethnic, sexual/gender, and in general, the psychological and cultural divides in order to facilitate communication on critical issues between asylum seekers and asylum judges. At the heart of most asylum cases is the issue of credibility, then s/he is likely to receive refugee status and protection. However, many factors of psychology and culture often cause a disconnection in communication and comprehension that can and does interfere with fair and full credibility resolution. (p. 30)

What these authors presented is the normal track of asylum seekers generally applicable in the United States. In the situation of the European crisis, the refugees decided to leave their camps and seek justice on their own. While they were screened through various methods in their camps, most of them left their countries without a background check or by claiming a new identity, since the war destroyed their goods, including their documents.

From a humanistic perspective, their actions are not to be blamed, since it is in our nature to want to start anew and leave what is painful behind. But the same strategy is used by the current terrorists in Europe to infiltrate and later plan attacks. Lawrence and Ruffer also noted that,

when refugees apply for asylum, they have to relate a narrative of their persecution in their country of origin. Evaluating the veracity or otherwise of these narratives is central to the asylum adjudication process. Over the past decade or so, determination of national identity has become vitally important in assessing whether someone claiming the right to asylum is a legitimate refugee or economic migrant. Border agencies have focused increasingly on the possibility that ‘economic migrants’ might pose as citizens of particular countries in order to gain access to Britain as
recognized refugees. This phenomenon has become known as ‘nationality swapping’. (p. 202)

At this stance, the European Union turns into a paradox due to its promises to protect the basic human rights of the refugees while being political and economically inept for an event at this large scale. The present refugee crisis has caused the European citizens to take sides and support the pro and con refugee political parties, caused distress and injustice to the refugees and European nationals, caused mistrust and judgement towards the current political leaders, and caused the European Union member states to violate certain principles of human rights, as seen on the news. In terms of International Law, the current situation has violated the

ius cogens international law norm of the principle of non-refoulement. Ius cogens norms of international law are fundamental principles binding all nation states. Non-refoulement is considered part of these international norms, and ensures that asylum seekers are not automatically repatriated to states where they might face inhuman or degrading treatment. (Balogh p. 4)

While the balance between human rights and national security is heavily disputed in Europe, it all concludes that the current security situation of Europe is weak. In straightforward terms, the present immigration state is viewed as an economic and cultural hazard to the European Union society. In 2004,

the EU established Frontex Border Agency with the aim of ensuring Member State operational cooperation at the European Union’s external borders and curbing flows of irregular migrants in the framework of an European Union common policy. Frontex’s border control practices—through which the European Union and its Member States aim to prevent irregular migrants from entering European Union territory—are now very salient in political, societal and legal dimensions. (Mungianu p. 1)
The European Union’s purpose has always been to assure the protection of those in need, as its member states build upon the promise “to protect those individuals trying to escape persecution and ill treatments.” (Mungianu p. 2)

Europe has created a democratic image which represents the key to freedom for many individuals from third world countries. In addition, the Schengen agreement was ratified in 1985 with the purpose to “enable the European working population to freely travel and settle in any European Union State, but it fell short of abolishing border controls within the Union.” (European Commission, 2016) At first, this agreement was signed between France, Germany, Luxemburg, and Netherlands and throughout time they have incorporated other European countries that have more social and economic stability. This was an agreeable situation that allowed people to finally move without having to put up with the hustle of obtaining a visa or worry too much about documents and health care. Even though the European Union’s borders are accessible and porous to some degree, the Frontex agency assures that irregular immigrants won’t have access into the European countries. Mungianu also noted that:

According to the Schengen Borders Code, which contains the rule governing the movement of persons across E.U. borders, the control of the external borders consists of border checks carried out at border crossing points and the surveillance of border crossing points outside the fixed opening hours. (p. 4)

Despite the existence of Frontex and the policies implemented by the European Union with respect to immigration and border crossing, the desperation of the refugees to save their lives have caused them to break the law and trade their horrifying home countries with discrimination and unfair treatments received at European borders. The misjudging of these refugees along with the fear of terrorism has led to culture clashes. Part of cultural
clashes has been the result of the unfounded assumption that refugees have invaded Europe to destroy its cultural identity and to vanish Christianity from all European countries. Since 9/11 the Muslims have been targeted as the main enemy of the Western Civilization, matter that will be further addressed in the next subchapters.

Culture clashes: The story of European Muslims before and after 9/11

The Muslim culture has been around Europe for centuries and their connection to Western civilization has been on a more positive note in terms of trade and culture exchange. For decades, Europeans and Muslims have tried to understand one another and find means to cooperate in order to find a common future.

Europe in antiquity owed a great deal to Islam and classical Islamic civilization. Personalities such as Ibn Rushd may have had their names Latinized (Averroes) and their faith marginalized in historical accounts, but the existence of Muslim communities in Europe dates back to the seventh century, not long after the emergence of the faith itself. Some authors have illustrated the existence of a deeply Muslim component to European history in the case of al-Andalus (Andalusia), as this was the most distinctive example of a dominantly Muslim society in Europe. It was not, however, the sole illustration: Muslims had reached other parts of European territory as well. (Hellayer p. 2-3)

But the real wave of Muslim migration started in the 1970’s and 1980’s when Europe was relying on minimum wage laborers as means to address the economic crisis of that time. Even then, as today, these Muslim nationals were mistreated in terms of labor rights and freedom. As noted by Hefner:

Immigration on a large scale only began when Western Europeans sought to import low-paid workers from abroad. This process began in France towards the end of the nineteenth century, much earlier than elsewhere because of France’s close ties to its African territories. Other states and their industries recruited workers in the reconstruction years immediately
following the Second World War, and many of these workers happened to be Muslims. Although initially this recruitment was for temporary work, by the 1960’s families had begun to settle in Europe. By 1974, the global economic recession had led most countries to curtail labor migration, allowing further immigration only for family reunification or political asylum. (p. 218)

The same author stated that “younger Muslim men and women, frustrated at the difficulties they found in gaining employment and equal rights, turned to religion as a source of positive self-identification” (p.219) This resulted in the raise of Islamic culture in Europe, as these people had to stand for their rights. Since then, the divergences kept growing, especially after the tragic event of 9/11. If before Europe was just aware of their existence, but accepted them as part of their culture, after 9/11 Muslims were viewed from a negative perspective.

As we have noted so far, the history of Muslim immigration is not new to Europe. Generations of Muslims have migrated towards democratic European countries since decades ago. The attacks of 9/11 created an international storm in which Muslims are being categorized as terrorists. As such, the integration of Muslims is more challenging now than prior to 9/11. More so, because the Muslims stand for different norms and perhaps the rest of the world did not take the time to educate themselves about the subcultures of the Muslim world. As Helbling noted:

The Islamic percentage of the European population has grown dramatically over the past several decades. In response, many states initially adopted policies that sought to accommodate the religious practices of their Muslim population (Fetzer and Soper 2005). In turn, European far-right activists helped engineer a populist backlash against Muslims, and the results have been felt in mainstream public policy and electoral politics throughout the region. France has banned the wearing of the hijab in public schools and the French legislature voted to outlaw the wearing of the burka in public places,
the lower house of parliament in Belgium passed a similar burka ban, and the Netherlands and Britain have proposed doing the same. The latest of these actions was the 2009 referendum vote in Switzerland that banned the construction of new minarets. A clear majority of Swiss voters (57.5 percent) affirmed the proposal, making Switzerland the only country in Europe with an outright prohibition on the construction of these religious structures (Antonsich and Jones 2010). That the Swiss referendum is consistent with what other states have done to restrict the rights of European Muslims does not, however, explain why the Swiss voted so convincingly in favor of the ban. (Helbling p. 101)

Refraining from generalizing, among the refugees there are individuals who, despite seeking a better culture to live in, will refuse to adapt to the new cultural norms. When culture clashes occur, there is a natural need of protecting one’s own identity. Assuming that the terrorist attacks were made as protests against the Western culture, they make the acculturation process for all refugees even more complex because a great percentage of public opinion labels all refugees as possible terrorists. 9/11 has fueled the conflict between Middle Easterners and Westerners, causing the vast majority of world’s population to be biased against Muslim. As noted by Helbling:

Prejudice against Muslims has been extensively documented and finds expression in popular media, discriminatory governmental policies and hate crimes (Gottschalk and Greenberg 2008; Love 2009). Understanding such prejudice has become a matter of special urgency since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (2002) reported that in the months following those attacks, hate crimes against Muslims in the United States rose 1,600 percent; subtle and overt discrimination against Muslims increased in the UK as well (Sheridan 2006). A recent review of the literature found that both implicit and explicit negative attitudes toward Muslims in the United States rose in the years following the 9/11 attacks, due in part to biased media portrayals (Cashin 2010). (Helbling p. 21)
The terrorist attacks of 9/11 have caused Muslims to be the elephant in the room, so to speak, in any environment. Muslims, in general, are automatically associated with threat to national security. The differentiation between Muslim and non-Muslim leads to issues of mistrust starting from cultural norms to religious preferences which makes their integration in Europe more challenging. Chebel d'Appollonia, A., & Reich, Simon argued that the integration of Muslim foreigners is directly linked to national security since the 2001 terrorist attacks on New York:

It is from this standpoint that the linkage between security interests and the integration of immigrants seems clearest. A failure to integrate Muslim migrants in Europe over the past forty years has created immigrant enclaves where radicals are well received and are able to organize with relative ease. In Germany, for example, immigrant enclaves have provided spawning grounds for foreign terrorist groups, such as the Hamburg cell that played such a key role in the 9/11 attacks. Terrorist organizers use marginalization as a recruitment tool, helped by the fact that a failure of integration has minimized senses of loyalty to the host country and led to restricted economic opportunities for many immigrants, which can spawn frustration and resentment. (p. 41)

However, with the unexpected wave of refugees, Europe is struggling to connect people that pertain to two different cultures, respectively Middle Easterners and Europeans. This again, links to the balance between human rights and national security, as Europeans have mixed feelings in regards to the refugee situation, as seen in the case study of Germany versus Hungary. Regarding the integration of foreigners, Chebel d'Appollonia, A., & Reich, Simon argued that:

When considering the role of the integration of foreigners as a security issue, it is also important to recognize that integration has two dimensions, not one. In other words, if we seek to foster integration, we must move beyond a simple notion that it is something the state can mandate on a unilateral basis. Successful integration represents a type of social contract,
and both parties—immigrant and native—must find the terms of this arrangement agreeable. In other words, it is important to carefully consider agency in the process of integration. Moreover, when considering integration, we must also recognize that this may involve several types of integration—social (assimilation), political (equality), and economic (access). (p. 45)

The opposition to foreigners’ integration starts with the right-wing European nationalists that are against refugees and their rights. Since 2015, we are witnessing a new culture clash that has gradually become stronger since 9/11. Hate for Muslims has increased as a result of numerous terrorist attacks throughout Europe. This dislike of Muslim culture is taught in classes, through media, by religious leaders, politicians, professors and the rest of right-wing supported that stand with the refugee ban. Those European nationals that continue to discriminate against Muslims start from the cultural and religious differentiations to economics and demographics. The same categories of people are against the European Union as it promotes multiculturalism and collaboration with other countries through peaceful means.

In terms of security, ISIS represents the greatest threat not only to the European Union but to the entire world. Based on their country of origin, people tend to associate, in an ignorant manner, all terrorists with Muslims and vice versa. On this matter, Christopher Caldwell noted that

not only is Islam a varied spectrum of beliefs and cultures—Arab and non-Arab, Sunni and Shia, traditional and modern—but that spectrum is further refracted by Islam’s sudden entry into Europe. In what sense do English-speaking Pakistanis share a culture with Italian-speaking Moroccans or German-speaking Turks? To speak of the Muslims was an ignorant stereotype, an optical illusion. It was what the French would call an amalgame. (p. 126)
However, the attacks throughout Europe created the confusion that all terrorists come from Muslim countries. Distinctively, the lack of knowledge about multiculturalism within the Arab world has caused the Westerners to wrongfully tag those people as Islamists, terrorists, or as those that are against democracy.

One of the greatest tensions feared by the European public is that the Muslims are migrating to Europe with the potential to tear apart the Union and sweep away Christianity, a mindset that is also encouraged by the Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban. On this matter, Christopher Caldwell (2009) does an exceptional job at describing a post-Christian Europe that is continuously changing due to the increasing number of Islamic members that come to live on European soil. As Caldwell noted, the immigration issue comes with pros and cons. In the past, Europe’s appetite for low-cost laborers has attracted many immigrants from third world countries. At that moment, this seemed a comfortable solution for all parties involved. What was not expected is that these people settle in and retain core aspects of their culture that do not mesh with European standards. Due to this cultural discrepancy, Caldwell sees Europe as very nationalistic and not very welcoming of the new immigrants. It is definitely clear that Europe is susceptible to cultural clashes, as many of its values and norms differ significantly.

**Domestic Terrorism and the Refugee Crisis**

Despite the unmanageable number of refugees and the attempts of the European politicians to guarantee that the human rights are respected, one of the most provocative conditions that Europe is facing at the moment is domestic terrorism. Thus, in Europe’s
case, it is impossible to focus on domestic terrorism without taking into consideration the external ramifications which are directly linked to ISIS, also known as the Islamic State. Therefore, within the current crisis, it all starts with the filtering of asylum seekers from terrorists, which is a difficult and sensitive process as leaders must respect human rights while defending national security. In order to distinguish among the rightful asylum seekers, the European Commission proposed in December of 2015 a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council in which they anticipate for the:

Member States to carry out systematic checks on persons enjoying the right of free movement under Union law (i.e. EU citizens and members of their families who are not EU citizens) when they cross the external border against databases on lost and stolen documents as well as in order to verify that those persons do not represent a threat to public order and internal security. (European Council, 07 December, 2016, Schengen Borders Code: agreement to reinforce checks at external borders)

It is common knowledge that when one intends to migrate to a different country he/she is expected to present certain documents, such as a visa, in order to be granted entrance. In the refugee situation, the vast majority have no documents to present since their possessions were destroyed during bombardments, nor were they ever granted a visa to enter in Europe. Because of the refugee invasion, Hungary was the first country to stand strong on its immigration reforms, by building a tall fence and blocking the refugees from traveling through its territory. This led to a domino effect in which more countries followed their example to block or control the influx of the refugees for the sake of security.

According to EUROPOL,

The terrorist threat is not limited to one Member State and does not only result from external factors. The phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters remains a major source of concern. The number of EU citizens traveling to Syria and Iraq to support terrorist groups is continuously increasing. It is
estimated that up to 5,000 EU citizens departed to the conflict zones and most probably joined ISIS forces. (Unknown Author, Te-Sat – Europol, 2015)

Additionally, the lack of documentation creates a lot of stress as many terrorists took advantage and infiltrated themselves throughout Europe. When he was the United Nation’s High Commissioner for Refugees, António Guterres noted that “Syria has become the great tragedy of this century, a disgraceful humanitarian calamity with suffering and displacement unparalleled in recent history. The only solace is the humanity shown by the neighboring countries in welcoming and saving the lives of so many refugees.” (Unknown Author, United Nations Refugee Agency, 3 September 2013)

Syria seems to be the most problematic country of the last few years, as a great number of refugees continue to flee from it. This country’s nightmare started with the Arab Spring in March of 2011, when Syrian reformist aligned their protests with those of many other nations, and basically wished for nothing more than genuine democracy. The results of the Jasmine Revolution in Tunisia gave them hope that change is possible and so they got the strength to stand up for their rights. (Axelrod, p. 283) In this context, ISIS used the opportunity to take over part of their land and destroy many lives because “islamist terrorism is intended to achieve certain political ends in the name of religion” (Axelrod, p. 214). According to their dogma, individuals that do not follow the laws of the Quran are infidels and should be eliminated in Allah’s name.

According to The Washington Post, the most atrocious and fearless terrorist group is currently represented by ISIS. This organization used to control a large territory between Syria and Iraq, including a whole Iraqi city, Mosul, and Raqqa, which was their de facto
capital, in Syria. This group used to “preside over a brutal campaign of pillage and slaughter, enslaving and butchering minorities, while destroying priceless pre-Islamic antiquities and heritage sites as the international community looks on helplessly.” (Ishaan, 2015)

This type of harming mentality prevails due to their fundamentalist interpretation of Islam and apostasy. Basically, their interpretation of Quran is different from that of the majority of Muslims. An article released in July of 2017 by the U.S. Department of Defense, noted that:

Iraqi forces have cleared more than 30,000 square miles of territory once held by ISIS, and nearly 2 million Iraqis who were displaced have returned to their homes, the colonel Dillon noted, but, he cautioned, the enemy still must be wiped out around the world. The defeat of ISIS in Mosul does not mark the end of this evil ideology and global threat. (Cronk, T. for Department of Defense, 2017)

The same source argues that this was not a simple victory over a territory as much as it was an act of heroism in the name of human rights that has the purpose of giving back the land to those that it belonged, of right. General Rasool declared that “We liberated millions of people. We liberated them from terrorism, starvation and the worst terrorist organization in the world known to humankind. And we did a great job by this victory.” (Cronk, 2017)

We cannot talk about security in Europe without taking into consideration the level of fear that ISIS instigates. As they pertain to the Arab world, it provides the opportunity for more discrimination as the uninformed people would consider Muslims as being terrorists and vice-versa. Caldwell noted that
when Europeans worried about the long-term assimilability of immigrants, it was Muslims they worried about most. Sometimes it was Muslims they worried about exclusively. In Denmark, where the right wing Danish People’s party (DF) had frightened the ruling coalition into passing Europe’s strictest laws against immigration, the DF leadership was at pains to convey that it did not consider all immigrants problematic (p. 125).

While Muslim people can differentiate themselves from other immigrants due to the cultural uniqueness of their looks and gestures, it does not mean they also belong to a terrorist organization. Unfortunately, the terrorist attacks of November 2015, that took place in Paris and led to the death of 130 civilians, have changed the perception of Europeans about border protection. The influx of refugees made its way to Europe by entering in Greece, then continuing their journey into Belgium, France, and Germany. Due to these events, the Schengen area was challenged and had to strengthen internal borders. (Unknown Author, CNN Library, Updated October 15, 2017)

As we can determine from the above-mentioned sources, the focus falls on the newcomers and less on the second generation of European immigrants, these being the children of the refugees that left their war-torn countries decades ago. This created the idea that the refugees are possible terrorists, and as such they should be marginalized within the European societies. Until the unfortunate terrorist attacks of recent years, the European citizens have been exempted from border control while traveling within the Schengen area. Now everyone must undergo the same screening process.

As stated, Muslims are not the same. Even within their own cultures they stand for different norms and objectives. While it is true that some of the ISIS supporters have infiltrated migrants, this does not justify blame or discrimination against all Muslims. This challenge falls back on the lack of screening prior to their entry into Europe’s grounds.
This issue is discussed behind closed doors in Europe, as the leaders of the European Union don’t want to call it an obvious problem while insisting that Muslims are welcome to fully integrate into European standards. Caldwell refers to the complex phenomenon facing Europe by noting the following:

It is tempting to look at Islamophobia as a translation into the European idiom of American-style political correctness. In this view, Islam is simply the latest category, after gender, sexual preference, age, and so forth, added to the prim way that Americans invented to talk about their race problem during the civil rights era. But Islamophobia is a more labile term than that. It encompasses misconduct towards Muslims, racism, fear of Muslim radicalism, and political opposition to certain Islamist political tendencies. Those who accuse others of Islamophobia often want to have their cake and eat it. Any European reluctance to embrace Islamic immigration gets called Islamophobia. So does any suggestion that immigrants or their children adapt to European ways. (p. 138)

ISIS has created a bad image for all Muslims worldwide, as they sustain this fear of Islamophobia though their attacks in Europe. They also created the wrong impression that all Muslims are capable of atrocious acts throughout Europe, as ISIS did in the Middle Eastern countries:

Islamic State has turned around and murdered people from most of the countries that have challenged it: Shiite civilians in Iraq and Syria; Kurdish and leftwing Turkish peace demonstrators in Ankara; passengers on a Russian airliner over Egypt; Shiites, because of Hezbollah’s involvement in Syria; and more than 120 innocents in Paris. (Glass p. 150)

There is no way of stopping this group unless the forces that oppose them come together. It would be easy to think that air-striking their territory would fix the problem by instigating fear among them, as they do throughout the world. Diplomacy should be the primary answer to this problem, as violence would instigate more hate from both sides. This is an ongoing war in which pride wins and death prevails. At the global level, terrorism
has no forgiveness and no justifications. On this issue, Christopher Smith, Chair, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, noted that:

There is a real threat that terrorist groups like ISIS will infiltrate these massive movements of people to kill civilians in Europe and beyond. I am deeply concerned that the screening at many European borders still—and again, this is a crisis that was thrust upon them—but remains inadequate, putting lives at risk. All of us must be responsive to the humanitarian needs without compromising one iota on security. European response plans should include specifics about strengthening security screening throughout the European region. (Smith p. 3)

This would technically break the rules of the European Union, which assures an open border for services, goods, and people. The European Union’s borders became porous to assure good communication and collaboration among the member countries. The current refugee crisis is pushing European Union to stand against its own rules to guarantee the protection of its citizens. Due to terrorism, the citizens of Europe will always be skeptical when it comes to helping refugees. Without proper screening of these people, we can hardly distinguish the person who intends to harm others from the one seeking freedom. The European Union as a superpower, as well as the rest of Europe, was never prepared for such a crisis despite its will to promote peace and give access to freedom to those in need. The European continent which once used to be romantic, with its museums, art galleries, famous avenues and tourist sites, is now confronting its darkest days since World War II.

Now that we have a picture in mind of how ISIS ramifies itself within the domestic terrorism, to be acknowledged is that the attacks that took place in 2015, 2016, and 2017 were mostly executed by European nationals. While it is true that they ascend from Muslim families which settled in the past throughout Brussels, France, and Germany, these
attackers were raised in democratic societies. On this matter, the European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS) noted that:

A look at the profiles of the Paris attackers and their accomplices reveals a group of individuals with roots in Europe, many of whom had travelled to the Middle East as ‘foreign fighters’. Abdelhamid Abaaoud, the suspected mastermind of the attacks, was a case in point. The 28-year-old Belgian national of Moroccan origin grew up in the Brussels neighborhood of Molenbeek. He is believed to have joined the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in 2013 and spent time in Syria. Similarly, all three of the Bataclan concert hall attackers, Omar Ismail Mostefai (29), Samy Amimour (28) and Foued Mohammed Aggad (23), were born and raised in France. As to Ibrahim Abdeslam, the 31-year-old French national who detonated a suicide vest outside a restaurant: he had travelled to Turkey in 2015 intending to reach Syria, before being turned back. Bilal Hadfi (20), one of the Stade de France attackers, was a French national who lived in Belgium. The authorities knew that he had gone to Syria to join ISIL but failed to detect his return. (Funk M, and Parkes R., 2016)

The same source argued that two Syrian passports were found at the State de France attacks, from which investigators could determine that one was a fake passport while the other one belonged to a Syrian refugee which just made his entry in Europe through Greece. We may conclude from this that the adoration for their religious roots prevails; which encourage the young generations to resort to such atrocious acts. It may be that the second and third generations are more prone to radicalization as their cultural beliefs could not fit within a democratic society.

As more European citizens live with the impression that these attacks have been generated mainly by the newcomers, the mass media proves the opposite. Realistically speaking, the refugees need shelter, food, and protection. They are too burnout from seeking justice and building a safe future for their children. Meanwhile the attackers are young people that knew their targeted locations very well and must have had years of
training and preparation for such events. In 2016, *BBC News* published an article through which they presented the identities and the backgrounds of the terrorists that instigated fear in France, Belgium, and Germany. As noted by *BBC News*:

Salah Abdeslam: the 26-year-old French national, who was born in Brussels, was wounded and arrested during a police raid in the Molenbeek area of the city on 18 March. On 27 April 2016, he was extradited to France, where he faces charges in connection with the Paris attacks - participation in terrorist murder and the activities of a terrorist organization. He has also been charged in Belgium over a shoot-out in Brussels on 15 March 2016, in which four police were wounded.

Abdelhamid Abaaoud, 28 is described as the suspected ringleader in the Paris attacks. He died in a long gun battle with police, who raided a flat in Saint-Denis on 18 November. He grew up in the Brussels district of Molenbeek and was an associate of Salah Abdeslam.

Akrouh, 25, was born and raised in Belgium, of Belgian-Moroccan descent. He travelled to Syria in 2013 and was given a five-year jail sentence in absentia while he was there.

Omar Ismail Mostefai: the 29-year-old French national of Algerian descent blew himself up after the massacre at the Bataclan, eight days before his 30th birthday. He was identified from a fingertip, found in the concert hall where 89 people were killed. Born in the poor Paris suburb of Courcouronnes, he was known to police as a petty criminal - getting eight convictions between 2004 and 2010 but spending no time in jail.

Bilal Hadfi: the 20-year-old has been named as one of the attackers who died at Stade de France. He had tried to get into the stadium while France were playing Germany but was denied entry and blew himself up in the nearby rue de la Cokerie. The French national had been living at Neder-over-Hembeek in Belgium.

Hasna Aitboulahcen, a cousin of Abdelhamid Abaaoud, died with him in the gun battle at the Saint-Denis flat. The daughter of Moroccan immigrants, Aitboulahcen was tracked by police who tapped her phone after 13 November, and she was seen leading Abaaoud into the flat hours before the police raid. (Unknown Author,, *BBC News*, 27 April 2016)
These are just a few examples of youngsters that chose to radicalize instead of embracing democracy, for which their parents fled their countries decades ago. The same youngsters were taking advantage of the refugee crisis, by creating the wrong impression that the refugees are the real terrorists. Regardless if the terrorists are nationals or foreigners, Europe will remain subject of attacks as terrorists use common objects such as knives, cars, and bare hands to serve the purpose set by ISIS. As we witnessed through what media has presented, each attack was claimed by ISIS. Meanwhile, the unfortunate refugees have no connection to these events and they suffer the most as there is confusion about who the real terrorists are.

As result of the attacks and the refugee crisis, Europol has conducted studies which concluded with ten key judgements that they will address in fighting the ISIS. These key judgements are as follows:

1. Further attacks in the EU, both by lone actors and groups, are likely to be attempted. Estimates from some intelligence services indicate several dozen people directed by IS may be currently present in Europe with a capability to commit terrorist attacks.
2. In addition to France and Belgium, all other EU Member States that are part of the US-led coalition against IS may be targeted by terrorists led or inspired by ISIS.
3. The most probable scenario is the use of the same modus operandi, including the same types of weapons, used in earlier attacks.
4. If ISIS is defeated or severely weakened in Syria/Iraq by the coalition forces, there may be an increased rate in the return of foreign fighters and their families from the region to the EU or to other conflict areas.
5. Counter-terrorism experts expect that IS will start planning and dispatching attacks from Libya.
6. Modi operandi employed in Syria and Iraq, such as the use of car bombs, extortion and kidnappings may be employed as methods of attack in the EU.
7. The apparent preference for soft targets means that attacking critical infrastructure such as power grids and nuclear facilities is currently not a priority for IS.
8. Elements of the Syrian refugee diaspora may be vulnerable to radicalization once in Europe and may be targeted by extremist recruiters. Given that it is in the interests of IS to inflame the migration crisis to polarize the EU population and turn sections of it against those seeking asylum, some infiltration of refugee camps and other refugee/migrant groups is likely.

9. Contacts between terrorists and career criminals are generally of a very pragmatic and opportunistic character, and for very specific purposes only. However, the relative incidence of such cases in which there are connections appears to have increased. Typically, this is because terrorists are known for previous criminal activity and/or because they make use of organized crime networks in the preparation of attacks, e.g. to obtain false identity documents and/or firearms.

10. What should not be overlooked is that IS is not the only terrorist organization with the intent and capability to carry out attacks against the West, or to inspire individuals and groups residing in EU Member States to do so. Al Qaeda and/or Al-Nusra affiliated or inspired groups and individuals continue to pose a serious threat to Member States of the EU and to Western interests in general. (EUROPOL, December 2016)

At this time, it is hard to determine who the real attackers of Europe are since the identity swapping is one of the most successful methods of infiltrating terrorists into the European Union. We must not forget that a great majority of these attackers were raised in Europe with an opportunity to embrace democracy, but have chosen to be radicalized instead. Despite their parents’ sacrifice and efforts of starting a new life in Europe, they considered that following the law of the Islamic State is the greatest achievement of their lives.

Due to these issues, it is difficult to differentiate between an economic migrant who is claiming asylum and a terrorist who uses nationality swapping to gain access into the Western world. As presented by media in multiple instances, Frontex has been involved in many push-back interventions that took place on the coasts of Malta, Italy, and at the Greek-Turkish border. Without intending to be retaliatory with regards to Europe’s method
of security, all sources found lead to the following two conclusions: first, is that Europe’s security is well built with functional laws, regulations, and constables that are meant to protect their territories in moments of peace, but are not strong enough to confront a war on terror at this magnitude; and second, the European Union fails at protecting its citizens, as a result of weak regulations, as proven by the numerous attacks that took place since 2015.

**Intercultural dialogue**

As a result of the refugee crisis, the rising concerns over culture clash and domestic terrorism, requires dialogue for conflict resolution. Within European societies we clearly have citizens and leaders that are pro and con refugees and their integration. At the same time, we also have the citizens and leaders who recognize the complexity of this issue. It is therefore necessary to engage in dialogue that would address the legitimate concerns of European citizens and refugees. Building consensus may signify one of the factors that can bring a solution to the refugee crisis since security is a matter of both groups’ concern. And hopefully the proper integration of these people will lead to a mutual understanding.

The European Union is already taking steps in this direction, acknowledging that a bridge between the two different cultures is possible through education and by slowly introducing refugees to European culture. In a recent publication by the European Agenda for Culture, it was noted that:

> This landmark Communication stated that ‘Culture, and in particular intercultural dialogue, can contribute to addressing major global challenges – such as conflict prevention and resolution, integrating refugees, countering violent extremism, and protecting cultural heritage. It
recognized the particular migratory pressures from and to EU enlargement and neighborhood countries, and the role of intercultural dialogue in promoting inclusion. Two of the three objectives of the proposed strategy are ‘Unlocking the potential of culture and creativity for sustainable social and economic development and ‘Promoting peace and fighting radicalization through intercultural dialogue’. The strategy includes a number of actions, including the creation of an EU Cultural Diplomacy Platform. (Mogherini p. 20)

As proven again, the European Union will take any necessary steps to maintain peace and promote multiculturalism while building new programs to aid the acculturation of the refugees. Ignoring for a moment the right-wing nationalistic parties, Europe shows signs of success in dealing with this problem, as it faced the biggest challenge since the 1950’s, when it was founded. The same source noted that:

EU Culture Ministers also agreed to create a new working group of Member State experts in the context of the migration and refugee crisis, to explore how culture and the arts can bring individuals and peoples together, and increase participation in cultural and societal life. It was agreed that this work should build on the 2014 OMC Expert Group report on the Role of Public Arts and Cultural Institutions in the Promotion of Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue. Priority D of the Work Plan for Culture, ‘Promotion of cultural diversity, culture in EU external relations and mobility’, was therefore amended to introduce a new working group, on the topic of Intercultural Dialogue in the context of the migratory and refugee crisis. Member States were invited to nominate experts to work for one year (2016) on this topic and produce a report with case studies. (Mogherini p. 23)

In this context, we can acknowledge that dialogue can happen at various level, and as in European Union’s case, peace can be achieved through exchange of culture and art. Despite the pros and cons already discussed in regards to this complex matter, one straightforward fact is that the European Union is not ready to give up in front of divergences and abandon the values on which it was build. This is obviously a theme that needs to be further studied as we don’t know what further challenges this crisis will bring.
What we know, at this moment, is that 2017 represented another year in which solutions and means of dialogue were sought by the European politicians.
Chapter 5 Findings and Analysis

From 1945, Europe was preoccupied with rebuilding what was destroyed during World War II. While rebuilding their societies they learned to tolerate each other’s national cultures and identities. After World War II, the non-European cultures were accepted, specifically the Middle Eastern culture, with the risk that the newcomers spread their values on European soil. Those people embraced the European cultural values while maintaining the respect for their religion and traditions. As far as the acknowledgment of Islam goes in Europe, Caldwell (2009) noted that

Westerners have forgotten all about Islam. They take for granted that it is decaying, and that, anyway, it is just a foreign religion which will not concern them. It is in fact the most formidable and persistent enemy which our civilization has had, and may at any moment become a large menace in the future as it has been in the past. (p. 92)

Caldwell’s statement is presenting a version of Islam characterized as an enemy of Western civilization. Since 9/11 and with recent high-profile attacks in Paris and Brussels, Islam captures more attention now than it did in the 50’s and 60’s when Westerners were less likely to question the religious values of immigrants. Nevertheless, the way that media presents the refugee story will puzzle the future generations who seek a true idea of Islam and its followers. Unfortunately, the whole asylum-seekers situation creates the perception that Europe is turning backward from decades of democracy and human rights building. The World Wars led to the creation of the European Union with the purpose to keep conflict away and its citizens more safe and united. As we can witness, from the far-right nationalist perspective, the cultural blend is not an acceptable option. There is a great differentiation
in values and religion. Obviously, with the current conflict the Europeans and the Muslims are upset with each other and have difficulty finding common ground.

Regardless of how the past shaped the history of Europe, since 2015 three major issues have arisen, respectively: human rights, national security, and terrorism. Needless to say, terrorism was an issue even before 2015, but it seems more pronounced since the refugee crisis started, as it may be easier for terrorists to infiltrate and achieve their goals. As mentioned throughout this paper, Europe used to have a great balance between human rights and national security, which was later destroyed by the unbearable number of refugees, and the terrorist threats. The terrorist attacks that occurred in Europe since 2015, have created serious conflicts between the European nationals and refugees. Instead of having an environment in which the refugees would be fully supported through their integration, this conflict creates the situation in which people and countries are taking opposite sides, as indicated through the case study of Germany versus Hungary.

When it comes to respect of human rights, let us not forget that Germany is the biggest supporter of refugees. At the decision of Chancellor Merkel, the door of Europe was open for thousands of refugees. As presented by Eurostat (2016) most refugees are from Syria, and Germany was the hosting country of the majority of Syrian refugees:

Syria (28% of the total number of first time applicants) was again in 2016 the main country of citizenship of asylum seekers in the European Union Member States. Of the 334 800 Syrians who applied for the first time for asylum in the European Union in 2016, almost 80% were registered in Germany (266 250). In total, Syrians represented the main citizenship of asylum seekers in thirteen European Union Member States. Afghanistan (15% of the total number of first time applicants) remained the second main country of citizenship of asylum seekers in the European Union Member States.
States in 2016. Of the 183 000 Afghans seeking asylum protection for the first time in the EU Member States in 2016, nearly 70% applied in Germany (127 000). Afghans represented the main citizenship of asylum seekers in five European Union Member States. With 127 000 first time applicants (or 11% of the European Union total) in 2016, Iraq was the third country of citizenship of asylum seekers in the European Union Member States. Three-quarters applied in Germany (96100). (Unknown Author, Eurostat, 16 March, 2017)

Despite the criticisms received, Germany still stands in the belief that Europe should act as a united front and help refugees integrate within their societies. In an article posted by Huffington Post (2017), it was stated that:

Germany took in 1.1 million refugees in 2015. This has been a great challenge, but Germany has lived up to it and the situation has improved on many levels compared with one year ago: Asylum procedures have been expedited. This August, Germany adjudicated the applications of 57,000 people, more than three times the number as in August of last year. Hundreds of additional employees were hired to process applications more swiftly. The main challenge, of course, remains integration - this is why Germany is now providing courses for refugees to help them integrate into society, learn the German language, and find employment. At the same time, refusal to join integration courses will lead to cuts in benefits for refugees. (Wittig, n.d., 2017)

I personally commend the steps took by Germany for integrating their refugees, as there are no other means to help them acculturate other than through education. And as no good deed goes unpunished, Germany has suffered terribly for its stance to protect refugee’s human rights. The majority of Germany’s citizens understood that this is a humanitarian issue created by war and that there was a price to pay in their attempt to save the citizens of war-torn countries; consequently, the price was their national security. In the long run, Germany seems to build its path towards more peaceful days as they finally seem to manage the refugee situation the best they can. On this note, Verkaik wrote for CNN News on January 2017 that:
I believe that Germany's open-door refugee policy will, in the long run, help protect Germans from terrorism. There is evidence that with the right immigration policy, refugees can play a valuable role in the war against terror. Germany’s decision is a ray of hope in a world of bleak humanitarian catastrophe. Rather than focus on the imagined links between terrorism and immigration, we should look at the long-term benefits of pursuing a plan that is helping to build stronger multi-cultural communities that can fight extremism. (Verkaik, 2017)

While Germany is permanently seeking methods to improve the refugee situation and continuously looks for solutions to find the balance between human rights and national security, Hungary is maintaining its scandalous stance by not accepting a great number of refugees, nor allowing them to transition safely. Additionally, the stance of Hungary has been argued in the Court of Justice with no improvements, as the political trend, initiated by Hungary’s leadership, is to influence Hungarian citizens to be against refugees and any program that may aid these people. As articulated by The Guardian,

The European Union’s top court has dismissed complaints by Slovakia and Hungary about European Union migration policy, dealing a blow to the Hungarian prime minister, Viktor Orbán, and his allies in central Europe over the bitterly contested policy of refugee quotas. In an important victory for the European Union, judges threw out a challenge against its mandatory relocation scheme, which aims to relocate 120,000 asylum seekers around the bloc. The victory has sharpened tensions between the European Union and Hungary’s combative PM, who has made opposition to European Union asylum policy a core theme of his “Stop Brussels” campaign. It will also raise tensions with Poland, which lent its support to the failed legal campaign. (Rankin, 2017)

With the persisting tensions, the refugee situation in Hungary didn’t seem to improve by the end of 2017, as the politicians see refugees as illegal immigrants and they completely ignore the fact that these people are running from death. Hungarians seem to be firm supporters of their national security while claiming to respect the human rights,
without any proof of doing so. In an interview for Aljazeera (2017), Hungary’s foreign minister Peter Szijjarto declared that he thinks:

the criticism it's extremely unfair because there's an issue where we don't agree - definitely. We think illegal migration is a security threat to Europe. Others say that illegal migration is acceptable. We don't think it's acceptable. But that should not give the reason to anyone to question whether Hungary respects European values or not because we have been members of the European Union ... We share the European regulations, and we share the European values, of course. (Unknown Author. Al Jazeera, 30 September, 2017)

At this moment, Hungary’s behavior represents a challenge in obtaining the harmonization between human rights and national security within Europe. The majority of European countries applauds Germany for its approach to this crisis and follows its example, while Hungary is influencing the neighboring countries to adopt the same approach of pushing refugees away from their borders. Additionally, the most recent ABC News reported that on November 15, 2017:

Police blocked some 200 migrants and asylum-seekers Wednesday from leaving a city in northern Greece for the Macedonian border in hopes of traveling on to other European Union countries. Dozens of officers in riot gear used shields to push back the migrants near the center of Thessaloniki and blocked the road with police buses. The marchers, who included families with young children, refused to leave and sat down in the street. No one was hurt in the brief confrontation. The migrants, most of them from Syria, Iraq and Somalia, had gathered throughout the day in Thessaloniki. Many said they were responding to a campaign on social media for a march to the Greece-Macedonia border to protest their inability to relocate to other European countries. (Kantouris, 2017)

As we can see, Hungary’s measures, and not only, are completely against international law and they are continuously proving that they don’t want to stand in

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solidarity with the rest on Europe in resolving this crisis. As reported by the United Nations:

The High Commissioner’s Office (UNHCR) has repeatedly raised its concerns over the situation of refugees and asylum-seekers arriving to Hungary with the authorities and the EU, stressing that physical barriers and restrictive policies have resulted in effectively denying access to territory and asylum. Hungary’s “emergency measures” under the amended law on asylum expand mandatory detention of asylum seekers and lead to the expulsion from the country of anyone who enters the country irregularly, in violation of the country’s obligations under international law. UNHCR reported that since it came into force on 28 March, new asylum-seekers, including children, are detained in shipping containers surrounded by high razor fences at the border for the entire length of their asylum procedures. As of 7 April, there were 110 people, including four unaccompanied children and children with their families, held there. (Pouilly, 2017)
The chart below shows the number of asylum applicants per country, in 2016.

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<td>Afghanistan 11 500</td>
<td>Syria 8 730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>9 780</td>
<td>Russia 7 435</td>
<td>Tajikistan 830</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>710</td>
<td>Ukraine 140</td>
<td>Algeria 5 700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>1 855</td>
<td>Syria 805</td>
<td>Iraq 460</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Afghanistan 410</td>
<td>Syria 270</td>
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<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
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<td>Iceland</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>26 820</td>
<td>Entebbe 5 040</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3. First time asylum applicants by country of citizenship in 2016
Source: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/2995521/7921609/3-16032017-BP-EN.pdf/e5fa98bb-5d9d-4297-9168-d07c67d1c9e1

As shown in the figure above, Hungary was within top five recipient countries of asylees, but as a result of human rights violation, the number assigned to Hungary will drop considerably in the future.

Since World War II, Europe has been very welcoming of foreigners and its citizens are nurturing the notion of peace and prosperity. But nowadays, as stated throughout this
paper, Europeans were challenged by the greatest influx of refugees since World War II.

The U.N. Refugee Agency noted that:

Since the beginning of 2017, over 2,700 people are believed to have died or gone missing while crossing the Mediterranean Sea to reach Europe, with reports of many others perishing en route. These risks do not end once in Europe. Those moving onwards irregularly have reported numerous types of abuse, including being pushed back across borders. With so many lives at risk, rescue-at-sea operations undertaken by all actors must remain a priority. Despite some progress in increasing the number of safe pathways to Europe, these opportunities are far too few to offer a feasible alternative to risky irregular journeys for people in need of protection. Further efforts are needed to increase access to existing legal pathways, including family reunification. (Unknown Author, United Nations Refugee Agency n.d. 2017)

Even for those refugees that found ways to enter Europe in 2015 and 2016, their journey was not pleasant or safe as they were boycotted by the European citizens and politicians that stand against refugees. As indicated in the chart on the right, their asylum applications are still pending for over a year, time in which we could assume that they are being screened and the Union finds new ways to help them adjust. (Rodriguez, 2017)

![Figure 4. Nationalities waiting for asylum decisions](http://www.pewglobal.org)

Overall, it ought to be acknowledged that the refugee crisis brought numerous concerns to Europe, the main one remaining the war against terrorism. When the media
presented young males entering the European borders, Europeans automatically perceived them as possible terrorists while ignoring the fact that the majority of terrorists that attacked Europe were born and raised in European Union countries. The security dimension continues to be addressed at different levels, as seen in the case study of Germany and Hungary. Hungary’s behavior is likely to ignite more conflict within the next years as it shows no interest of conforming to international law by allowing refugees transitioning through it safely.

As refugees come from non-democratic countries, such as Syria, Iraq, Yemen, and etc., they have little to no understanding of the Western World. Their journey to Europe was traumatizing enough, but once they are accommodated they come to discover host cultures in which gender equality, mutual respect, and personal choices are normal and encouraged. When it comes to acculturation, it may take quite a few years, for refugees to adjust, and this will occur only if the migrant will embrace the host culture with an open heart. One of Caldwell’s distinct arguments noted:

It is certain that Europe will emerge changed from its confrontation with Islam. It is far less certain that Islam will prove assimilable. Europe finds itself in a contest with Islam for the allegiance of its newcomers. For now, Islam is the stronger party in that contest, in an obvious demographic way and in a less obvious philosophical way. In such circumstances, words like ‘minority’ and ‘majority’ mean little. When an insecure, malleable, relativistic culture meets a culture that is anchored, confident, and strengthened by common doctrines, it is generally the former that changes to suit the latter. (p. 349)

In the coming years, we may be witnessing Europe transitioning from a traditional and conservative political actor towards being more open-minded in regards to the newcomers. As Caldwell noted, there is indeed a competition between Islamists and
European nationals in winning the newcomers, reason why, the proper integration of the refuge is a crucial. Isolating them will cause the refugees to withdraw and find comfort within marginalized groups that speak their language and share similar cultural norms, which inevitably would increase the criminality rate in any European society.
Chapter 6 Conclusion

Having examined the literature provided on human rights, national security, and terrorism, it enabled me to demonstrate that the influx of refugees, from war-torn countries, impacted the European Union drastically. More specifically, we have learned that the situation between Germany and Hungary remains fragile, as both countries need to find means of collaboration in order to rebuild the balance between human rights and national security. The Union’s immigration policies have drastically shifted from porous borders to harsher controls at sea and land. Unfortunately, through analyzing different sources, they all lead to the fact that communication is not at its best between Germany and Hungary, which causes more conflict within the European Union.

The future of Europe is very much in doubt as the refugee crisis is bringing many problems to the surface. Domestic terrorism continues to be the greatest threat as law enforcements are being challenged by both the refugees and the European Union nationals that radicalize. At this point, it is hard to determine which country will be the next victim of terrorism.

The polarization between countries and its citizens will also be maintained as long as Hungary tends to ignore the human rights while Germany is finally coming to a point of finding an internal balance between human rights and their national security. With the persistent crisis, the different cultures become more obvious as neither the Europeans nor the Middle Easterner asylees show will to change and accommodate each other’s cultures.
Regrettably, these factors have caused the European Union members to regress and return to right-wing nationalistic political methods to protect their borders and citizens.

By analyzing the work of authors and articles published by European Union’s agencies, I have come to the final conclusion that, in order to successfully integrate refugees within a new society, the following steps should be followed: first, as a result of their chaotic transition, the war situation has to be addressed immediately. Thus, instead of waiting for an unexpected boat loaded of refugees, these potential asylees should be offered a designated route to Europe, where points of control should be build. Regardless of what happened to their documents, the refugees should be interviewed and fingerprinted at their very first contact with European soil. In this manner, the entire Europe can rest assured that these people have been properly screened and interviewed before allowed to proceed to their country of safety.

Second, the respect of human rights must be enforced in all European Union’s countries. Although the United Nations has imposed certain international rules when it comes to refugees, we have learned that Hungary makes its own rules when addressing this issue. Perhaps it will be time to remove the Hungarian police from protecting its borders and have the United Nations control the transition of refugees. In this manner, refugees will be protected from violence, abuse, and exploitation.

And third, once refugees have been interviewed and properly screened at the border, either by land or sea, their wish of the final destination should be respected, as much possible. In the case that the respective country has reached its numbers allocated for
asylees, then the refugee should be offered proper shelter and their integration in European society should be implemented immediately. While they are waiting to be allocated to their desired country, they must be offered the right to education, health, and justice. The refugee camps should not be perceived as jails, but more as a place from where they can freely start a new life.

The integration of refugees must be done gradually and with significant involvement from the European authorities. There is a desperate need for methods of acculturation and helping the refugees accept the views of the European culture. Sadly, it is ignored the fact that the asyless can bring a positive influence to Europe. By educating their children in democracy the future of Europe may look brighter. Today’s refugee children, who have been witnessing atrocious acts through their transition, may become tomorrow’s European citizens that will find ways to stop this pain and help the Europeans assimilate their culture through peaceful means.

Most certainly, terrorism instigated so much fear which makes it harder for politicians to approach this crisis from a humanistic standpoint. I believe that strengthening the security of the European Union should be the main focus in the near future. In this manner, the wrong perception that refugees destroy Europe will be eliminated. It is terrorism that destroys the unique cultural European identity. Therefore, I persist with the idea that the movement of these refugees must be done in a more controlled manner, and their backgrounds should be subject to harsher investigation, while respecting their basic human rights.
As we can see, this refugee crisis created two polarized forces in politics and public opinions. Therefore, the future challenge is how to bridge the gap between national security and human rights. However, the question that warrants further analysis is whether the above mentioned polarization can be bridged as long as warfare continues producing refugees to the scale that we have seen in Europe. The issue in regards to this challenge prods the question: can the gap between national security and human rights be bridged without addressing, limiting and eventually preventing war? As the complex refugee crisis is moving and changing in time, the above mentioned question warrants further research.
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