

The 2015 European Migration Crisis

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To my family. Without your unconditional love and support, I would not have been able to do this.

To my beloved Mélo.

Abstract

This research paper will analyse the 2015 European migration crisis and if immigration regimes impact how many came to a country. This paper will look at four case studies: the United Kingdom, France, Belgium, and Ireland, and examine both their respective immigration regimes by characterising them as more liberal or less liberal regimes and the total intake of asylum seekers in determining whether immigration regimes hold influence or not on newcomers. Analysing the total intake of asylum seekers in each country will depict if more liberal immigration regimes attract more refugees than less liberal regimes. The final findings on both factors – the immigration regimes and the total intake of newcomers in a country – reveal that having a more liberal immigration regime does not attract more newcomers than less liberal immigration regimes. The data collected between the period of 2015 and 2016 demonstrates that the less liberal regime (France and the United Kingdom) resulted in having the most intake of newcomers as well as providing the most positive decisions in both years. In comparison, the presumed more liberal regimes (Belgium and Ireland) were the ones who received the slightest intake of newcomers, respectively. Both countries also had the fewest positive decisions in both years. Having the least number of refugees demonstrates that a more liberal immigration regime does not persuade newcomers to claim asylum in that country. What the data also highlights are that between the four case studies, the United Kingdom and France have the most stable and organized immigration regimes that do not leave the claimant guessing what the next step is. Perhaps this element also explains why France and the United Kingdom received the most newcomers between 2015 and 2016 and attributed the highest positive decisions in both years.

Introduction

Humans are incapable of change until they are forced into it. Humans are creatures of habit – it is how we survive. Thus, in every mass movement of people, there is a reason behind it. Sometimes it is for better economic opportunities or for family reunification. Other times, and what seems to be the most often depicted reason in recent decades - war. Europe has only lived through mass movement of people in the aftermath of World War 2. However, in 2015, this changed.

The research question this paper will answer is; do immigration regimes impact how many refugees come to a country? Many scholarly works have been written about the refugee crisis of 2015, primarily based on looking at the errors emitted by the European Union in handling the crisis and implementing a coercive policy for all member states (Joensen and Taylor 2021). As well as other works that analysed the relationship between northern member states and the rest of the European Union (Gilbert 2015). What resulted was an imbalance relationship relating to financial capabilities that coexists in the European Union in handling the crisis (Poddar 2016). The question depicted in this research paper is about bringing a new narrative to the crisis concerning the relationship between member states and refugees arriving in their countries. One crucial element that seems to be missing from analysing the crisis is the influence immigration regimes can hold on where and why refugees tend to reach for certain member states over others.

The hypothesis this paper will use throughout the research is if more liberal regimes will attract more refugees than less liberal regimes. In order to study this hypothesis, I will classify the immigration regimes depicted in each case study on whether or not they are more inclined to be less or more liberal. With this in mind, I will formulate expectations on which country should be expected to have the most and the fewest refugees based on their immigration regime. This

research paper's findings showcase that the more liberal regimes do not seem to attract the most refugees. The findings are based solely on the immigration regimes from each case study and depict whether or not they are classified as more liberal or less liberal regimes. One would think that the United Kingdom and France be classified as having the most liberal regimes. However, Belgium and then Ireland came in the position of the more liberal regime category. In the less liberal regime category are France and the United Kingdom.

In addition, when looking at the total number of refugees that came to each respective state in 2015 and 2016, the hypothesis used in this paper turned out to be wrong. More liberal regimes do not attract more refugees than less liberal regimes. The supposedly more liberal regimes (Belgium and Ireland) are the ones that attracted the least total intake of refugees in 2015 and 2016. The less liberal regimes (France and the United Kingdom) attracted the most refugees in 2015 and 2016. What this tells us is that although immigration regimes do hold a specific influence on the final decision of refugees in demanding asylum claims, this also tells us that for more refugees arriving in Europe, the immigration regime in itself mattered less than the actual economic and welfare benefits both France and the United Kingdom possess. Although both France and the United Kingdom have strict immigration regime policies and integration models that can, at times, reflect a nuance of racism, the ultimate decision for those refugees, as presented by the numbers, did not influence them in their final decision on where to try to claim asylum.

The structure of this paper is in the following order. The first part of the paper looks at the background of the events that led to the migration crisis in Europe and the literature review on the crisis itself, where various scholars analyse two perspectives to provide a more in-depth understanding of how the crisis fractured the institutional structure of the EU and established a policy dilemma but also at a more national level with stricter policies and a rise in far-right political

parties. The second part of the paper depicts the possible effects of the immigration regimes from the four case studies selected on the number of refugees arriving in a country and analysing other plausible factors that might have influenced dissuading or persuading newcomers from claiming asylum in a country. Furthermore, this section also provides a description of the case selection and why these four countries (the United Kingdom, France, Belgium, and Ireland) can help in answering the research question since they all differ in various ways, and this, in turn, influences and reflects in the management and implementation of the immigration regimes which ultimately have an impact on how many come to a country. The paper then looks at an in-depth analysis of each case study's immigration regime and highlights potential factors influencing how many refugees claim asylum. The third part of the paper highlights the main structure by detailing the research question this paper will answer, as well as the hypothesis and the methodology section in discussing the secondary and primary sources used and how they are analysed. The fourth part focuses on the analysis of the paper. The analysis section provides an explanation of the data and findings uncovered and how this aligns or not with the hypothesis established concerning less or more liberal regimes influencing how many came to a country. The paper concludes with a summary of the literature used and the findings from the data between 2015 and 2016 for each case study, as well as providing alternative factors and generalizability to other countries.

Background

The world seemed to finally take notice of the gravity of the situation and the dangerous context in which individuals were putting themselves in, to escape civil wars, prosecution, and a chance at a better life, when the image of a small boy lying dead on a Turkish beach prompted international headlines. The image seemed to capture the reality of a crisis unfolding on European

shores. This crisis of over 1.3 million refugees reaching the European continent was a mass movement Europe had not seen since World War two.

In 2015, Europe again faced the second most significant mass movement of people due to war consequences. With such a mass movement of immigration, member states were not equipped to face issues relating to the general acceptance from the public, as well as the placement, integration, and general adaptation of having such numbers of newcomers arriving in their country and facing potential political, economic and social problems that would adhere from this movement (Gladys and Viktor 2020, 11). Still, the mass movement was caused by wars thousands of miles away from its coastlines this time. The 2015 European migration crisis was due to multiple external events, such as the increased Western presence in the Middle East and North Africa in the early 2000s, the continuous wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the repercussions of the Arab Spring that influenced the Libyan and Syrian civil wars. Libya became a crucial point in the Mediterranean for Africans escaping civil wars, persecution, and a chance at a better life. The most common routes most migrants undertook in 2015 were towards Eastern Italy or through Greece and making their way up the Balkans route toward northern European states (Oxfam International 2017, 2).

The crisis has used two different words: the 'migration' crisis and the 'refugee' crisis. It is essential first to identify the difference between both and, second, highlight which word will be used throughout this research. In this situation, most asylum applicants were economic migrants. Due to war-torn cities, people fled their homes due to unlivable conditions and sought better economic opportunities (Poddar 2016, 4). According to the United Nations, a migrant is someone who "is moving or has moved across an international border or within a State away from his/her habitual place of residence, regardless of (1) the person's legal status; (2) whether the movement

is voluntary or involuntary; (3) what the causes for the movement are; or (4) what the length of the stay is” (United Nations n.d., n.p). Whereas with refugees, under the 1951 Refugee Convention, a refugee is defined as someone “who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion” (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees n.d., n.p). Refugees cross international borders to flee war, conflicts, violence, and persecution, whereas with migrants, it is primarily due to economic opportunities. Therefore, what can be concluded from those fleeing in 2015 was that civil wars destroyed their cities and livelihoods with barely any economic opportunities, prompting many to escape and seek refuge in Europe. For this research, the word migrant will be used to describe the 2015 migration crisis.

Migrants who are fleeing for a chance at a better life in Europe are termed asylum seekers. Asylum seekers apply for refugee status and await decisions from the member state they applied under (Patrascu 2016, 11). Most of all newcomers that arrived in the European Union were unauthorized migrants and tried to change this status by applying to any given member state they deemed the most forgiving. What makes the crises complicated to handle is that “an asylum seeker falls in between international and national policy because migrants from outside the EU seek national protection and therefore do not just fall under the jurisdiction of international law but also the national law of a Member State” (Patrascu 2016, 12). Therefore, there is a difference between the two types of groups that made their way to Europe. The first group consists of refugees who left their country due to unlivable conditions such as war. In contrast, economic migrants arrived in Europe hoping for better economic opportunities. This is why the asylum systems within member states and the European Union asylum regulations are much more lenient and accepting to those coming in from war-torn countries like Syria and Iraq (Poddar 2016, 4).

Moreover, the migration crisis has created fissures in the center of the European Union and its member states, particularly regarding how to manage the crisis as well as protecting the EU external borders (Gladys and Viktor 2020, 19). There is thus a migration policy failure as argued by Scipioni (2018), who brings forth this notion that crises which results in policy failures actually helps to bring about newer developments on agreements which reinforces integration (Scipioni 2018, 1357). Such results can take years before they become apparent, but highlighting the main problems of a policy helps to advance a new mechanism in dealing with a crisis that affects state members differently in various areas. The migration policy failure has raised the question on the efficacy of the European Union's resilience in handling the crisis and its primary mandate of a protection regime based on the 1951 Refugee Convention (Poddar 2016, 2). The reason for this is threefold. First, the crisis created a securitization problem by labeling migrants as a security threat and claiming they were illegal refugees (Hintjens 2019, 182). By establishing measures to securitize refugees, the EU ultimately failed to meet its international human rights and humanitarian obligations (Hintjens 2019, 182). As Vollmer (2021) argues, this presumed 'threat' helped abruptly reshape how Europeans perceived newcomers. This new relationship is a division between the European 'citizen' and that of 'the other,' in going against a humanitarianism solution but rather to restrict further their migration regimes to not fracture 'their' social, political, and economic order (Vollmer 2021, 52). Second, the European Union has programs and policies to cater to the arrival of refugees wanting to claim asylum. However, the mass arrivals happened mainly in Greece and Italy, which claimed they did not have the financial resources to deal adequately with the processing of asylum claims and therefore left the arrivals to venture off within the Balkan routes toward Western states (Poddar 2016, 5). The financial burden created by the financial crisis a few years back made it so that many Southern European countries receiving

masses of arrivals needed more financial resources to establish the European Union policies and laws. Second, the European Union policies establish that any incoming migrant or refugee needs to be registered in the member state it first arrives in. During the crisis, most came from Italy or Greece. However, both states should have implemented such policies to determine if the claim was valid or had grounds for repatriation. This helped fuel the total number of arrivals making their way toward Northern member states, which had better welfare services and systems (Nedergaard 2019, 81). Therefore, what can be understood is that Italy and Greece, having failed to process the arrivals, did not follow the European Union's Dublin Regulation of processing the claims of migrants and refugees arriving in the first destination country (Ibid). Even more so, many countries did not have the adequate resources and policies to deal with the magnitude of the arrivals coming in. The Dublin regulations put in place decades ago became inapplicable for many states, and improvising became their only resource. This showcases another fissure between the EU and its member states. Reintroducing border controls were measures undertaken by states to regain a sense of jurisdiction and sovereignty under a situation that was not manageable from the European Union perspective (Peshkopia et al. 2022, 663). This first fissure within the European Union showcased that facing a crisis of this magnitude became a lot more challenging to handle due to the economic fragility of some of its member states. The result of this was to "limit the inflow of migrants and refugees and to prevent undesirable persons (e.g. potential terrorists) from gaining access to these countries" (Nedergaard 2019, 84). Such measures put into question the Schengen agreement on the free movement of people between member states borders. This was seen as a way for most member states to regain sovereignty of their borders and territories (Nedergaard 2019, 84).

Another fundamental problem the EU faced was that many European member states blamed Southern and Eastern Europe for being unwilling to do their required duty and follow

European laws concerning new arrivals wanting to claim asylum. Some even argue that the crisis demonstrated that they “attribute the refugee crisis to the challenge of enlargement, which has made the EU ‘ungovernable’” (Guiraudon 2018, 159). You add on the fact also that the rise of illiberal regimes in Eastern countries has made it almost impossible for the EU to try to implement their immigration and asylum policies due to the nature of securitization undertaken by many member states in the wake of the crisis. Another essential element is that for many newcomers within the EU, after primarily Northern-western democracies created the 1990 Schengen and Dublin agreements, new member states in its aftermath could not decide to opt out of such agreements nor alter them. Even more, these agreements were created and signed when extreme Right political parties were nonexistent and the economy was stable. This demonstrated that the current immigration, asylum claims, and border security policies implemented did not work. Many felt the tensions associated with primarily securing the external EU border, which was not apparent to be doing, and therefore for many member states, they decided to drift apart from the substantive regulations put in place by the EU and instead follow and implement their national guidelines in handling the crisis (Seneri 2020, 2).

Consequently, the problem with regaining control of ones’ border is that it can cause a domino effect. Whereby member states, who are perceived to be weaker in the financial and political sense, can result in establishing an open-door policy for all arrivals wanting to venture off into more appropriate democratic states where welfare programs are better suited for them. For many, Southern and Eastern countries did not follow suit. Following specific procedures and checks installed for incoming travelers was not implemented, and specific details like checking if the person is on an international criminal or suspected terrorist list was not applied by border authorities (Nedergaard 2019, 85). Nevertheless, Italy and Greece, in particular, could have done

their jobs more carefully, resulting in hundreds of thousands continuing onto the Northern side of the continent (Nedergaard 2019, 86). Another pressing result of the migration crisis is that the decision-making within the European Union has shifted drastically due to one specific country becoming a de facto leader – Germany. When Angela Merkel announced that the country would receive over a million refugees, this altered how the EU and consequently member states would respond to the crisis (Nedergaard 2019, 87).

Furthermore, many Western member states have not been welcoming and accepting of the surge of arrivals wanting to claim asylum. Many did not offer protection and did not do their due diligence in processing the claims under the law. Instead, some countries used force to push arrivals back with brutal tactics, such as Croatia, Hungary, and Austria (Oxfam International 2017, 2). Arrivals facing such violence and aggression from state authorities violate human rights, as any refugee has a right to claim asylum under a protected environment and not face pushback (Ibid).

The refugee crisis has thus put into question many related policies and regulations concerning immigration, border control, and asylum claims. These questions were further outlined when the majority of its member states were not in coordination with the implementation of such regulations and decided to instead follow their national priority instead of coming together as a community. Thus, this questions the legitimacy and authority the EU holds under a crisis of this magnitude. When push comes to shove, member states would instead do things the national way that benefits them rather than having to come together as one whole community facing the crisis as a continent.

Literature review

This research focuses on understanding if there is any correlation between the immigration regimes from the specific case studies and the total number of newcomers that came to a country. Understanding these immigration regimes is more than just looking at the policies and laws in each respective state. It is also about analysing from a broader spectrum how the crisis and the response from the EU ultimately influenced how member states would respond and, in turn, how such a response from the latter would impact not only the immigration regimes itself but also how it might have had an influence on the total number of newcomers.

The existing literature on the 2015 migration crisis focuses on two perspectives. On the one hand, many scholars such as Guiraudon (2018), Joensen and Taylor (2021), Neimann and Zaun (2018) and Scipioni (2018) focused on analysing the underlying mechanisms within the EU, a supranational institution within global politics, to understand what went wrong. The works on the crisis are analysed and discussed from a policy dilemma perspective, and that one of the main underlying problems relating to the crisis was the 1990 Schengen agreement (Guiraudon 2018, 155). The agreement comprised like-minded individuals who believed in one specific way of doing things and wanted to control the debate surrounding the policy agreement (Guiraudon 2018, 155). The agreement signaled a new way of operating, such as implementing visas and carrier sanctions which ultimately deprive asylum seekers of their rights and is put in place to keep unwanted foreigners out of the European continent (Guiraudon 2018, 155). As Joensen and Taylor (2021) argue, this agreement and that of the Dublin regulation tied in with the crisis challenged the fundamental pillar of what the EU stands for – freedom of movement and a right to claim asylum (Joensen and Taylor 2021, 7). What this means, in practice, is that any European citizen has a right to move freely within national borders, establish themselves in any given member state and work

there legally. However, such practice is what ultimately led to Brexit as a central argument brought forth during the election concerning the lack of control of its borders and mismanagement from the EU due to its failing policies and regulations. Another factor is that such liberty of movement caused what many scholars refer to as ‘asylum shopping’ by migrants (Joensen and Taylor 2021, 7). However, not all member states have the same economic standing nor welfare programs, which puts a strain on certain states with more financial problems or do not have adequate welfare services for their citizens. The economic and social unbalances between member states is one of the reasons why many chose to go back to re-imposing stricter border control and go against the original Schengen agreement (Joensen and Taylor 2021, 7).

What prolonged the crisis is that the European Union asylum system is not designed for foreigners to seek asylum within the EU (Albassam 2015, 3). When it comes to managing any asylum claims coming into the European Union, it is over-headed by the Dublin Regulation. The Dublin Regulation establishes that an “asylum claimant should apply for asylum in the first EU country that they arrived in. Often referred to as the common European asylum system, Dublin set out the processes for receiving and examining asylum claims, but left issues such as the level of economic support (i.e. welfare benefits) to national discretion” (Joensen and Taylor 2021, 5). Furthermore, the Dublin legislation also established specific rights migrants have within two distinctive categories found in temporary and subsidiary status (Ibid). However, as the crisis highlighted, most migrants traveled into the EU to gain their country destination and applied for asylum there. This caused many member states to either suspend their Schengen free movement contract or implement stricter border controls (Ibid). Therefore, this meant that many member state processed asylum applications as if this was their first claim, even though for many the final destination was achieved by crossing amongst various countries beforehand (Joensen and Taylor

2021, 5). This showcases that the Dublin regulation did not work and that the overall EU system of asylum claims procedures could not in practice be implemented equally within all member states (Joensen and Taylor 2021, 5). This reason alone is why member states of the South could not adequately follow the Dublin regulations and process each claim and, as a result, caused the crises to emerge within the entire European continent. The system, in turn, results in member states having to absorb the majority of the responsibility, particularly for Eastern and Southern states. It provides more problems than solutions at the expense of asylum seekers' human security. However, also at the expense of member states, who can only partially take on the charge of this many applicants under a level of stress and uncertainty.

In addition, some believe the mismanagement of the crisis is not entirely the fault of the European states. The fault falls on the dysfunctionalities of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) (Neimann and Zaun 2018). The CEAS established a mechanism whereby newcomers would face “minimum standards in reception conditions, qualifications for international protection status, and procedures to be followed in granting such status” (Scipioni 2018, 1364). The CEAS hoped that implementing such measures would create an even distribution of newcomers amongst member states and that they would receive the same equal treatment in all of the states. However, this perfect-case scenario of such policy, “asylum-seekers as utility-maximizers and achieving harmonization would eliminate disproportionate pressures on individual member states” (Scipioni 2018, 1364) was not the reality. This entails that since no set rules or protocols were implemented informally between member states, this caused stress on the protocols to face to many applicants and helped highlight an emerging crisis (Neimann and Zaun 2018, 3). By reanalysing the CEAS and establishing new policy measures, the authors conclude that this can help ease the integration process of migrants into the European continent and reinforce the role of the European Union. This

policy dilemma is based on a lack of clarification on how member states should react and implement such policies. Some scholars believe there needs to be a reassessment of the current policies since they failed and be re-established for a crisis like this to not occur in the future (Sergio et al. 2015, 1).

There are two prominent solutions to such policy dilemma. One of them is to modify the existing regulations and policies concerning asylum claims under the Common European Asylum System (CEAS). For many member states, having a cooperative outcome on asylum policies has remained relatively unseen, enabling policy failures (Stoyanova and Karageorgiou 2019, 211). A second solution targeting the EU's pillar is to remove its immediate threat as much as possible – foreigners. One important element put in place by member states that are important to highlight is the temporary relocation program. The program focused on a quota system of relocating up to 120,000 asylum-seekers from Southern countries hit with the emergence of new arrivals, like Greece and Italy, into host countries (Stoyanova and Karageorgiou 2019, 212). This program lasted only briefly, as many member states decided to regain control of their borders. The European Commission then switch its narrative from trying to implement a solidarity response amongst all member states to extending that solidarity toward asylum seekers arriving (Gurkan and Coman 2021, 288). However, as the crises heightened, so did the fear of security. This is why the European Commission went looking for help outside, most notably with Turkey. This is why establishing a deal between the EU and Turkey to remove what is causing the immediate threat of the 1990 Schengen agreement and try to implement solidary, if not nationally, then at least internationally (Gurkan and Coman 2021, 289). The EU-Turkey deal was the only way to help ease the number of foreigners arriving on the European shorelines since no member states wanted to change their positions and opinions concerning the crisis (Ibid). The agreement was that for every Syrian

refugee returned to Turkey, Turkey, in return, would send Syrians to be resettled within the EU. The agreement between both parties faced much international backlash, as Turkey is not considered a 'safe third country' and violates international human rights laws and EU laws (Guiraudon 2018, 158).

Another critical perspective on the crisis comes from this sentiment of unfairness amongst member states, and that there is a level of hierarchy within the EU (Gilbert 2015, 532). Those who have less hegemonic power are the ones who took on their share of responsibility during the crisis. This notion of unfairness is apparent within the financial aspect of processing applicants which is rarely referred to in scholarly works about the migration crisis. However, this is an essential topic in understanding why the policies put in place by the EU did not hold their ground in the South. Most of the Northern states have pushed, since the beginning of the crisis, for Eastern and Southern states to take up overseeing the refugees that are coming in, as well as absorbing the financial costs related to it since they first arrive in these member states' borders (Gilbert 2015, 532). Most of these member states since the 2008 recession need more financial strength to absorb such a logistical and financial challenge. What we see here is that not only is there a flaw concerning the financial capacity of certain member states in applying the Dublin regulations and asylum policies established by the EU, the policies themselves need to consider this critical aspect when being implemented. This notion of policy dilemma is apparent in how member states and, as a whole, the EU handled the crisis.

On the other hand, the literature also dives more nationally in identifying reasons concerning the response to the crisis, whether that be through the complexity of border control and security as seen in the works by Sergio et al. (2015) and Stoyanova and Karageorgiou (2019), who argue that the crisis created a division that influenced a return to securitization. Such reintegration

of border control from member states for security purposes, also enabled member states a more preferred selection of foreigners to take shape. This division ultimately helped member states to make decisions based on their national interests and sovereignty rather than creating a joint migration plan (Joensen and Taylor 2021, 216). Without clear guidance and an established action plan, many member states grouped themselves based on national and cultural interests. They established similar migration policies to try and handle the crisis amongst various member states. Member states would choose to implement a more preference selection policy since the material costs to welcome refugees, such as health care, education, housing, and welfare services, is a lot for some states to handle financially. This is why, for many, the immigration regime is designed to dissuade asylum seekers from choosing their country and persuade them to seek protection in another state by implementing policies restricting access to foreigners (Stoyanova and Karageorgiou 2019, 216). This notion of preference is probably telling when looking at the total number of asylum claims accepted in any given case study analysed in this research. Without a policy dilemma, member states would not implement such measures. Such a sentiment of dissuasion generally comes from public opinion that the more refugees a state welcomes, the more it will have a dire effect on welfare services used by citizens themselves (Albassam 2015, 3). This, in turn, creates a sentiment of panic that the allocated resources are not going toward the citizens but to help out foreigners. Such rhetoric by far-right political parties helps influence governments to either implement welcoming policies and regulations for foreigners or establish the opposite in the hopes that not many claim asylum (Stoyanova and Karageorgiou 2019, 216).

Alternatively, the crisis also heightened the public sentiment concerning a potential threat to national and cultural identity, as well as the influence of the emergence of far-right political parties, as discussed in the works of Albassam (2015) and Peshkopia et al. (2022). Both authors

believe that the media played an essential part in influencing public opinion on newcomers and helped elevate the emergence of far-right political parties. These factors contributed to the overall shaping of the narrative and understanding of the crisis. The media helped influence and shape citizens' opinions on newcomers and used framing techniques of the events and those in need, as individuals who were coming in to steal everything from them (Heidenreich et al. 2018, 72). The sudden rise of racism, anti-immigration discourse, and nationalism stems from the “historical undertones and the paranoid preservation of cultural identity amongst relatively homogenous states” (Albassam 2015, 3). The public opinion found within many member states is the fear and anxiety that newcomers would have an impact on welfare programs, the economy, and labor, as well as disrupt the national cultural identity embodied by many citizens in most Eastern nations. These waves of nationalism influenced policy and decision-making from member states in their response to the crisis.

A critical point to highlight concerning the media is also depicting the violence that can ensue if newcomers arrive, such as with the terrorist attacks in Paris and Brussels to dissuade public opinion and the government from accepting so many applicants. Mass media helped shaped a specific discourse that dissuades the public from accepting refugees. When there is a strong sentiment of civil national identity this influences the public political trust. Whereas strong sentiment of “ethnic national identity negatively impacts political trust” (Peshkopia et al. 2022, 665). Therefore, having a general civic trust in institutions and the government can influence a positive attitude and support on immigration, but during the crisis this was not always the case. This demonstrates that for many European member states who faced the crisis head-on, the security question and their borders seemed more important than coming up with a collective agreement on how to handle the crisis. This notion further aligns with the sentiment of unfairness as argued by

Gilbert (2015). As mentioned above, most member states that faced the crisis needed more economical and social resources to handle this many newcomers. Until the crisis reached the wealthier member states, there did not seem to be a problem – until there was one. Most of the wealthier states chose to protect their borders instead of facing the crisis unilaterally with other member states who did not have the capacity, nor the right to close off their borders since their country (i.e., Greece and Italy) were along the European coastline, and this would go against international laws on human rights.

Finally, the crisis also takes a more global approach and focuses more externally. Other scholars believe the main problem lies not within the European shores but globally (Bayard et al. 2016, 3). Analysing the conflicts and civil wars in various states help to understand better where the crisis is emerging from, such as in Syria or Libya, and to frame a better response analysis concerning what can be done for future crisis. One way of making sure a crisis like this one is minimized in the future, more financial resources and assistance can be allocated to overseas refugee camps. Refugees are fleeing the camps or finding alternative options due to the unacceptable living conditions and their safety at risk. For many, as the crisis demonstrated, it was better to risk their own lives and those of their family members to have a chance at better living conditions. Allocating further financial resources will help establish a safer environment for refugees and perhaps dissuade some from trying to make it to the European shores (Bayard et al. 2016, 3).

Thus, what can be said about the literature from a policy dilemma is that most of the work done to highlight the crisis unilaterally agrees on a straightforward notion: the need for more organization, communication, and commitment to following the Dublin regulations as well as formulating new regulations concerning the Common European Asylum System (CEAS). Since

no set rules or policy were implemented, this caused stress on the protocols to take from the EU but also for member states, as with the heightened pressure of unprecedented level of applications arriving that most member states were not used to or prepared for which had a direct impact on the immigration regimes (Neimann and Zaun 2018, 3). From a more national perspective, what has a direct impact is not only the policy failures from the EU and its dysfunctionality in implementing it uniformly amongst all member states, but also how this created a vacuum for member states to single-handedly decide to implement stricter policies and go against the Schengen agreement. This, in turn, has directly impacted not only the respective immigration regimes from states, but also the livelihood of newcomers as it identifies them as illegal migrants and therefore cannot have access to asylum rights under the 1951 Refugee Convention. However, this has clearly not dissuaded newcomers from accessing some of their final destinations which will be analysed in this research paper. With this in mind, the central hypothesis I am advancing in this paper is that the more liberal a regime is, the more it will attract refugees to settle in the country. Whereas less liberal regimes will attract fewer refugees.

In general, what is written about the migration crisis is that this has created a failure of migration policy amongst various agreements designed to act as the central pillar in controlling masses of people arriving at the European shorelines. The impact of the Dublin regulation, Schengen Agreement, CEAS, and the 1951 Refugee Convention has questioned the durability and confidence in what the EU stands for and its purpose in protecting external borders. The literature review does not seem to dive deeper into the relationship between actual member states and migrants' influence on immigration policies and regulations. Much of the work surrounding this topic seems to forget the central element of the crisis – migrants – and how they substantially affect why EU regulations do not work. Migrants are depicted as illegal entities walking around the

European continent searching for a country to claim asylum. However, they would not be labeled as such if EU regulations and policies adequately reflected the reality of what a crisis of mass movement of people can look like and what this entails from a national perspective rather than focusing solely on the continent's external borders. Suppose the problem lies fundamentally with the lack of structure and communication within the EU's intergovernmental body. In that case, the problem is not just about the policies that do not work but also looking at how they do not work concerning actual individuals – migrants – that are arriving in masses. Member states claiming that they are receiving too many newcomers' due to the EU's policy failure do not consider their respective immigration regimes and how they might have had an actual vital role to play in how many arrived in their country. Suppose the policies and regulations fail at the national level. In that case, more needs analysing between the actual cause of these failed implementations and the effect these causes have on national immigration regimes. This gap found within the literature is why this paper will focus to analyse if immigration regimes impact how many refugees come to a country. Immigration regimes depicted in the various case studies highlighted in this paper will showcase either openness or restriction towards newcomers. This, in turn, has either had a positive influence on inflicting a desire and will for newcomers to try and reach asylum claim in a respective country. Alternatively, on the other hand, dissuaded newcomers from reaching that respective country and claim asylum.

I will be focusing my paper on the immigration regimes in four countries, the United Kingdom, France, Belgium, and Ireland, as well as their possible effect on the number of refugees in any of the four countries. Possible effects, in this stance, are focused on how immigration regimes are depicted towards those applying and whether or not they are deemed 'good' enough for refugees to apply. Analysing the statistics on how many each country welcomed during 2015 and 2016 will

highlight the effect of immigration regimes. Aside from the immigration regime, other essential factors that are taken into consideration are how dependable welfare programs are, the economic situation of any given country, and the social and cultural acceptance of newcomers are all important interlinkages that are subtly present within the immigration regime of the four countries. By analysing them, this paper will highlight the underlying thinking that most applicants come across when deciding where to go once inside the European continent. As well in turn, how immigration regimes themselves acted as a gatekeeper of their country by either presenting an open policy towards newcomers or instead establishing a regime that is dissuasive in welcoming newcomers.

The possible effect of each immigration regime on how many came to a country depends on a few tangible things. First, for the United Kingdom, the apparent racism enshrined within its immigration regime is the main effect on how many came into the country. Due to France's emphasis on French identity and assimilation, this notion reflects in the effect of its immigration regime and how many came into the country. As for Belgium, it has a more relaxed incoherent immigration policy due to its diverse governmental pillars, and therefore this reflects on its dysfunctional immigration regime and how many came into the country. Lastly, as for Ireland, due to its historical hardship and lack of immigration for hundreds of years, it has newly developed an immigration regime that reflects somewhat of an openness to newcomers but also presents an immigration regime that is closely surveilling and excluding applicants from integration in Irish society. This, in turn, dissuades applicants from establishing themselves in Ireland, which is part of Ireland's end goal. All four cases demonstrate different symbolism of their immigration regime, which influences the effect the regime had on how many came to their countries.

Case selection

The case selection; the United Kingdom, France, Belgium, and Ireland are good case studies when analysing immigration regimes since they all have different histories and cultural identities that helped shape them. Each country has a different outlook on immigration, and this will help in discovering whether or not this is being implemented and reflected in their immigration regime and if, in turn, this has either dissuaded or persuaded migrants to turn towards these nations for a better life. Furthermore, what has made refugees turn towards one particular country over another? What are the underlying factors that matter in making such a decision? These immigration regimes all differ in various ways, so depicting these differences will help better understand each regime more acutely, where these differences are influenced by, and how this reflects in the overall management and integrational process of these newcomers. Each country has a different perspective when analyzing the crisis influenced by its respective national immigration politics, public opinion, internal events, and political parties. The focus on these four case studies is significant for the overall results this can yield concerning the research question since, depending on the factors highlighted before, this can influence the immigration regime and impact how many newcomers arrive in a country.

The United Kingdom is a good case selection to answer the research question since it has displayed hostility towards foreigners for decades. The hostility sentiment was demonstrated in 2020 when the United Kingdom left the European Union. The United Kingdom is a good case study since it has a history of colonial racism, and the events of Brexit also shed light on where public opinion and the overall government stand on newcomers. These contexts are acutely displayed in its current immigration regime and will therefore provide an understanding of its effect on how many came into the country.

France is a second case selection, as its colonial history and revolution helped produce the nation's ideology and ideals that are still present today (Haine 2019, 9). This conceptualized notion of the French identity is enshrined in the historical past of France. It reflects today not only in the political discourse but also within the immigration integration model. Therefore, France is a second good case study for the immigration regime, as it continuously links its French identity (with that of colonial racism) within its Constitution and reflects directly on its engagement with newcomers and the effect the immigration regime might have had on them.

Belgium is the third case selection in answering the research question, as it is a welcoming country for newcomers with its diverse population and a displayed historical preference amongst immigrants. Belgium also partially resists accepting foreigners due to its need for coherent government policies. Such a complex governance system is showcased when dealing with concerns related to immigration policies and politics. As such, Belgium has developed an 'as it comes' approach towards immigration. This is why Belgium is the third country used as a case study to showcase the effect of the lack of immigration policies within its immigration regime and the effect this has had on who came into the country.

Ireland, the last case selection for this paper, is perhaps the most intriguing, as it historically has some of the lowest immigration figures in all the case studies selected. The data showcases an immigration regime that is relatively new compared to the other cases and demonstrates at the same time an openness and willingness to accept newcomers, but also a close monitoring and deterrence to not accept too many newcomers. Therefore, the effect of the regime will be present in how many came to the country.

Immigration Regime

The United Kingdom

The historical overview of the general immigration pattern in the United Kingdom follows. In the 19th century, individuals and families looking for better economic opportunities migrated toward suburbia (Lloyd 2007, n.p). Immigration restrictions were implemented after 1905 to limit the entry of non-British nationals (Lloyd 2007, n.p). This is because the Aliens Act of 1905 was implemented due to various large groups of immigrants coming in, starting with Irish immigrant's due to the Potato famine, then German immigrants and Jewish immigrants escaping anti-Semitism and repression. The number of immigrants quickly increased after the devastation of World War 2, of which over 162,000 poles chose to become British citizens, and in 1948 the government established the British Nationality Act. This act enabled subjects from the British Empire to grant the right to work in the UK due to labour shortages which the government mostly favored subjects from Irish and European workers (Migration Watch UK 2020, n.p). There was also the Commonwealth system that was established after World War II, to help establish closer ties between other colonial states. Later came the Commonwealth Resident Act, where citizens from ex-colonies in the 1960s could immigrate to the United Kingdom without facing any barriers (Minjeoung 2021, 41). Between 1905 and the 1960s, this principle of restriction on who could come into the land was nonexistent apart from quarantine restrictions based on health grounds. Throughout the years, although the right of entry for Commonwealth rights was decreasing, those of the European Union increased due to Great Britain's entrance into the EU in 1973. The United Kingdoms' main pillar on immigration focuses on providing equality opportunities for each newcomer and respecting cultural diversity (Minjeoung 2021, 41).

With that being said, what did not help is the recent 2016 UK referendum to leave the European Union, and one of the most significant debates surrounding this question was on the 2015 migration crisis. The political and social debate, as well as the discourse surrounding immigration concerning the crisis in 2015, were based on the notion of race. Furthermore, right-wing political parties reinforced this already-heard discourse about immigrants coming in and stealing their jobs, increasing crime and violence in cities, and a fear of losing one's national and cultural identity (Bosworth, Parmar, and Vazquez 2018, 66). Such acts of racism were present in the immigration control system in the late 1960s and 1970s (Bosworth, Parmar, and Vazquez 2018, 66). In more recent times, the UK has established specific pre-entry measures to control who comes in, which is demonstrated through the usage of having to use a visa to enter the UK with a combined carrier sanction if the airline is carrying passengers without a proper visa. This benefits the UK since implementing such a law dissuades air and sea carriers from having illegal passengers. Therefore, "unwanted travellers, including vulnerable asylum seekers, are prevented from reaching UK soil" (Bosworth, Parmar, and Vazquez 2018, 73). Anyone in danger who wants asylum in the UK cannot do so. Another migration strategy that has seen the light is the cross-government Illegal Migration Strategy, which entails that the UK is making everything possible to limit its involvement in helping out-migration streams and to focus on external factors such as the Libyan territorial waters by building a stronger Libyan Naval Coastguard and establish procedures of searches to make sure asylum seekers do not reach the UK territorial waters (Bosworth, Parmar, and Vazquez 2018, 74). In addition, the fees and fines concerning immigration matters have increased significantly, and anyone who contests against these measures in front of a judge gets attributed extra fees (Burnett and Chebe 2020, 579). What this showcase, is that not only has the United Kingdom opted to implement strict immigration policies and laws, but by

implementing financial burdens on newcomers, this elevates the difficulty in those trying to get inside the country and the United Kingdom amass profit whilst doing it (Burnett and Chebe 2020, 580). Many scholars have also pointed out that the United Kingdom, throughout its history of immigration up until today, had displayed negativity towards new immigrations, especially when the overall immigrant population started to increase in the 1990s (Al-Faris and Barton 2014, 50).

France

The historical overview of the general immigration pattern in France is somewhat similar to that of the United Kingdom. What changed is that France needed a massive amount of foreign labour in the 1960s, which brought a lot of unwanted action and reaction from the public and civil unrest (Escafre-Dublet 2007, 7). In the 1970s, such a model of integration was on immigrants able to “maintain their cultural identities within French society” (Escafre-Dublet 2007, 11). Another point to highlight in comparison with the United Kingdom, is that France does not have the same established relationship with its former colonial states. France does not grant the “same political rights as the French without French citizenship” (Minjeoung 2021, 46) when it comes to immigrants from ex-colonized French states like the United Kingdom.

When it comes to France's immigration regime, since 2007, a few changes have occurred. Beforehand, France's immigration regime focused on a zero-immigration policy and tolerance. Although France continuously showed resistance to immigration, it is, in contrast, one of Europe's countries where immigration has continuously been the most prominent since the 19th century (Bertossi 2008, 3). With its colonial past, French national identity remained the important forefront aspect even within the discourse of immigration, which prompted anti-immigration rhetoric. With that came the November 2005 riots in the suburban communities, which sparked debate about connecting violence and Islam due to the influx of Algerian and African nationals coming into the

country and, to some political leaders, demonstrated an image of “uncontrolled immigration who are so much foreign to our beliefs, our customs and our laws” (Bertossi 2008, 4).

Such rhetoric showcases this idea of the French culture being superior to other immigrant cultures and is very much still present within immigration policy today. After the 2007 elections, the French model of integration and immigration policies changed from zero immigration to a chosen immigration system. This new policy framework was on establishing “better control and management of immigration” (Bertossi 2008, 5). Such a policy aimed to eliminate irregular migration, increase economic immigration and establish bilateral agreements between specific countries for chosen immigrants that fall under labour migrants and those who do not fit the labour migrant category (Bertossi 2008, 7). The reason for this ‘chosen’ immigration policy is that its appearance is not new. It is embodied under the Jacobin ideology that the State is present in every aspect of the nation through cultural, economic, or social spheres. Such ideology has been present since the end of World War 2 (Bertossi 2008, 6). What this showcase is that the French immigration regime focuses on a chosen specific limitation of newcomers based on their socio-economic development needs and can easily integrate and assimilate the French cultural identity.

Belgium

The historical overview of the general immigration pattern for Belgium is composed of mainly European immigrants but regarded as an “immigrant-receiving society” (Taras 2013, 122). Belgium has a welcoming approach to newcomers compared to the United Kingdom and, to a certain extent, France. This is because Belgium has one of the most diverse multicultural and multiracial societies in the European Union. The total population of Belgium is of a minimum of 12% of immigrants (Martiniello 2003, 225).

Regarding the immigration regime in Belgium, it is difficult to put into one sentence what

that regime looks like. Immigration in Belgium is estimated to be around 10 million individuals, divided between three essential regions. The capital city, Brussel, has an estimated 28% of its population being immigrants, whereas Flanders only 5% and Wallonia at 10% (Martiniello 2003, 225). Therefore, the only way to understand such is to dissect it within five different streams of legal migration. The first is on EU citizens' freedom of movement (Martiniello 2003, 227). The second stream focuses on family reunions. The third stream is on temporary residence permits (Martiniello 2003, 227). The fourth and fifth streams, its asylum application and work permits (Martiniello 2003, 227). As for asylum applications, until the late 1990s, applicants had to wait up to seven years to know whether their application was accepted or not, which in most cases was rejected, which makes it a lot harder throughout this administrative process to be able to gain legal status (Martiniello 2003, 229). Once someone is legally accepted, they go through an integration process. However, the process differs by region, and equal treatment is often not at the forefront of Belgium's different regions' minds (Martiniello 2003, 230). The integration process focuses on the mantra of a national model that focuses on a more assimilationist process for those established in Francophone regions and over a multiculturalist process for those established in Flemish regions (Adam and Jacobs 2014, 66). However, one of the central aspects of the immigration regime reflects in the top-down approach enshrined in the regional autonomy found in the constitutional amendments (Taras 2013, 121). What is shown with this model is that it correlates with the multilevel governance concerning immigration found in Belgium. This creates confusion about how policies should be implemented in different regions and how this plays out when a crisis of newcomers occurs. Therefore, although the application process is lengthy, the acceptance rate is relatively low and demonstrates perhaps also a need for administrative structural reforms. All of this showcases that the Belgium immigration regime is difficult to navigate due to various levels

of government and processes, and this dissuades foreigners from applying for asylum claims.

What is important to note about the Belgium immigration regime is that it holds a somewhat strong migration integration program, as explained above. What differs from other immigration regimes in each case, Belgium attributed civic rights to migrants, such as political and social rights that are not given in the other cases described above, like with France. This aspect of migrant integration is interesting to highlight as it establishes a sense of belonging before even being allowed to become a citizen. This helps to establish a sense of security and belonging within the Belgium community for newcomers and presents an openness to an integration process that can sometimes be draining (Adam and Jacobs 2014, 68).

Ireland

The historical overview of the general immigration pattern for Ireland differs from the other states above. In the 1960s and 70s, the economy was thriving thanks to Ireland joining the European Union in 1973, which reinforced employment opportunities and helped decrease emigration; up until the 1980s, the population grew more than 22% (Einri and White 2008, 153). However, this decreased again with economic hardship in the late 1980s, with over 2% of the population leaving Ireland (Einri and White 2008, 153). The biggest group of asylum applicants at this time were Romanian and Nigerians in 2002 at over 35% (Einri and White 2008, 153).

When it comes to Ireland's immigration regime, there is not much that can be said; as stated above, immigration in Ireland was almost non-existent until relatively recent decades. For dealing with administration and legislative proceedings that have to do with immigration and asylum applications, Ireland has three specific governing bodies that take care of this. The first is the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner (ORAC), which takes care of processing asylum applications (Quinn et al. 2008, 70). The second is the Refugee Appeals Tribunal (RAT) which

directly interacts and deals with appeals made by asylum applicants if they are unsatisfied with the final verdict. The third governing body is the Reception and Integration Agency (RIA), which ensures asylum applicants are looked after while their application is being processed, such as by providing them with housing and welfare programs (Loyal and Quilley 2016, 70).

The DPD programs help asylum seekers, such as housing, meals every day, and welfare programs (Loyal and Quilley 2016, 73). The DPD system is based on three principles; "(a) to keep asylum costs to a minimum in respect of meeting bare subsistence needs; (b) to segregate, render invisible, and confine ethno-racially distinct groupings away from the general citizen population whilst acting as a deterrent and reducing immigration to a minimum; and (c) to maintain a level of knowledge, through surveillance, on the whereabouts of asylum seekers as an extension of border control policy"" (Loyal and Quilley 2016, 76). Also, constantly surveilling foreigners dissuades newcomers from integrating society and wanting to settle permanently in Ireland, which is ultimately Ireland's end goal (Loyal and Quilley 2016, 78). Moreover, Ireland shared a border with the United Kingdom. It wanted to make sure that both systems mirrored one another so that applicants do not deter Ireland from finding a more suitable policy, and was "therefore a crucial economic factor undermining the Irish state's decision to introduce DPD" (Loyal and Quilley 2016, 82) since there was no border controls between both countries since the 1920s due to the Common Travel Area.

Ireland has also had some criticism regarding its immigration regime in the last few years, such as having a more extended waiting period for applicants to receive news of their process, not being completely transparent in direct provisions for newcomers, and poor decision-making. This is since, in less than four years, its asylum system was modified three times. This enables discrepancies and a lack of accountability from the government in response to how newcomers are

treated since the system changed so many times. A lack of coherence and organizational structure enables fundamental rights to be lackluster in place. Elliot (2019) argues this stance and believes that Ireland's immigration system does not resemble the European values and norms that are usually followed and established within other member states immigration regimes, as well as how the immigration regime mostly follows domestic politics and that of the United Kingdom (Elliott 2019, 562). It is also important to note that although Ireland does not have a current far-right political party and movement that showcases racism and anti-migration rhetoric, there is still anti-immigration sentiment and racism within the country (Elliott 2019, 567). Elliot (2019) further argues that in times of economic pressure, Ireland would instead focus on its population first than seek outside and help those in need, and this is why many scholars have argued that Ireland does display anti-immigration sentiment (Elliott 2019, 567).

Hypothesis

The central hypothesis I am advancing in this paper is that the more liberal a regime is, the more it will attract refugees to settle in the country. Whereas less liberal regimes will attract fewer refugees. In order to formulate this hypothesis, I am classifying the regimes of the United Kingdom, France, Belgium, and Ireland from more to less liberal. I will also depict the specific expectations on which country should have the most and the fewest refugees.

Belgium should receive the most refugees, as the expectation is that due to its immigration regime displaying the most liberal values and norms and displaying an openness not analysed in other regimes. Most refugees will respond to this and feel welcome and accepted. Belgium has an open, multicultural society and provides civic rights under its integration model. This showcases a regime that is the most liberal.

Ireland is the second most liberal regime, and the expectation is that Ireland is still developing its immigration regime, showcasing it is still apparent openness to refugees but also establishing reluctance to implement refugees within society. This showcases a regime that is liberal enough to expect a good number of refugees to feel welcomed and accepted, but not as much as in Belgium since the regime also focuses on separating refugees from the rest of society. So, Ireland finds itself in an in-between space of more liberal but also less liberal in how it does not currently have a strong integration model.

France takes the first place in being the less liberal regime. The expectation concerning how many refugees will come is lower than that of Ireland and Belgium due to a few things. Although France displays a multicultural society, it showcases the opposite by having a ridged assimilationist immigration regime and integration model. This favors less acceptance and does not permit civic rights for refugees. This showcases a less liberal regime; therefore, the expectation that they will receive many refugees is relatively low.

The United Kingdom should receive the least amount of refugee's due to its immigration regime demonstrating reluctance to accept newcomers and favors being in control completely of its borders due to this reason – hence Brexit. Therefore, showcasing a desire not to allow newcomers to establish the message that refugees are not welcome in the country and reflects in the immigration regime as well as the current policy established to send them back. The United Kingdom displays the most hostility towards refugees, with its intolerant quasi-racial immigration regime and procedures put in place to prevent newcomers from claiming asylum. This showcases a regime that is the most less liberal, and therefore the expectations of how many refugees will try to enter the United Kingdom is low.

There are other reasons why migrants decide to claim asylum in a country. One underlying reason is firstly due to reuniting with family members, whether based on traveling from one country to another or claiming asylum there. Alternatively, getting in the smuggler networks and try to reach the European continent to reunite with family members (Fotaki 2019, 322). However, due to the crisis and the different policies implemented by various member states, it becomes harder for many to reunite with their family due to displacement. This fundamental right of “family life and protection of the family is enshrined in international human rights law” (Fotaki 2019, 322). However, many of the regulations and practices member states carried out during the crisis failed to protect this principle. Therefore, for many, their only option is to claim asylum in the country where most of their family members are located, even if this means crossing the European continent illegally.

A second reason is based on two essential factors. The first is that the countries selected as case studies hold relatively high importance within the economic and social developments and provide a haven for opportunities and reestablishing self-sufficiency. The countries selected are based on better circumstances that help reestablish normalcy in their lives (Pearlman 2021, 282). Most of the refugees that entered the EU are young and possess skills that can be useful in the labor shortages these case studies are experiencing. In order to help out those who excel in the labour demands, there needs to be adequate welfare services and programs put in place for newcomers. Although special training programs are not consistently implemented to help the candidate qualify for specific employment based on their skills, it nonetheless helps to have an economic and social standing that can introduce such measures (Poddar 2016, 9). A second factor is an important aspect often overlooked when dealing with refugees. Many who try to claim asylum, and in particular with the case studies selected, believe that these countries are generally

favorable to newcomers and receive the necessary protection as refugees. What this entails is that countries that hold international human rights standards and follow the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees provide specific economic and social rights that refugees would not always experience in transition countries like Turkey, Jordan, or Lebanon, such as “the right to stay legally, to work, and to receive education and health care” (Almustafa 2022, 1067). Adhering to such international norms provides a sentiment of peace and security to those fleeing in search of a better life. Access to such rights in Europe, but more specifically within the countries selected, is another main reason refugees are compelled to apply for asylum claims there.

A third reason they claim asylum is to try and regain a sense of personal integrity after what they have endured. This notion of integrity is rarely talked about within the works on migration. However, it is essential to highlight the influence behind a person's decision to migrate in the first place. Human integrity is an aspiration to regain. This can be helped by providing the necessary measures and services, such as a safe shelter or, as mentioned above, having the right to be recognized within the status of a refugee in the selected country (Pearlman 2021, 281). As Crawley and Skleparis (2017) mention, various factors are considered when a person decides to leave behind their home, such as conflicts or economic instability in their region (Crawley and Skleparis 2017, 53). Most left due to the fear for their personal lives and those of their families but primarily due to their lives being affected to a point where it becomes impossible to survive.

Methodology

The sources consulted in this research paper have a diversification approach. As primary sources to analyse the hypothesis concerning the total number of migrants arriving in a country, this paper used official statistics from the European Commission of 2015 and 2016 and Eurostat data from 2017. These data helped us understand how many refugees arrived in a country in 2015

and 2016, respectively. By looking at the total number of newcomers, the data was also helpful in analysing more acutely the different categorizations of newcomers, such as those having a refugee status or subsidiary status or those who claimed asylum, as well as specific subsections like age and gender. One important categorization highlighted in the data for the total number of migrants in 2015 and 2016 was the positive decisions undertaken by each national government. This element is essential in helping to answer the research question, as it depicts the immigration regimes of each state on whether or not the state is willing to accept or deny entry to newcomers. As for secondary literature, this paper used scholarly articles and various publications to provide a more nuanced account of the crisis from a national framework perspective. The crisis is often portrayed as a continental problem, which is the case. However, analysing the crisis from a national and even regional perspective provides a more personal account of how the crisis influenced society and civilians, whether that be through the public opinion that migrants represent a threat to national and cultural identity. Alternatively, media framing helped to elevate the presence of far-right political parties and create a hateful discourse that influenced how governments handled the crisis. These national effects tend to reflect in government decisions and influence how immigration regimes implement regulations and policies. This transcends to how many migrants arrive in a country and gets accepted.

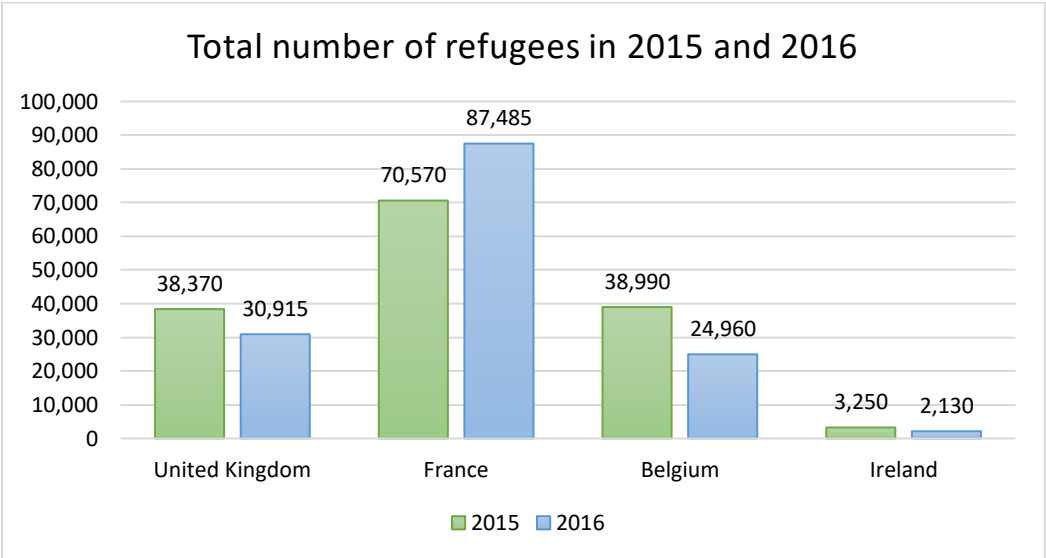
Analysis

Migration goes beyond borders, and if a joint approach between European states does not occur, this can create chaos and a misbalance approach to dealing with the crisis. Another critical point to highlight is that for many migrants, their first choice of destination was based on their perceived knowledge of the welfare programs and benefits they would have, such as in Germany or Sweden. However, as Joensen and Taylor (2021) bring forth, is that there was this phenomenon

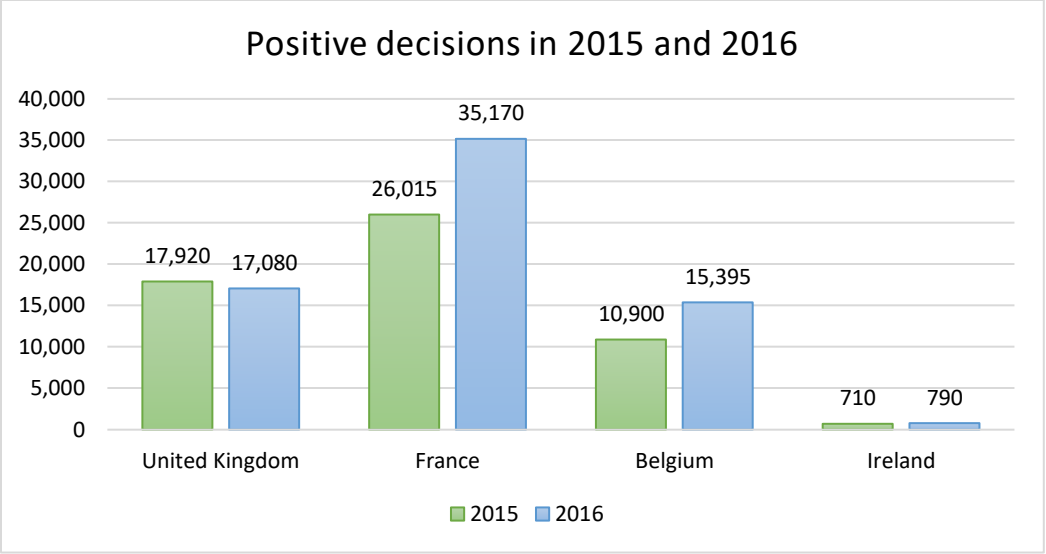
that was reoccurring with most migrants arriving. This phenomenon was that rather than claiming asylum in the first country they arrived in, they made their way towards Western Europe to claim asylum in member states where the economic and social benefits were better (Joensen and Taylor 2021, 6). What this showcase is that the countries that were perceived to be the best destination were also apparently the ones to face the most significant arrivals of migrants at their borders, whereas those who were the least appealing presumably received much fewer migrants and therefore providing a solution to the crisis was not as urgent as making sure most did not enter their borders and establish a shared responsibility with other EU member states.

This is important to highlight, as my hypothesis goes similarly. The more liberal a regime is, the more it will attract refugees to settle in the country. Whereas less liberal regimes will attract fewer refugees. The immigration regimes in question also relate to the type of welfare benefits and programs established for newcomers and how they are incorporated within their integration models. All of this ties in with the overall public opinion and general narrative on the perception of immigration and how welcoming a state is to newcomers.

Graph 1: Total number of refugees in 2015 and 2016 (European Commission 2015 and Eurostat 2017).



Graph 2: Positive decisions in 2015 and 2016 (European Commission 2016 and Eurostat 2017).



With that being said, the data speaks differently. The total number of refugees that came to each respective country between 2015 and 2016 as first-time asylum applicants were as follows; the United Kingdom received 69,185, France 158,055, Belgium 63,950, and Ireland 5,400. These numbers demonstrate that my hypothesis on the influence immigration regimes have on the total number of refugees that come to a country is incorrect. Whereby of the four-case study, France is the one that received the most first-time asylum application at over 158,055. In second place is the United Kingdom, with 69,185 first-time applications. Both countries were deemed less liberal when analysing their immigration regime, particularly with the United Kingdom being the most anti-immigration of the four countries analysed – which resulted in a political divorce with the European Union over this subject.

My hypothesis tried to analyse whether or not the immigration regime of those respective countries would influence how many came to a country and applied for an asylum claim. These numbers demonstrate that applicants were not influenced and based their decision on the immigration regime. Instead, of all four case studies examined, the less liberal immigration

regimes were the ones that received the most first-time asylum applicants. It is also important to highlight in this stance that when it comes to positive decisions allocated to all applicants, a few things need to be noted. The United Kingdom in 2015 and 2016 had over 35,000 positive decisions, whereas France had 61,185 total favorable decisions. In Belgium, it was 26,295, and in Ireland, only 1,500 positive decisions. Not only did France receive the total number of refugees between 2015 and 2016, but it also had the highest positive decisions of all four case studies. My hypothesis also claimed earlier that the more liberal regime was Belgium. However, analysing these numbers, my conclusion is that Belgium is neither more or less liberal, as it did receive over 63,950 refugees, but only 26,295 in both years were given positive decisions. What surprised me the most in this research and data is Ireland. Ireland was put in the middle category, being either more or less liberal but rather an in-between grey area. My hypothesis was correct, as Ireland's total number of refugees in 2015 and 2016 was 5,400, and favorable decisions were a mere 1,500. This showcases that it is either related to the geographical location, as some scholars pointed out, or due to its immigration regime or lack of knowledge on what the country offers to newcomers.

What is surprising to note when referring to nationalism is that the findings highlight that France had the highest positive decisions between 2015 and 2016, followed up close behind by the United Kingdom. Although France and the United Kingdom were ranked amongst the less liberal regimes in this paper, the number showcased a different narrative. France and the United Kingdom display a similar immigration regime and emphasise the national identity as a critical factor in their decision-making and public opinion of how the government handled the crisis. This is another reason the United Kingdom chose to leave the European Union. The crisis was seen as a direct threat to the national and cultural identity of the country. However, this did not stop both states from having the most positive decisions between 2015 and 2016. Although their immigration

regime might emphasise national identity and assimilation, newcomers still decided to apply and settle in these two states. Belgium and Ireland, which do not solely emphasize national identity as their primary vehicle for their immigration regime, had the least amount of positive applications. Perhaps this can be explained by the fact that for Belgium, the immigration regime is not concrete and changes all the time depending on the current crisis. Different regions demand different quotas and profiles of newcomers; therefore, the numbers fluctuate, which can explain why the numbers are smaller than the United Kingdom and France. As for Ireland, its immigration regime is based on exclusion which demonstrates in the overall numbers of positive decisions in 2015 and 2016. Ireland's numbers are the ones that speak the most when referring to the immigration regime and its hostile approach to newcomers. Although, in the beginning, the country was ranked amongst the more liberal, in the end, the numbers demonstrate that Ireland ranks the less liberal due to its immigration regime, which reflects in the total amount of first-time asylum applications in 2015 and 2016, as well as the total positive decisions performed in those two years.

When analysing the data and the immigration regime of the respective case studies, it is clearly shown that the regimes who displayed the most hostility and implemented the strictest laws concerning immigration are also the ones who not only received the most newcomers in both 2015 and 2016 but also had the highest positive decisions on both years. When comparing Ireland, for example, although the immigration regime is set up to dissuade newcomers from arriving, Ireland does not publicly display hostility compared to France or the United Kingdom, where major political parties can influence the government. As for Belgium, although it publicly displays a welcoming sentiment towards newcomers, its immigration regime is rather lackluster and hard to navigate around for newcomers who decide to claim asylum, more thought for newcomers who

might not understand how the governmental structure works. Albeit, Belgium did receive the third-highest number of newcomers.

The United Kingdom

The United Kingdom would be the first country to showcase less liberal norms, and this is demonstrated in its immigration regime but is reflected differently in the total amount of migrants arriving. The United Kingdom in 2015 received 38,370, 17,920 positive decisions on asylum applications, 14,785 for refugee status, and 210 for subsidiary protection (European Commission 2016). In 2016, the total number of applications was 30,915, of which positive decisions were 17,080, 14,585 were refugee status, and 585 were subsidiary protection (Eurostat 2017).

The United Kingdom implemented a few policies during the crisis, which ultimately influenced, no doubt, the total amount of refugees arriving in the country. Mostly, with simultaneously dealing with the influx of asylum seekers and also with the Channel ports from migrants trying to reach the UK from Calais, the government decided to instead address “the reasons people migrate, and their experiences during transit, at the EU external border, the UK border and when they arrive in the UK” (House of Commons Home Affairs Committee 2016, 9). Furthermore, the UK acknowledged that more needed to be done and decided to take and resettle over 20,000 Syrians until 2020 (House of Commons Home Affairs Committee 2016, 10). Another essential step is that the UK provided humanitarian aid to assist refugees fleeing Syria and settling in Libya, Jordan, and Turkey. The amount the UK gave was over £550 million and provided provisions such as shelters, medical and aid, and food as well as an increase in helping the Syrian crisis with a pledge of £2.3 billion (House of Commons Home Affairs Committee 2016, 22).

With that being said, the United Kingdom and its VPRS program help to reach out to those who need the help the most in contribution with the UNHCR in helping out select candidates for

resettlement (House of Commons Home Affairs Committee 2016, 23). The criteria for admissibility are based on those who are the most at risk, such as women and children, those fearing persecution, those who have medical needs, or are at risk due to their identity (House of Commons Home Affairs Committee 2016, 23). However, the process is tedious and lengthy since the applicant has to go through many different channels and a background check before a decision can be made (House of Commons Home Affairs Committee 2016, 23). Those who are lucky to be accepted are given accommodation, access to work and benefits, as well as English language courses to be able to integrate within British society fully (Ibid). That said, the government seeks the right to review the need to protect specific individuals. If the government deems the situation back home is safe again, the United Kingdom will no longer offer them a settlement (House of Commons Home Affairs Committee 2016, 24). Concerning this, a bill called Immigration Bill was passed in March 2014, which focused on changing how removals were done to make this easier for those applying to have no rights (UK Visa and Immigration 2015). This bill focuses on migration, establishing custom checks for immigration to reinforce border protection, and reforming visa applications (UK Visa and Immigration 2015). Therefore, although the resettlement program is doing good for many, it also, through such policy, counteracts the program since this enables the government to review and send back many who probably passed by that program.

Furthermore, to help such an increase, the then Prime Minister declared that an expansion on the current Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme would be added to include an additional 20,000 new Syrians that needed protection (The United Kingdom Government 2016, n.p). This program has helped in 2015 resettle over 1,864, and an additional 1,194 were granted humanitarian protection under the same program. In 2015, 51% of those resettled under the Syrian VPRS were under 18 years old, and half of that were females. A total of 1,337 people have been

granted humanitarian protection under the Syrian VPRS since the scheme began, including 1,085 who arrived in the last quarter of 2015 (The United Kingdom Government 2016, n.p).

By not having clear guidelines on how to operate its borders from Brussels, the United Kingdom decided to take matters into its own hands and reinforced its immigration regime but also used the argument of taking back control of its borders as a way to advance the campaign to leave the European Union, which it did on January 31st, 2020. This turn in viewing the crisis did not deter applicants, as the United Kingdom was the highest state to receive newcomers in comparison to the other case studies.

France

In a second instance, we have France, which, although it presents the second less liberal immigration regime in our case study, demonstrated a considerable number of migrants arriving in its country during the crisis. France in 2015 had over 70,570 first-time asylum applications, of which 26,015 positive decisions, 20,620 were refugee status, and 5,395 were for subsidiary protection (European Commission 2016). In 2016, the total number of applications was 87,485, of positive decisions, which were 35,170, of which 23,225 were refugee status, and 11,945 were subsidiary protection (Eurostat 2017).

France established a resettlement program to help over 500 Syrian refugees. Such a program is based on helping out certain areas like Lebanon, Jordan, and Turkey that are affected by the Syrian crisis. Under the European resettlement commitments, the French government was able to grant over 3,657 refugee statuses, mostly coming from Syria (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees 2018, 3). However, with the tensions related to the numerous terrorist attacks in Paris and Nice in 2015, the public was not wholly, as well as party partisans, in favor of implementing programs to help refugees (Bastien 2015, 11).

Therefore, due to such uncertainty and heightened security discourse, no programs were implemented to help the influx of refugees arriving in the European Union since “the state authorities consistently held that no targeted measures were necessary as refugees enjoyed the same rights as any other resident” (Bouagga et al. 2021, 109). In this stance, independent organizations and the private sector created programs to help refugees integrate into society and find work since many critics have argued that France lacks basic survival programs to facilitate integration (Bouagga et al. 2021, 122). Also, one thing to note is that many asylum seekers tried to avoid France since it has a bad reputation for newcomers to not find work efficiently and displays a high unemployment rate throughout the country. Asylum seekers are not allowed to work whilst their application gets processed, which can be problematic in the long term since the waiting time frame can exceed nine months (Bastien 2015, 12).

That said, although, in 2016, France received over 10,000 Syrian refugees, most of these applications were obtained in the Middle East under the asylum visa program (Gabiam 2021, 1327). This visa program helps reach Syrians who are in need, establish the required documentation to legally travel to France, and proceed with the asylum application in a safer environment (Gabiam 2021, 1328). This can be helpful to refugees that can arrive legally in France and not have to wait months not knowing what will happen to them. Another project put in place was the Calais Shelter, which helped house temporary asylum applicants until they received word on obtaining refugee status. Some also stayed there to attempt to seek the highroads and try to reach the United Kingdom, which became a problem between the United Kingdom, France, and Belgium border authorities. The camp was opened in January 2015 and closed in October 2016 due to media attention and pressure from national and international organizations on the camp's unsanitary, dangerous, and inhumane conditions (Shelter Projects 2018). Like Belgium, one

crucial element to take into consideration is the terrorist attacks that happened, which ultimately had an influence on policy and legislation put at play to mitigate the refugee crisis. This is why for France, security is at the forefront of their concerns during the migration crisis and influences their immigration regime and new policies established (Koenig 2016, 2).

Furthermore, due to France's already fragile societal issues, such as socio-economic disparities with minority groups, another central element is its Muslim population. Such population is one of the biggest in Western Europe, and its direct link with potential security threats (Sweet 2017, 5). Islamophobia was at an all-time high, and political and social discourse was set around this issue that the populations inhabiting the banlieue were regarded as hotspots for radicalization as many of the terrorist attacks did come from these areas (Sweet 2017, 51). Therefore, asking France to establish a plan for facilitating the integration of asylum seekers that come primarily from Arabic countries in contrast with the security threat at the time, was not something the French government was willing to compromise on and therefore put security first as its central concern (Sweet 2017, 52).

During the crisis, France saw the opportunity to increase its labour shortages by remodeling its immigration regime from zero immigration to a chosen immigration regime that focused on specific profiles that could enter the country based on labour needs. Therefore, France used the crises and disrupted policies to engage in its national interests versus helping out in arriving at a joint program for handling the crisis. France was open to receiving newcomers as long as it benefited itself first. However, this did not dissuade applicants from claiming asylum, as France received the second-highest applications in 2015 and 2016 of all four case studies.

Belgium

Belgium in 2015 had over 38,990 first-time asylum applications, of which 10,900 were favorable decisions, 9,220 were refugee status, and 1,675 were subsidiary protection (European Commission 2016). In 2016, the total amount was 24,960 applications, of which positive decisions were 15,395, 12,080 were refugee status, and 3,315 were subsidiary protection (Eurostat 2017). The most significant number of applicants were minor men and mostly came from Afghanistan with over 55% of total minor applications, Syria second with only 4% (Direction Générale Office des étrangers 2021). There was also an increase in unaccompanied minors, with over 3,919 applications (Office of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons 2016). In early 2016, over 63% of all asylum seekers were males between 18-34, and females represented only 37%. This showcases that the journey to safety in any European country is not accessible, and most females choose not to risk their lives. Therefore, with such an increase, the government had no choice but to react and implement measures to deal with the influx. The government decided to open up even more reception centers to treat rapid applications (d'Haenens, Joris, and Heinderyckx 2019, 28). Over 120 additional staff were added, and the number of decisions had increased by over 2,500 (Office of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons 2016). However, the Immigration office decided to settle on a special quota each day – little as 250 registrations a day and not more. This decision was on the fact that the government wanted to make sure not that many asylum seekers could not apply on the same day and were given a letter of notice called pre-registration (Flemish Refugee Action 2016). Also, the government established a plan whereby each city would take in a specific number of refugees. Flanders was predicted as being the central city that would take in the most. This did not go well, and the public dissuaded

the government's efforts by promoting anti-migration rhetoric and restrictive measures (Coninck et al. 2021, 3).

Furthermore, this tension was brewing about identity and security issues due to the Brussels attack on March 22, 2016, which further increased the discourse on not allowing asylum seekers into the country (Cleen et al. 2017, 69). Belgium, just like France, already had intense clashes with minorities, especially in the Molenbeek neighborhood, and this discourse on security and culturalism did not aid refugees against the Belgium government (Cleen et al. 2017, 69). This is due to the public seeing this situation as a threat to “Flanders cultural homogeneity” (Cleen et al. 2017, 74). Such discourse was also put on Islam, and this helped to understand better how the Belgium government reacted – or did not react – to the crisis and what little program was put in place. Some politicians also argued that Belgium could not ‘afford’ to be a host country of many refugees (Coninck et al. 2021, 3).

Therefore, many scholars agree that the migration crisis is not so much a crisis but a crisis on the EU’s asylum policy that seems to focus on ensuring the least number of individuals are entering the EU. As well as ensuring adequate protection is given to those who need it. This notion is demonstrated by how Member States' current asylum programs focus on dissuading refugees from entering and staying in their territory (Flemish Refugee Action 2016). This was how Belgium handled the crisis as described above, with “pre-registration, enacted restrictive legislation and invested in dissuasion campaigns” (Flemish Refugee Action 2016), which demonstrates that just like with other EU states, Belgium is included in the list of countries of those who would prefer not doing much in handling the crisis.

During the crisis, the most significant number of applicants were minors that mostly came from Afghanistan with over 55% or Syria with only 4% (Direction Générale Office des étrangers

2021). There was also an increase in unaccompanied minors, with over 3,919 applications (Office of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons 2016). In early 2016, over 63% of all asylum seekers were males between 18-34, and females represented only 37%. This showcases that the journey to safety in any European country is not accessible, and most females choose not to risk their lives. Therefore, with such an increase, the government had no choice but to react and implement measures to deal with the influx. The government decided to open up even more reception centers to treat rapid applications (d'Haenens, Joris, and Heinderyckx 2019, 28). Another challenge that Belgium authorities and the government had to face was that there was also an illegal operating transit between Belgium and the United Kingdom on the sidelines. Most transit migrants trying to reach the UK temporarily stayed in the Calais camp in the North of France. However, when the camp closed due to unsanitary measures, most had nowhere to reside. Most migrants decided to relocate and settle in Maximilian park, not far from the European Institutions. However, most wanted to head toward the UK, but the mission was impossible (d'Haenens, Joris, and Heinderyckx 2019, 28).

Thus, not only were there no specific policy guidelines on handling the crisis from the European Union, but the Belgian government also did not have a specific immigration regime set in motion to refer to. This caused chaos within the immigration offices of the different regions but ultimately did not have much of an impact on how many applied for asylum claims, as Belgium received around the same amount as the United Kingdom.

Ireland

Lastly, as for Ireland, one of the central policies developed following the migration crisis is the Irish Refugee Protection Programme (IRPP) which stated that the state would welcome over 4,000 asylum seekers extended over a certain period of years – not just for 2015 only. However,

the numbers differ. In contrast to what the government spoke about, pledging to take in upwards of 4,000 migrants, Ireland did not even come close to this number (Elliott 2019, 564). Ireland in 2015 received 3,270 first-time asylum applications, of which Ireland accepted a total of 710 asylum applications. 335 were given refugee status and 375 subsidiary protection (European Commission 2016). In 2016, the total amount was 2,130, of which 790 had positive decisions, 645 were granted refugee status, and 140 had subsidiary protection (Eurostat 2017).

The program focused on establishing an agreement between Italy and Greece to register migrants and then be put under relocation to a Member state. Ireland accepted 600 migrants over the two years of this agreement and the already established 520 refugees from conflicted areas. However, such an agreement was not a long-term solution for Ireland but rather a way to help ease the tension between certain Member states until a more efficient plan was put in order (Department of Justice of Ireland 2015). However, no efficient plan for the longer term was established. Ireland's DPF program is ever present in dissuading asylum seekers from integrating and staying in its territory, which can explain why longer-term solutions were never fully developed.

Ireland received the least applicants in both years, and although it claimed to want to accept over 4,000 newcomers, it only took in half of this amount. This shows how policy failures were used to Ireland's advantage in not keeping their word in accepting the amount they initially claimed. Furthermore, not having clear guidelines on settling procedures gave Ireland the freedom to implement its program and isolate newcomers away from society and living under hardship conditions in the hopes that this dissuades applicants from applying.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this research paper tried to bring a new discourse on the 2015 European migration crisis by depicting whether or not immigration regimes impact how many came to a

country. Not many scholarly works have written about the immigration regimes of respective European Union member states in analysing the crisis from a differing perspective.

The literature used in this paper focused primarily on two specific notions in analysing the crisis; policy dilemma and a national turn to securitization. These two factors have directly impacted how member states dealt with the crisis. For one part, the policy dilemma stems from the lack of the EU in enforcing communication and commitment between member states in following the Dublin regulations and the Common European Asylum System. As Guiraudon (2018), Joensen and Taylor (2021), and Neimann and Zaun (2018) bring forth in their respective works, is that one of the significant elements that caused the policy dilemma during the crisis was the 1990 Schengen agreement since the crisis fundamentally challenged the pillar of what the EU stands for. By having no clear path on what states should do from the EU, member states saw newcomers as a threat, and the only way to dissuade that threat was to remove the one essential element that fuels the threat – freedom of movement between member states. Such a policy dilemma also created fissures within the EU on a sentiment of unfairness in the distribution of responsibility and commitment in dealing with the crisis, as described in the works of Gilbert (2015). This fissure reinforced a hierarchy amongst the EU, whereby wealthier states were deemed not doing enough to help less wealthy states deal with the crisis, such as with Italy or Greece. Not providing the aid asked by struggling states created administrative chaos and is one reason why most newcomers could facilitate their way to Western states. By having no set rules or policies implemented, member states did what they could with the bit of guidance they received from the EU. This directly impacted how member states would then handle the crisis, which policies and regulations they would implement, and how this would reflect in their respective immigration regimes.

In a second instance, from a national viewpoint, this notion of securitization became the primary step for most member states since, for many, they could not rely on the EU and its failed policies for guidance. The narrative around securitization characterised itself in many different ways, as with a rise in far-right political parties and the aid with the influence of the media, or the decision to go against the Schengen agreement and close their borders due to security threats, as well as reinforce stricter immigration regulations to dissuade newcomers from coming in a country. The securitization of borders was the first policy implemented, as discussed in the Sergio et al. (2015) work, to regain control of the crisis unfolding in the entire European continent. The crisis had created a division that prompted a return to each member state regaining sovereignty of its borders. Implementing such a measure, as described in Albassam (2015) and Peshkopia et al. (2022), created a new narrative around a potential threat that newcomers represented towards the public and far-right political parties all over Europe emerged around this notion. In some instances, the far-right political party, with the help of a framed narrative in the media, was able to persuade its government to limit the total number of newcomers arriving or, in other cases, altogether remove the state from the EU as was the case with the United Kingdom and the Brexit vote. These factors, amongst various others, helped reshape states' immigration regimes due to policy failures that influenced member states handling of the crisis. Immigration regimes were impacted by how national governments handled the crisis. This was carried out by how many came to a country like Belgium and Ireland.

The research question in this paper is about understanding an underlying factor often forgotten during a migration crisis – immigration regimes. The latter holds immense importance and value in precisely knowing if they hold influence in how the crisis occurred and how many came to a country. The hypothesis this paper used was if more liberal regimes will attract more

refugees than less liberal regimes. In order to study this hypothesis, I classified the immigration regimes depicted in each case study on whether or not they are more inclined to be less or more liberal. I then formulated expectations on which country should have the most and the fewest refugees based on their immigration regime.

Analysing immigration regimes and characterising them from more liberal to less liberal, while simultaneously looking at the total intake of refugees for each case study in 2015 and 2016 helped to highlight a few things. First, these findings helped explain where and why refugees tend to reach for certain member states over others. Primarily due to the economic strength of the classified less liberal regimes (France and the United Kingdom) as well as better welfare programs and services. Second, the more liberal regimes (Belgium and Ireland) did not attract the most refugees. Instead, it was the less liberal regimes (France and the United Kingdom) that attracted the most intake of refugees.

In addition, when looking at the total number of refugees that came to each respective state in 2015 and 2016, the hypothesis used in this paper turned out to be wrong. More liberal regimes do not attract more refugees than less liberal regimes. The supposedly more liberal regimes (Belgium and Ireland) are the ones that attracted the least total intake of refugees in 2015 and 2016. This is since both states immigration regime lacks coherence and structure, and Ireland has a regime built to isolate refugees from civilians. The less liberal regimes (France and the United Kingdom) attracted the most refugees in 2015 and 2016. Both states' regimes are based on racial undertones due to their colonial past and present a quasi-assimilationist program for newcomers. However, both had the highest intake of refugees.

Those findings tell us that for the short-term, immigration regimes do not seem to matter the most in influencing where refugees make an asylum claim. However, in the long term,

immigration regimes can have an influence. The short-term immigration regime of these states seemed to matter less than the actual economic and welfare benefits both France and the United Kingdom possess and could give. Although both France and the United Kingdom have strict immigration regime policies and integration models that can, at times, reflect a nuance of racism, the ultimate decision for those refugees, as presented by the numbers, did not influence them in their final decision on where to try to claim asylum. On the other hand, what the findings highlight, however, is that in certain cases immigration regimes can matter in the short term. Belgium and Ireland received the least amount of refugees' intake in 2015 and 2016. This can be due to the simple fact that, first, both regimes do not seem to hold a solid immigration program and have had trouble implementing a coherent plan for handling the crisis. Second, Ireland, in particular, showcased a public-friendly approach to receiving refugees, but behind the scenes, the regime is structured to deter and isolate newcomers. The government taking less than the declared total amount also speaks for itself.

Do immigration regimes impact how many refugees come to a country? The answer is yes for various reasons. What the findings demonstrated is that the presumed less liberal regimes (France and the United Kingdom) were the ones to receive the highest total intake in 2015 and 2016. In contrast, the presumed more liberal regimes (Belgium and Ireland) received the least total intake in both years. Refugees seem to lean more toward states that are direct and honest about their immigration regime and overall national outlook on newcomers, as there are no surprises. As well as, having long-term economic and social benefits are factors that can help in the decision-making of where to claim asylum once migrants arrive in the European Union. Immigration regimes thus influence how many refugees came to a country during the 2015 migration crisis.

What can be learned from this paper is that when looking at the data, newcomers seem to be inclined to arrive in a country where immigration regimes are established and well organised and demonstrate a general reluctance in accepting newcomers as with the United Kingdom or a preference selection policy such as with France. Why? Perhaps showing reluctance showcases that the state is hands-on in its immigration regime and that the process might be quicker. Alternatively, general knowledge of both countries seems to be the preferred option for newcomers, such as welfare programs and economic stability. The data also demonstrate that newcomers are less inclined to arrive in a country that does not hold a robust immigration regime, such as Belgium. Or when a state like Ireland purposely designs its immigration regime to dissuade newcomers from arriving. Therefore, what can be noted from a more general outlook on the crisis and immigration regimes, is that when there is disruption, such as with a policy dilemma, this influences how member states handle a crisis of this magnitude and how this, in turn, ultimately reshapes a state's immigration regime which consequently impacts directly negatively or positively the asylum claimer.

Such findings prompt more questions to be further researched, such as looking at alternative factors influencing many to reach for example France and the United Kingdom rather than Ireland and Belgium. Factors might include migrants having a higher tendency to relocate to countries with colonial history and a better-integrated minority community. Alternatively, they might establish themselves in a state with higher economic opportunities where the preferred language is English or French. In addition, applying the results as a generalizability to other countries could be telling. Such as a more restrained state like Austria versus Germany, which welcomed over one million refugees, and analyse its immigration regime might provide a broader understanding of whether or not an immigration regime can ultimately hold influence on how

many are arriving in a country depending on the states outlook regarding newcomers. The generalizability can also apply to other countries, like Sweden, which historically has not welcomed many newcomers and has a relatively new immigration regime like Ireland.

Another important question this research raises, is the notion of who has a right and deserves to be accepted within a European member state. Whereby, there is this underlying opinion and public narrative that those who seem to behave badly or do not present the same norms and values do not deserve to be accepted. The question, then, of 'eligibility' in seeking protection becomes a prominent discourse in this new humanitarian crisis. This undermines the universal human rights laws and makes the application of human rights condition to specific aspects. Such as demonstrating good behaviour or even adhering to the values and norms that represent the European identity. More needs to be analysed concerning humanitarian crisis and where this is going concerning questions of human rights and analysing other emerging factors like climate change, that contributes to individuals escaping their home for a safer and better life.

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