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*University of Central Florida*

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THE EUROPEAN IMMIGRATION CRISIS:  
AN ANALYSIS OF HOW TERROR ATTACKS HAVE AFFECTED  
IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE POPULATIONS  
IN WESTERN EUROPE

by

TAYLOR M. SCIMECA

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the Honors in the Major Program in Political Science  
in the College of Sciences  
and in The Burnett Honors College  
at the University of Central Florida  
Orlando, Florida

Spring Term, 2017

Thesis Chair: Dr. Ted Reynolds

## **ABSTRACT**

The 2015 European Immigration Crisis brought an unprecedented number of immigrants to parts of Western Europe as millions of people fled war-torn and politically unstable countries. Similar to the increase in immigrants, Western European countries have also been combatting the rise of terror attacks throughout Europe. The increase in immigration coupled with an increase in terror attacks has caused anti-refugee sentiments among some Europeans and demands for stricter immigration policies. This paper examines how terrorism has impacted refugee and immigrant populations throughout Western Europe with a focus on Germany, France, and Belgium following the 2015 European Immigration Crisis.

In order to determine the effects, the analysis focuses on recent terror attacks in the three nations. The claim that refugees are responsible for the increase in terror attacks is examined along with the impact of foreign terrorist fighters in each nation. Following this, the responses from right-wing groups are discussed. This includes the rise of right-wing political leaders, the organization of right-wing movements, and right-wing terror attacks. The resulting policy implications regarding both terrorism policies and immigration policies are also discussed. From these three areas of impact, the overall effects of the European Immigration Crisis are better understood.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Thank you to everyone who has supported me through this journey. To my thesis chair, Dr. Ted Reynolds, your classes first introduced me to the field of terrorism studies. I could not have done this without your advice and encouragement over the past few years. To my committee members, Dr. Tom Dolan and Dr. Andrew Boutton, thank you for your direction and time throughout this process. To the staff of the Global Perspectives Office, thank you for first introducing me to research and providing me with the skillset to do so. To my friends and family, thank you for the daily encouragement. I appreciate each of you so much.

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## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

With the rise of terror attacks and an increased call for lone-actor attacks in Western Europe, several European Union nations have been forced to address increased concerns regarding terrorism. The 2015 European Immigration Crisis and its impact on the EU member states have exacerbated these concerns. Nations such as Germany, France, and Belgium have attempted to relocate refugees and immigrants, but these attempts have been met by national security concerns that have soured perceptions of the migrants among local populations.

In 2015, the European Union experienced a spike in terror attacks across its member countries. The particularly violent year caused 148 deaths and 350 injuries related to terror attacks. In 2015, 211 terror plots were failed, foiled, or completed and 1,077 individuals were arrested on terrorism-related offenses (Europol, 2016).

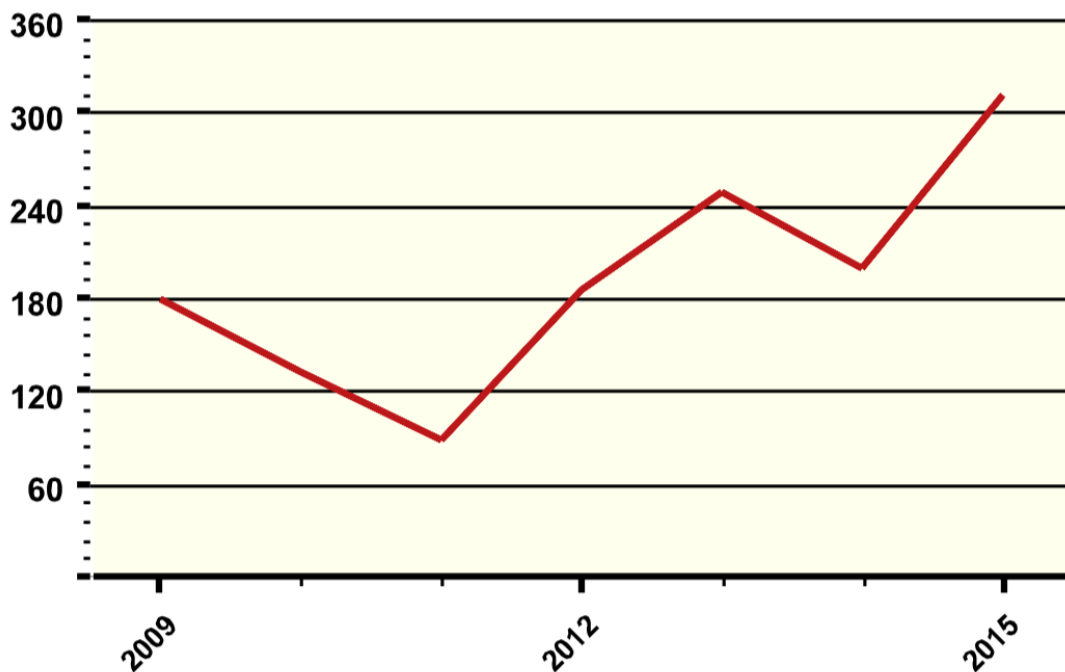


Figure 1: Terror attacks in Western Europe 2009-2015, Source: GTD

These numbers are significantly greater than 2014 numbers and trends in 2016 have followed 2015 trends. While France was the main Western European country affected in 2015, France, Germany, and Belgium have been affected throughout 2016 by major terror attacks.

Following the increase in terror attacks over the past five years, some nations are now struggling to balance the possible threats from liberal immigration or refugee policies.

### **Purpose of Research**

The purpose of this research is to examine how terrorism has affected migrant populations –both immigrant and refugee- in Western Europe. This research will start by focusing on the increase in terrorism in parts of Western Europe following the European Immigration Crisis. It will seek to determine where or not refugees are responsible for the recent increase in terrorism in Germany, France, and Belgium. In order to do this, the research will examine the impacts of the European Immigration Crisis. Recent terror attacks in each of the three countries will be examined to determine if the perpetrators were refugees. The impact of terrorism on refugees and immigrants from far right groups will also be examined. Finally policy implications will be researched to better understand how these effects have been felt throughout parts of Western Europe. From these findings, this paper will make recommendations for how particular Western European nations can better combat terrorism while still addressing their refugee and immigrant populations.

### **Definition of Terms**

**Asylum-seeker.** An asylum-seeker is defined as a migrant whose application for refugee recognition is currently being processed (Innes, 2015).

**Foreign Terrorist Fighter.** As defined by UN Security Council Resolution 2178 (2014), foreign terrorist fighters are “nationals who travel or attempt to travel to a State other than their States of residence or nationality, and other individuals who travel or attempt to travel from their territories to a State other than their States of residence or nationality, for the purpose of the perpetration, planning, or preparation of, or participation in, terrorist acts, or the providing or receiving of terrorist training, including in connection with armed conflict” (p. 2).

**Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS).** ISIS is a Salafist, Sunni terror group that declared a modern caliphate across parts of Iraq and Syria (Steed, 2016). For the purpose of this paper, the group will be referred to as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, ISIS, or the Islamic State. The group is also known as the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS), the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), and Daesh.

**Refugee.** As defined by the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, “A person who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it” (p. 3).

### **Research Questions**

Following the European Immigration Crisis of 2015, Western Europe became inundated with accommodating refugees and processing asylum applications. As countries attempted to quickly relocate hundreds of thousands of people, local populations within host countries both

supported and opposed the new migrant populations. Fears rose as the potential for radicalized immigrants to arrive in Western nations increased. In order to better understand this fear and whether it is warranted, several questions will be examined in this research:

- How has the European Immigration Crisis of 2015 affected European Union policies?
- What policies have Germany, France, and Belgium enacted to address the immigration crisis?
- How has the local population reacted to immigrant populations?
- Have refugees been carrying out terror attacks within Germany, France, and Belgium?
- Have refugees been radicalized while in Western Europe?
- How have terror attacks impacted refugees or immigrants in Germany, France, and Belgium?
- What are the policy implications from the rise in terror attacks in Germany, France, and Belgium?

### **Methodology**

For this research, case studies of Germany, France, and Belgium will be used to determine how each of these countries has been affected by recent terror attacks. The Global Terrorism Database will be used to determine trends and spikes in terror attacks within the three countries. The following criteria must be met for each event in order for it to count as a terror attack in the data set:

- The act must be aimed at attaining a political, economic, religious, or social goal.
- There must be evidence of an intention to coerce, intimidate, or convey some other message to a larger audience (or audiences) than the immediate victims.

- The action must be outside the context of legitimate warfare activities, i.e. the act must be outside the parameters permitted by international humanitarian law (particularly the admonition against deliberately targeting civilians or non-combatants).

Additionally, different policies and reactions within the countries will be compared to determine patterns or differences in approach.

### **Hypothesis**

Due to the increase in terror attacks throughout Western Europe over the past few years, it is likely that there is a link between the rise in terrorism and the 2015 European Immigration Crisis. Attacks within countries such as Germany, France, and Belgium have probably led to an increase in popularity among far-right groups and subsequently stricter immigration policies from lawmakers.

### **Organization**

This paper will follow a specific order. First, the paper will provide an introduction to the European immigration problem and how Germany, France, and Belgium have addressed the issue. In this, country policies on immigration, how the local populations have reacted, and possible ways to address the issues will be discussed for each country. Then, the paper will address how terrorism in particular has affected these populations or if these populations have affected terrorism. The paper will examine if refugees who are seeking shelter in these three Western European nations have been responsible for the increase in terror attacks that the nations have experienced. In this section, the research will also discuss if the refugees who have

committed or intended to commit attacks arrived in the countries radicalized or if they were radicalized after their arrival.

The impact of terrorism on refugees and immigrants will also be examined. This will entail researching different reactions from far right groups in each country. Also, public opinion and if there has been a shift within the countries will also be used to examine the effects. Finally, the paper will discuss policy implications. Through this section, implications for the nation's political leaders or steps that the government or leaders have taken to address the issues will be discussed. Based on the findings, this paper will make recommendations on how these issues could be ameliorated in the future or if different country approaches are more successful than others. This paper will also address areas for continued research in the future.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2015 European Immigration Crisis**

The European Immigration Crisis began in mid-August 2015 when hundreds of thousands of Syrians, Iraqis, Afghans, and other migrants left their native countries to travel to Europe (Traub, 2016). Migrants and refugees went to extremes to achieve a new life in Europe. Some groups travelled by foot, while others were smuggled across borders in trucks or arrived by boat in the Greek islands (Traub, 2016). More than one million refugees and migrants flocked to Europe in 2015 with many of the people fleeing civil war, terror groups, or seeking political asylum. Nearly half of all of the refugees and migrants who arrived in Europe during 2015 had fled from Syria (Greenhill, 2016). The more than one million migrants that arrived in Southern Europe overwhelmingly hailed from Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan (UNHCR Global Report, 2015).

The number of asylum application during 2015 was greater than the previous greatest peak in history, which was observed following the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. European Union countries received about 995,000 first-time asylum applications by the end of October 2015 (Aiyar et al., 2016). With refugees reaching Europe at unprecedented and unsustainable numbers every day, the European Union was pressed to implement a policy that could address the staggering numbers. The European Union agreed to a relocation program that would resettle 160,000 refugees who had flocked to Italy and Greece in order to lessen the burden on these two countries (Non, merci, 2016). In addition to this decision, other member states also set their own policies for how many refugees they would accept from the Middle East and other fractured

countries. These policies ranged depending on the ability of individual countries to house and provide for refugees.

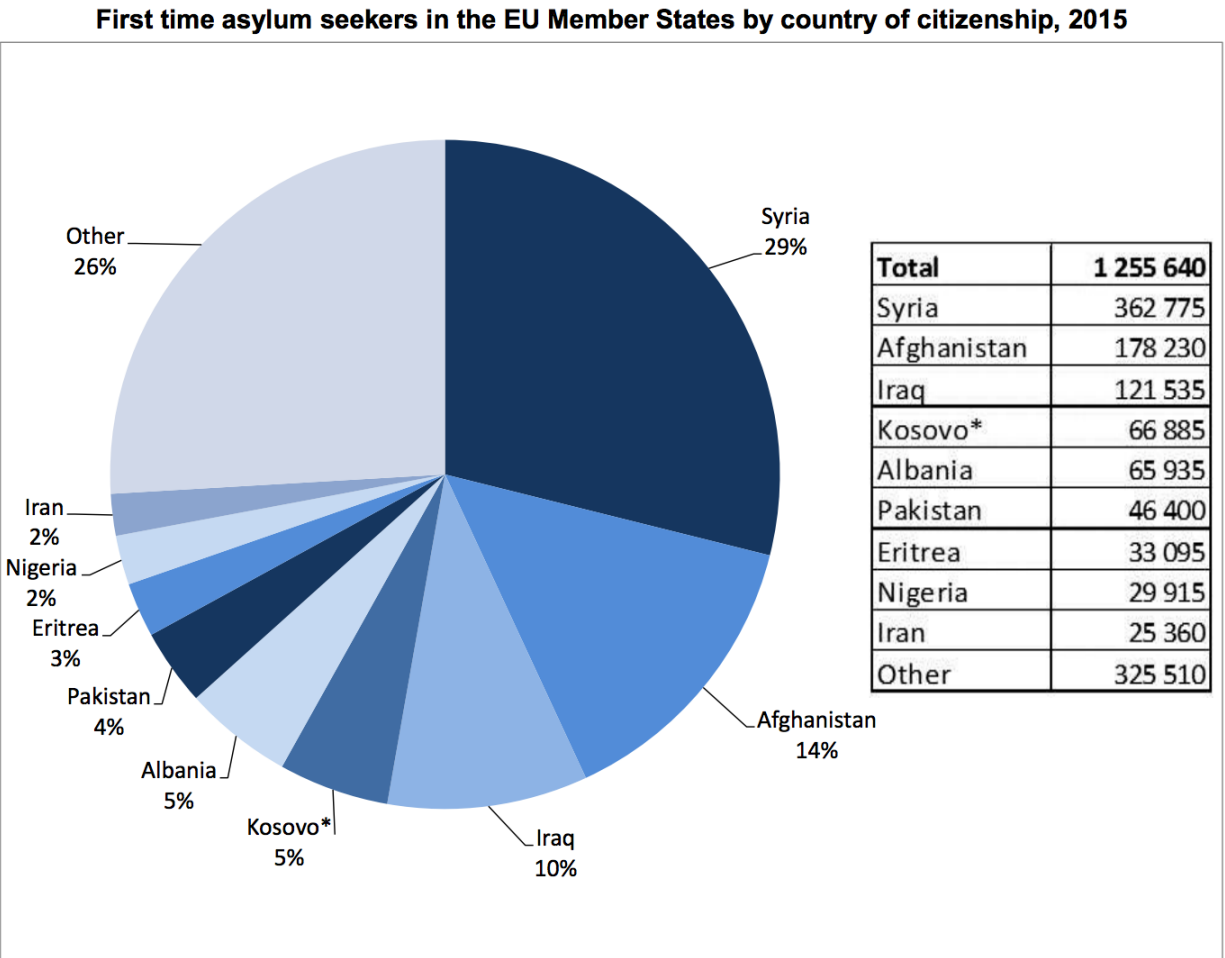


Figure 2: Asylum seekers in EU Member States, Source: EuroStat

While the migration flow to Europe has decreased in 2016, the decrease has not followed due to improved humanitarian, political, or social problems in the most affected countries. The number of people crossing into Europe in 2016 has decreased by 42% from the number of people who crossed into Europe from last year. Despite this number being significantly lower, there has



only been a 15% decrease in the total number of casualties from the previous year (UNHCR Global Report, 2016). While the number of migrants and refugees decreased, migration routes have become more dangerous this year as some countries have increased efforts to limit migration flow and secure borders.

## **Germany**

Germany has implemented one of the most liberal asylum policies in Western Europe (Park, 2015). The increase in immigrants following 2015 was seen greatest in Germany due to its characteristics as a prosperous and accepting EU state (Aiyar et al., 2016). While Germany has served as one of the few countries in Western Europe that has virtually welcomed immigrants in with open arms, its decision to do so has not been easy or popular for parts of the German population.

Germany's status as one of the world's most frequent destinations for immigrants would not have seemed like a possibility just half a century ago. During the 1950s, East and West Germany were still largely ethnically homogenous. This would change by 2014 due to the more than 8.2 million non-nationals living in Germany and more than 20% of its population having a "migrant background" (Hess & Green, 2016). Germany's first immigration boom was seen following the fall of the Berlin Wall when more than 1.2 million asylum applications were received and more than 1.4 million ethnic Germans from different parts of Europe came to Western Germany in the years following the reunification (Green, 2013). These numbers predate the European Immigration Crisis of 2015, which secured Germany's status as the number one country in Europe for asylum seekers. In 2015, Germany alone received 441,800 first time asylum applications (Asylum in EU Member States, 2016).

Despite the nation's decision to allow more than one million refugees in 2015, integration of these immigrants still remains difficult in Germany as it does throughout Europe (Hess & Green, 2016). Integration has been difficult for Germany to achieve in education, poverty, and employment. Concerns about security –especially since the terrorist attacks that took place in the United States in 2001- have been the impediment to integration over the past 15 years. Furthermore, the German people have not been as accepting of asylum seekers as the chancellor has been. The German people have looked to limit the number of asylum seekers in the country and the arrival of more immigrants has led to an increase in anti-immigrant protests (Crage, 2016).

Germany's "open door" policy has been criticized more frequently following terror attacks that have been carried out by migrants this past year (Troianovski, 2016). German Chancellor Angela Merkel has continued to stand by policies following the refugee crisis that permit large numbers of refugees to settle in Germany as opposed to stricter policies throughout much of Western Europe. These policies have proven difficult for Merkel's party as the opposition party, the Alternative for Germany Party, recently beat Merkel in her own district (Kirschbaum & Shalal, 2016). Merkel could now lose re-election for a fourth term due to the policies that she implemented in regards to the refugee crisis. While her decisions were initially lauded as humanitarian and compassionate, her people have now experienced the stresses of the liberal immigration policy through both the economy and the perceived security of the nation (Hess & Green, 2016).

## *France*

France has been more reluctant than other European nations to allow migrants from the Middle East and North Africa due to security concerns following terror attacks in the country (Park, 2015). France's hesitancy to accept more refugees mirrors the hesitancy of refugees to attempt to resettle in France as well. Following the refugee crisis, France's overall asylum applications rose 22% from the previous year; however, this increase only totaled to 79,000 applications for the year (Non, Merci, 2016). In 2015 during the refugee crisis in Europe, France received 70,570 first time asylum applications (Asylum in EU Member States, 2016). While the country has not been as welcoming as some other European nations, conditions within France have deterred refugees from seeking asylum. France's high unemployment rate coupled with a lack of opportunities for immigrants has made France a less popular destination for migrants compared to Germany (Bohlen, 2016). While immigrants did settle in Calais, France, many of those who settled in this city have attempted to travel to the United Kingdom as their final destination (Styan, 2015).

Terror attacks such as the Charlie Hebdo attack in 2015 have caused French citizens to oppose immigration due to security fears (Bourbeau, 2016). Continued terror attacks in the country have caused more than 60% of the nation's population to claim that they do not want more refugees in the country (Non, Merci, 2016). This has been echoed by the Prime Minister, Manuel Valls who stated "The first message we need to send now, with the greatest of firmness, is to say that we will not welcome all the refugees in Europe (Non, Merci, 2016)." The Prime Minister's approach has been starkly different from Chancellor Merkel's approach and both have been critical of each other. Rather than embracing refugees, Prime Minister Valls has rejected

relocation of these refugees beyond the quotas that France has been obligated to by the EU (Hamann, 2016).

Different approaches between Germany and France in their attitudes towards the refugee crisis have strained relationships between the two nations. Despite these differences, both countries have witnessed similar issues regarding unaccepting citizens, fear over terror attacks, and increased economic pressures.

### ***Belgium***

Belgium received 38,990 first time asylum applications in 2015 (Asylum in EU Member States, 2016). Unlike Germany and France, Belgium has not been as affected by the European refugee crisis. Belgium has not been called upon to resettle as many refugees as the two other nations. The 2014 quota to resettle 130,000 refugees by 2016 only mandated Belgium to place 100 refugees in 2014. Belgium decided in 2015 to increase its mandated quota of 150 settlements to 300 (European Resettlement Network, 2014). As 2015 progressed and the refugee crisis became more pronounced, Belgium was eventually expected to relocate a total 4,500 of the 160,000 migrants (Dugulin, 2015). The small nation has not been as affected due to the smaller number of asylum seekers who have come to the country looking for protection.

In 2016, Belgium increased its border patrol along the French border to prevent more migrants from coming into the country illegally and attempting to settle or continue travelling to the United Kingdom. Belgium also suspended a Europe-wide passport-free agreement in an effort to prevent the French arrivals (Dufrasne, 2016). Following terror attacks in the Belgium capital of Brussels in 2016 increased anti-immigrant sentiments among the public and have caused more people to oppose the settlement of migrants in Belgium (Erlanger, 2016). This is a

shift in the initial response to the migrant issue within Belgium. Originally, the vast majority of demonstrations that had links to the migrant issue within Belgium were nonviolent and were carried out in support of the migrants (Dugulin, 2015).

Following terror attacks within Belgium and other European nations, there has been a greater negative response to migrants and an increase in radicalized groups who opposed these migrants. Belgium's parliament is now considering mandating refugees to sign a "newcomer's statement." This statement would include the acceptance of Belgian values such as the acceptance of gay rights and equal rights for men and women. The statement would also request the signee to disclose any knowledge of possible terror attacks that might be committed in Belgium (Tomkiw, 2016).

### **Security and Immigration**

Leudtke (2009) explains the shift in EU immigration policy in a post 9/11 world. Before the US terror attacks, there was more support than ever for a unified set of immigration rules in the EU. The Schengen zone, a policy that allowed border-free travel in the EU, coupled with the Tampere Conclusions, an immigration policy for unification, were some of the new proposals for more integration. Despite this progress towards immigration reform, the policy agenda for EU member states dramatically changed following 9/11. Both Germany and France voted against an EU policy that would have taken dramatic steps towards an EU immigration policy. Nations began to view immigration policy with crime and terrorism matters. This made a more open EU policy virtually impossible. Furthermore, countries such as France and Belgium, nations that were previously known for more pro-immigrant legislation, used EU immigration law to limit the rights of immigrants (Leudtke, 2009).

Rudolph (2003) explains that following 9/11, security and migration policies throughout much of Europe were adapted to “securitize” migration (Rudolph, 2003). Prior to 9/11 the UC Commission was seeking more liberal immigration policies. Nations throughout Europe reversed these plans following the terror attacks and shifted to implemented new antiterrorism legislations. Nations such as France and Germany expanded police and intelligence agency powers in an effort to monitor suspected terrorists. These changes to antiterrorism policies stemmed from some nations believing that terrorists or potential terrorists were exploiting immigration and asylum rules (Leudtke, 2009). Europe also implemented changes to migration policies in response to the US terror attacks. Together, France and Britain closed the Sangatte Red Cross Center. This center was suspected of housing illegal immigrants and asylum seekers in 2002. Hundreds of illegal immigrants were detained due to the increase in police presence near the center. Germany also increased its border control efforts to limit illegal immigration following 9/11 (Rudolph, 2003).

### **Foreign Terrorist Fighters**

The rise of Muslim foreign fighters is a trend that has increased since the 1980s. Most transnational jihadi groups, were formed due to foreign fighter populations (Hegghammer, 2010). Hegghammer argues that the origins of the foreign fighter phenomenon are best traced back to what he claims to be a pan-Islamist identity movement. This movement began in the 1970s and formed a violent offshoot in the 1980s. Hegghammer offers two responses on how to address the foreign fighter trend. He argues that Western governments should focus less on attempting to stop the spread of Salafism, and instead, focus more on preventing anti-Western

media reporting through networks such as al-Jazeera and internet sites. Ultimately, the West must work to dispel pan-Islamism through promoting state nationalism. Second, policymakers ought to reevaluate adjust public diplomacy measures to understand that the majority of Muslims do not view foreign fighters and international terrorists as the same. The West's propensity to combine the two has caused communication issues between the Western and Muslim world since September 11, 2011.

In addition to understanding the origins and implications of the foreign fighter phenomenon, Hegghammer also explains the choice Western jihadists face when considering domestic fighting versus foreign fighting. Based on his data, foreign fighters outnumber domestic fighters 3:1 in Europe and the United States. Hegghammer offers several hypotheses for why this difference exists. First, militants may go abroad to fight if they perceive it as easier to operate abroad. Second, while fighters may prefer to operate in the West, they go abroad to increase their capabilities. Third, fighting abroad may be viewed as more legitimate than domestic fighting. Hegghammer finds this hypothesis to be the most likely out of the three he offers.

According to his finding in 2013, militants do not usually leave their home countries with the intent of returning to carry out a domestic attack. Rather, the small minority who do choose to return do so because of motivation they received while abroad. His data concludes that militants with foreign fighting experience exhibit a "veteran effect." When evaluating his data, attacks carried out by these veterans were successfully executed 29% of the time and resulted in fatalities 16% of the time. Attacks carried out by individuals without foreign fighting experience were successfully executed 18% of the time and resulted in fatalities 7% of the time. This

supports the hypothesis that these returners are more lethal militants than their domestic fighter counterparts.

The Europol Information System<sup>1</sup> has recorded more than 3,700 foreign terrorist fighters from 24 European Union Member States have travelled to Syria or Iraq since 2011. Fighters from Western European nations make up 20% of all the foreign fighters in Syria and Iraq. The largest influx of fighters was observed in the summer of 2013 when the Lebanese Shiite militia Hezbollah was supporting the Syrian Army. The second large increase was witnessed in the summer of 2014 following al-Baghdadi's proclamation of a caliphate in Iraq and his acquisition of land (Neumann, 2016). Turkey is the main country used to enter Syria and Iraq and to leave the two countries when foreign fighters prepare to return to Europe.

After arriving in Syria and Iraq, European foreign fighters have predominantly joined two terror groups: the Islamic State and Jabhat al-Nusra. Other terror groups such as Jaish al-Fatah, Harakat Ahrar al-Sham, Jaish al-Muhajirin wal-Ansar, and Harakat Fajr ash-Sham al-Islamiya have drawn fighters to a lesser extent (Europol, 2016). While foreign fighters are not a new development in violent conflict, the rise of the Islamic State has spurred an increase in the number of fighters. Outside of countries in the Middle East, the top five countries by number of foreign fighters who have travelled to Iraq or Syria are Russia, France, Germany, the United Kingdom, and Belgium (The Institute for Economics and Peace, 2016).

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<sup>1</sup> The Europol Information System is a Europol core database in which Member States report information on suspects, convictions, and events and devices connected with organized crime and terrorism.



## **CHAPTER THREE: RECENT TERROR ATTACKS IN WESTERN EUROPE**

This chapter will examine terror attacks that occurred in the countries of Germany, France, and Belgium immediately preceding and following the 2015 European Immigration Crisis. By examining the known terror plots that were carried out or foiled, it will be possible to determine the perpetrators. This will provide a better insight regarding if populations of refugees, immigrants, or natural born citizens have been responsible for the majority of the recent terror attacks in parts of Western Europe. By understanding the identity of the architects and executors of these terror attacks, it will help to determine the possible impact that the European Immigration Crisis has had on Western Europe in regards to refugee populations over the past two years.

The Islamic State has shown an increasing interest in recruiting refugees traveling to Europe. The terror group has focused on attempting to radicalize refugees in order for them to carry out attacks within European Union Member States (Grierson, 2016). The group is suspected of focusing its efforts on migration routes where it will be easier to concentrate on refugee populations. In addition to refugees utilizing specific immigration routes in order to reach Europe, terror organizations have focused their efforts on sending foreign fighters through the same routes (Europol, 2016). The routes have become inundated with refugees and individuals seeking asylum from European Union Member States. This has possibly made it easier for individuals travelling from Syria and Iraq who have ties to terror groups, such as the Islamic State, to more easily slip past border patrols and reach Germany, France, and Belgium.

While there is the possibility that terrorists or returning foreign fighters could utilize these refugee routes, there is currently no definitive evidence that terror groups are systematically using these routes in order to avoid detection upon entering Europe (Europol, 2016). Despite Europol's findings, Hans-Georg Maassen, head of Germany's Federal Security Agency (BfV), stated in June 2016 that at least 17 known terrorists had traveled to Europe through a refugee route in the Balkans (Von der Mark, 2016). In addition to the 17 known cases, BfV also reported in February 2016 that the agency has received more than 100 reports that militants were among refugee populations currently in Germany (Copley, 2016). It is still unclear the number of militants who have potentially infiltrated populations in Western Europe and are posing as refugees.

While this number is unknown, the Islamic State has purported that it will continue to destabilize these routes by training and camouflaging fighters to cross the European border. The United States Central Intelligence Agency reported in 2016 that the Islamic State's official strategy would be to hide operatives among refugee populations that were traveling from the Middle East and North Africa (Scarborough, 2017). Although the Islamic State's bold statements clearly outline the objectives of the terror organization, they do not lend insight into the individuals who have been persuaded or volunteered to carry out these attacks.

By examining the terror attacks in Germany, France, and Belgium following the 2015 European Immigration Crisis, this chapter provides a better understand of perpetrators' backgrounds. It will provide clarity into the history of whether individuals are radicalized prior to arriving in Western Europe, or if they have been radicalized before arriving in Western Europe. Furthermore, it will also provide a better understanding to the possibility that the terror

attacks are being carried out by foreign fighters rather than by refugees. Examining the attacker will not only provide an understanding of the terrorist profiles, but also, it will help to determine the similarities and differences that have occurred over the past two years.

### Germany

Germany has witnessed an increase in the number of terror attacks over the past few years. There was a 285% increase in the number of attacks between 2014 and 2015. There were 13 recorded attacks in 2014 and 50 recorded attacks in 2015 (START Global Terrorism Database). The graph below illustrates the trend in terror attacks that took place in Germany between January 2013 and December 2015.

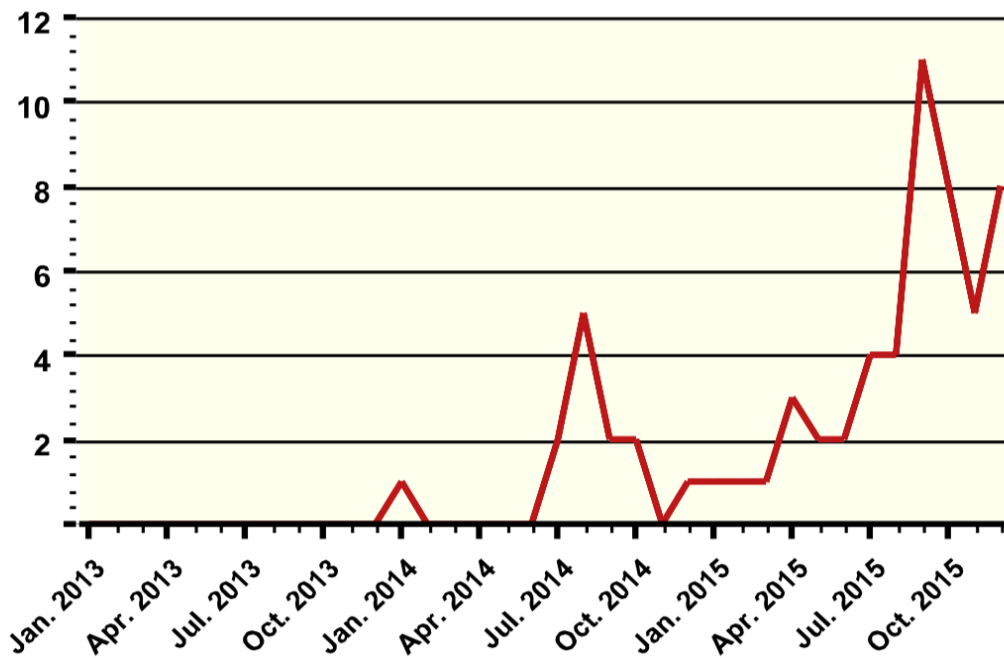


Figure 3: Terror attacks in Germany 2013-2015, Source: GTD

### ***2016 Terror Plots by Asylum Seekers/Refugees***

The 2016 Würzburg train attack was the first terror attack carried out by an individual claiming refugee status in Germany following the 2015 European Immigration Crisis. This attack was also the first time that Germany was a victim of a major terror attack by Islamic militants within the past few years (Hack, 2016). On July 18, 2016, Riaz Khan Ahmadzai, a 17 year-old Afghan refugee, attacked commuters on a train travelling in the city of Würzburg with an axe (Huggler, 2016). The attack severely wounded five people and left more than a dozen people in shock. Ahmadzai was shot and killed by German police following the attack (Huggler, 2016).

Ahmadzai arrived in Germany in June of 2015 as an unaccompanied minor and was placed in a refugee camp (BBC, 2016B). Reports indicate that Ahmadzai did not seem radicalized when he first entered the country and that he did not exhibit any alarming behaviors prior to the week before the attack (BBC, 2016B). While there is no evidence that Ahmadzai had direct contact with militants from the Islamic State, the terror group released a video of the alleged assailant shortly after the attack. In the video, the Afghan refugee is seen describing how he will carry out an attack in Germany to avenge the deaths of people in Muslim countries (Hack, 2016). Authorities believe that Ahmadzai was self-radicalized and may have decided to carry out the attack after learning about the death of a friend in Afghanistan (BBC, 2016B).

While Germany has been successful in thwarting several terror attacks, this attack marked the first successful attack carried out by a refugee who had arrived in Germany following the 2015 European Immigration Crisis. This has led to criticism from both citizens and officials who have opposed the country's welcoming policies towards refugees. While Germany's neighbors, France and Belgium, have been victims of several major terror attacks over the past

two years, Germany has not been as affected by successful terror attacks. The Würzburg train attack was the first major attack that German authorities were unable to thwart in the past few years (Hack, 2016).

The 2016 Ansbach bombing was a terror attack carried out by an asylum seeker from Syria. On July 24, 2016, Mohammed Daleel, a 27 year-old who had been denied asylum in Germany, detonated a bomb outside of a music festival in the Bavarian city of Ansbach (Gatehouse, 2016). The detonation killed Daleel and wounded 15 people in the surrounding area (Eddy, 2016). Following the attack, authorities found a video on Daleel's phone in which he pledged allegiance to the Islamic State leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi (Gatehouse, 2016).

While it is possible that Daleel had assistance from the terror group when orchestrating the attack, according to Manfred Hauser, the deputy director of intelligence for the state of Bavaria, it is more likely that Daleel was self-radicalized through the Internet (Gatehouse, 2016). In the video that was found on his cellphone, Daleel purports that the attack is in response to his beliefs that Germany was obstructing Islam through its involvement in coalition attacks in Syria and Iraq (Troianovski & Buell, 2016).

Additionally, the threat of deportation may have had an impact on the decision to carry out the attack. Ten days before Daleel carried out the attack in Ansbach, he had received his second notice that he would be deported to Bulgaria (Gatehouse, 2016). After arriving in Germany in 2014, he was denied asylum because he did not meet the minimum qualifications for asylum in Germany under the Dublin Regulation. This regulation requires refugees to apply for asylum in the first European Union country that they enter. This would have been Bulgaria for

Daleel (Eddy, 2016). According to a psychological assessment conducted by Daleel's trauma specialist warned the Federal Office of Migration and Refugees that an effort to deport him "could result could result in a "spectacular" suicide attempt" (Gatehouse, 2016, pA1).

This was Daleel's second notice of deportation. Following the first notice, he attempted to commit suicide, which is when the psychological assessment took place (Gatehouse, 2016). His deportation to Bulgaria had initially been halted due to the psychological troubles; however, following his second notice, Daleel once again spiraled. According to the report that was written, Daleel was afraid to return to Bulgaria because he claimed that he had been abused while in the country (Gatehouse, 2016). Based on the report that was written and the Daleel's reaction, it is believed that he was not a refugee who was radicalized while in the country, but rather, that his reaction was to the news of his deportation. He had threatened throughout his psychiatric treatments that he would carry out a suicide attack if he was deported (Gatehouse, 2016).

The 2016 Berlin Christmas Market attack is an example of a terror attack carried out by an asylum seeker who originally travelled from Tunisia. On December 19, 2016, Anis Amri, a 24 year-old who had been denied asylum in Germany, allegedly plowed through crowds of people at Berlin's Christmas market with a truck. The attack killed 12 people and injured 48 others (McKenzie, 2016). Following the attack, Amri allegedly traveled from Berlin to France. From France he took a train to Milan. Amri was involved in a shootout with Italian authorities that resulted in his death.

Following the terror attack, a video surfaced in which Amri was seen pledging allegiance to the Islamic State (McKenzie, 2016). While France's anti-terrorism prosecutor's office has not

confirmed or denied the allegations that Amri travelled through France to Italy, this has led to criticism regarding open borders between European Union countries as a major security threat (McKenzie, 2016).

In addition to concerns about border control, this terror attack raised concerns about how Germany has been monitoring asylum seekers. Amri arrived in Italy in 2011 from Tunisia following the Arab Spring. After arriving in Italy, he claimed to be a minor and was permitted to stay, but he was later arrested and sentenced to four years in prison for assault, arson, and damaging state property at the Lampedusa refugee center (Shoichet, 2016). Following his sentence, Italian authorities attempted to deport Amri back to Tunisia; however, Tunisia would not accept Amri on the grounds that there was not proper documentation for Amri (Shoichet, 2016). When the Tunisian government refused to accept Amri's deportation, Italian authorities demanded that he leave the country (McKenzie, 2016). This ultimately allowed Amri to remain in Europe where he eventually travelled to Germany in 2015.

Amri was able to travel throughout parts of Europe using different falsified identity documents each with different aliases (European Police Office, 2017). After arriving in Germany, Amri once again applied for asylum. German officials eventually denied his application after learning that he had used six different names and three different nationalities (BBC, 2016). Despite his asylum application being denied, German authorities also encountered difficulty attempting to deport Amri because he had no papers and authorities could not determine his identity (Shoichet, 2016).

### ***Foreign Fighters in Germany***

According to a report from the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism (ICCT) published in April 2016, the Germany Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) estimates that 720-760 individuals had travelled to Syria or Iraq to fight for or support terror organizations since October 2011 (Boutin et al., 2016). Germany is one of the four nations in Western Europe where foreign fighter numbers are the highest. The report from the ICCT believes that more than 238 fighters are still abroad, approximately 100 have been killed in the conflict zone, and 250 have returned to Germany. Of the more than 700 fighters who have travelled from Germany, 40% held German citizenship, 20% held dual citizenship, and 40% left from Germany but were not German citizens (Boutin et al., 2016). Germany also has an above average percentage of females who have travelled to conflict zones in comparison to other EU nations. The average percentage of female fighters from EU nations compared to male fighters is 17% while 20% of the foreign fighters from Germany are female (Boutin et al., 2016). To this date, returned foreign fighters have not been responsible for any of the reported terror attacks.

### **France**

Prior to 2015, the number of terror attacks in France remained relatively constant with the average number of successful and unsuccessful attacks at 13 attacks between 2013 and 2014. There was only one more recorded attack in 2014 than in 2013. Despite this trend, France has become increasingly affected by terror attacks over the past two years. Major terror attacks have threatened the country and prompted new fears among the population. There was a large spike in the number of attacks between 2014 and 2015. Similarly, there was a large spike in the number of deaths from terror attacks in France as well. The graph below illustrates the trend in terror



attacks that took place in France between January 2013 and December 2015.

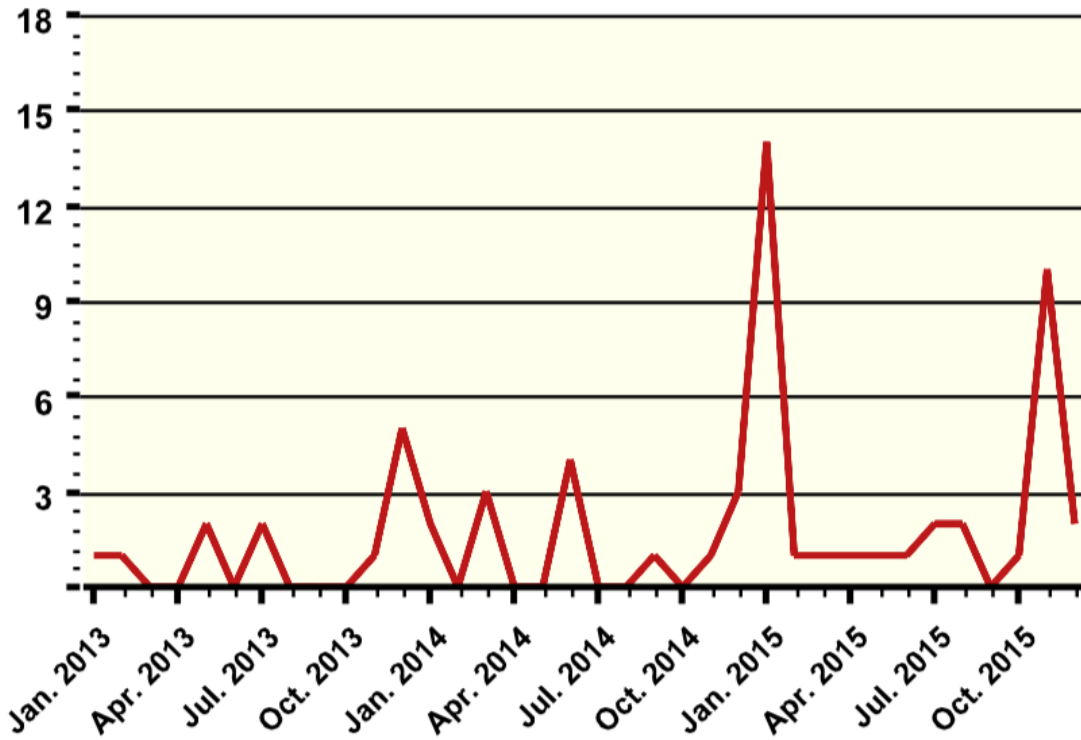


Figure 4: *Terror attacks in France 2013-2015, Source: GTD*

In 2015, France was the most affected Member State in the European Union in regards to terrorist attacks. From 2014 to 2015, France witnessed a 157% increase in the number of terror attacks from 14 in 2014 to 36 in 2015 (START GTD). During 2015, terror attacks in European Union Member States were responsible for 151 deaths. Of the 151 deaths, 148 of the deaths took place in Paris, France (Europol, 2016). The number of deaths also exhibited an unprecedented increase from previous years. In 2014, there was only one death in France due to terrorism. Furthermore, over the past 14 years, France has averaged one death per year due to terrorism (The Institute for Economics and Peace, 2016). This increase was due to two major terror events

that took place in 2015: the Île-de-France attacks and the November Paris attacks. The Islamic State claimed both of the major events that took place in 2015 (The Institute for Economics and Peace, 2016).

### ***Major Terror Plots in France***

Between 2015-2016, France witnessed several major terror attacks. In January of 2015, the Île-de-France attacks took place, which included the Charlie Hebdo terror attack and lone actor attacks (The Institute for Economics and Peace, 2016). The Charlie Hebdo attack targeted the magazine offices of the satirical French newspaper killing 12 people and injuring five others (BBC, 2016C). This was the first major terror attack in France in several years.

In November 2015, gunmen and bombers carried out several coordinated terror attacks which occurred within minutes of each other. Militants targeted the Batclan concert hall, the Stade de France, and several different restaurants in Paris. The attacks killed 130 people and wounded 368 others (BBC, 2016C). This attack was the deadliest attack to take place in Europe in more than a decade (Europol, 2016).

In July of 2016, Nice, France was struck by a terror attack that killed 86 people and wounded more than 300 when a truck plowed through people celebrating Bastille Day on the beach (BBC, 2016D). While all three of these major terror attacks occurred following the European Immigration Crisis, refugees were not responsible for any of these major terror attacks nor were they responsible for any of the smaller attacks that occurred in France over the two year period.

The increase in the number of attacks –and the magnitude of the attacks- caused France’s Global Terrorism Index (GTI)<sup>2</sup> score to significantly increase. France was the country with the largest relative difference in the number of deaths from 2014 to 2015 among all of the nations in the world (The Institute for Economics and Peace, 2016). In 2014, France ranked 36<sup>th</sup> among nations with a GTI score of 4.553. At the end of 2015, France ranked 29<sup>th</sup> among nations with a GTI score of 5.603. It was the highest ranked European Union Member State and was among five other nations (Burundi, Belgium, Kuwait, Niger, and Saudi Arabia) to have their GTI score increase by 10% or more (The Institute for Economics and Peace, 2016).

### ***2015-2016 Terror Plots by Asylum Seekers/Refugees***

Following the 2015 European Immigration Crisis, France has not reported any terror attacks that have been carried out by asylum seekers or refugees (START Global Terrorism Database). Rather, nationals who have either travelled to or attempted to travel to Syria carried out many of the major terror attacks that occurred in France over the past two years.

### ***Foreign Fighters in France***

Official estimates believe that more than 900 people have left France since October 2015 and more than 2,000 radicalized French nationals or residents are involved in jihadist networks in France (Boutin et al., 2016). France is the EU country that has seen the greatest number of foreign fighters travel to Iraq or Syria since 2011). Of the more than 900 people who have left, 570 are still believed to be in the conflict zone, about 140 have died, and 246 have returned to France (Boutin et al., 2016).

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<sup>2</sup> The Global Terrorism Index is a product of the Institute of Economics and Peace that uses data from the Global Terrorism Database to rank nations based on terrorist activity.

There has not been clear evidence to indicate a definitive profile for French foreign fighter. While the majority are young men who have a previous criminal record, fighters in France are drawn from all regions and economic backgrounds. Females are believed to make up just over 20% of the fighters from France. France –similar to Germany- has seen a greater percentage of female involvement compared to its EU counterparts (Boutin et al., 2016).

Some of the militants involved in the November 2015 Paris attacks were documented as reentering Europe through Greece. The perpetrators of the attack were able to exploit the Balkan route, which is a major route for asylum seekers to enter Europe (ICCT, 2016). Seven of the attackers allegedly had returned from fighting with the Islamic State in Syria (ICCT, 2016). Of the seven attackers, at least three of them, Ismael Omar Mostefai, Samy Amimour, and Abdelhamid Abaaoud, were known to French authorities for having travelled to Syria to fight alongside the Islamic State (Camilli, 2016). Abaaoud was a Belgian national who had returned from the Islamic State but helped to carryout an attack in France (Callimachi, 2016). The French government was aware of two of the three attackers and they had previously been under surveillance from 2010-2012. Additionally, Turkey notified France in December 2014 and June 2015 that Mosefai was in Turkish territory, but France did not respond (Camilli, 2016).

### **Belgium**

Unlike its European neighbors, Germany and France, Belgium has not been as affected by terror attacks over the past few years. The graph below illustrates the number of terror attacks that have taken place in Belgium between January 2013 and December 2015.

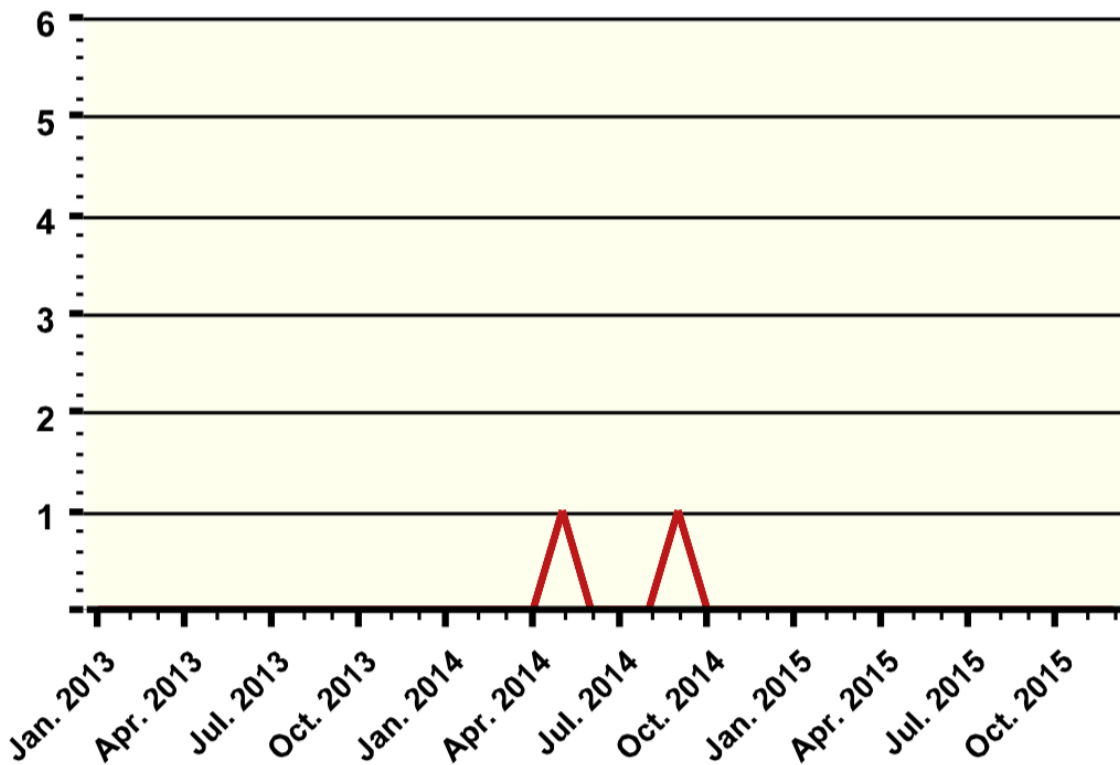


Figure 5: Terror attacks in Belgium 2013-2015, Source: GTD

In addition to the two terror attacks that took place in 2014, a major terror attack took place in Belgium during 2016 (BBC, 2016E). Belgium is a country that has been increasingly affected by terrorist threats despite exhibiting relatively low numbers of terror attacks in comparison to Germany and France.

### ***Terror Plots in Belgium***

The two terror attacks that were reported in 2014 both targeted Jewish populations. One attack set fire to a synagogue Brussels while the other targeted the Jewish Museum in Brussels. No group claimed responsibility for the attack on the synagogue and there were three injuries from the attack. The Islamic State claimed responsibility for the attack on the Jewish Museum

and caused four deaths (START Global Terrorism Database). On March 22, 2016, several bombs were detonated throughout parts of the Brussels' International Airport and the Maelbeek Metro Station. The explosions killed 31 people and wounded 340 people (BBC, 2016E). Additionally, it is evident that there are ties between the November 2015 Paris attacks and the bombings at the Brussels airport. The majority of the militants who were involved in the November 2015 Paris attack were Belgian citizens (Higgins & De Freytas-Tamura, 2016).

Belgium has witnessed several lone wolf attacks throughout 2016. On August 7, 2016 the Islamic State claimed responsibility for an attack that targeted two policewomen with a machete in the city of Charleroi. On August 22, 2016, a woman attacked a bus full of passengers with a machete. On October 5, 2016, another assailant attacked two police officers with a knife (Counter Extremism Project, 2016). Despite efforts by Belgian authorities to increase security efforts following the 2016 Brussels attacks, they have not been able to combat lone wolf attacks throughout Belgium.

### ***2015-2016 Terror Plots by Asylum Seekers/Refugees***

Following the 2015 European Immigration Crisis, Belgium has not reported any terror attacks that have been carried out by asylum seekers or refugees (START Global Terrorism Database). While Belgium has not been affected by terror attacks committed by asylum seekers or refugees, Belgium has been greatly affected by foreign fighters.

### ***Foreign Fighters in Belgium***

Government and non-government estimates place the number of Belgian foreign fighters at 420-516 people since 2011. These numbers, while not as high as Germany and France, make

Belgium the EU country with the highest number of fighters per capita (Boutin et al., 2016). As a small state in comparison to Germany and France, Belgium has been the most seriously affected by the number of foreign fighters in comparison to its population size. Three major recruitment networks, Sharia4Belgium, Resto du Tawhid, and the Zerkani network, have been responsible for recruiting the majority of the foreign fighters from Belgium (Van Ostaeyen, 2016).

The 2014 terror attack on the Jewish Museum was one of the first attacks witnessed in the European Union with ties to foreign fighters and the Islamic State. Mehdi Nemmouche, an Islamic extremist who had recently returned from fighting in Syria, claimed responsibility for the attack. While, Nemmouche carried out an attack in Belgium, he was a French citizen (Pizzi, 2015).

Individuals suspected of previously fighting alongside the Islamic State also carried out the 2016 Brussels attacks. The three attackers, Najim Laachraoui, Khalid Bakraoui, and Ibrahim Bakraoui, were all a part of a Belgian terror cell. The cell decided to expedite their plans and attack the airport and metro station after Salah Abdeslam, the leader of the cell, had been captured and killed earlier that week (Van Ostaeyen, 2016). Ibrahim Bakraoui had previously been deported to the Netherlands from Turkey after being arrested on the suspicion that he was a foreign fighter with the Islamic State. While Turkey alerted Belgian authorities, the authorities did not take action against Bakraoui.

### **Crimes and Refugees**

While this chapter has established that the influx of refugees in Western European nations has not created a terrorism issue as some have claimed, there have been instances of refugees committing violent crimes. In a report released by the German Federal Criminal Police

(BKA) Office, almost 300,000 cases were registered in 2016 in which at least one of the arrested suspects was an immigrant. The BKA defines immigrant as “a person who has a status as an asylum seeker; a protected person; a person who has been granted asylum; a person part of a refugee contingent or a victim of civil war; or people who are illegal” (Gopalakrishnan, 2017, p. 1). Despite these numbers, crime in Germany only increased marginally with the influx of refugees following the European Immigration Crisis (Gehrsitz & Ungerer, 2017). German officials have claimed that refugees are not more criminal than German citizens. Rather, it appears that anti-immigrant sentiments have over-inflated the refugee and crime argument in Germany and other parts of Europe (Noack, 2016).



## **CHAPTER FOUR: RIGHT-WING REACTIONS**

This chapter will focus on the rise of right-wing leaders and movements throughout Germany, France, and Belgium in the wake of the European Immigration Crisis.

Following the 2015 European Immigration Crisis, there has been a rise in far-right movements throughout Europe. While there has not been a link between refugees and terror attacks throughout parts of Europe, far-right groups have become more active over the past few years. These groups are not particularly concerned with the perpetrators of the attacks. Instead of focusing on whether the recent terror attacks have been carried out by refugees, asylum seekers, immigrants, or even citizens, these far-right groups have focused on blanket policies that would make immigration policies stricter.

Immigration –legal and illegal- in addition to the foreign fighter phenomenon has negatively affected the social cohesion of the European nations over the past few years (Europol, 2016). This lack of social cohesion has provided an environment for marginalized populations to join xenophobic and anti-immigrant groups. Furthermore, the European Commission has stressed that terrorist attacks that have been carried out by Europeans on European soil divides societies and increases extremist views among society members. Returned foreign fighters and homegrown lone wolves have been two populations responsible for carrying out these attacks. The societal division that these attacks cause has the ability to create a “vicious cycle of radicalization, aggression, and violent responses” (European Commission, 2014, p.2).

Far-right political parties also appeal to European populations that feel threatened by or oppose the recent influx of refugees to the European Union. Parties such as Alternative for Deutschland in Germany, the National Front in France, and Vlaams Belang in Belgium

witnessed an increase in popularity and public support following terror attacks that were carried out in 2015 and 2016. Additionally, these groups have benefitted from difficult economic times and high unemployment in some Eurozone nations. Unemployment rates in Germany, France, and Belgium have right-wing groups gain support. Compared to native-born populations of the three countries, immigrant populations experience higher unemployment rates.

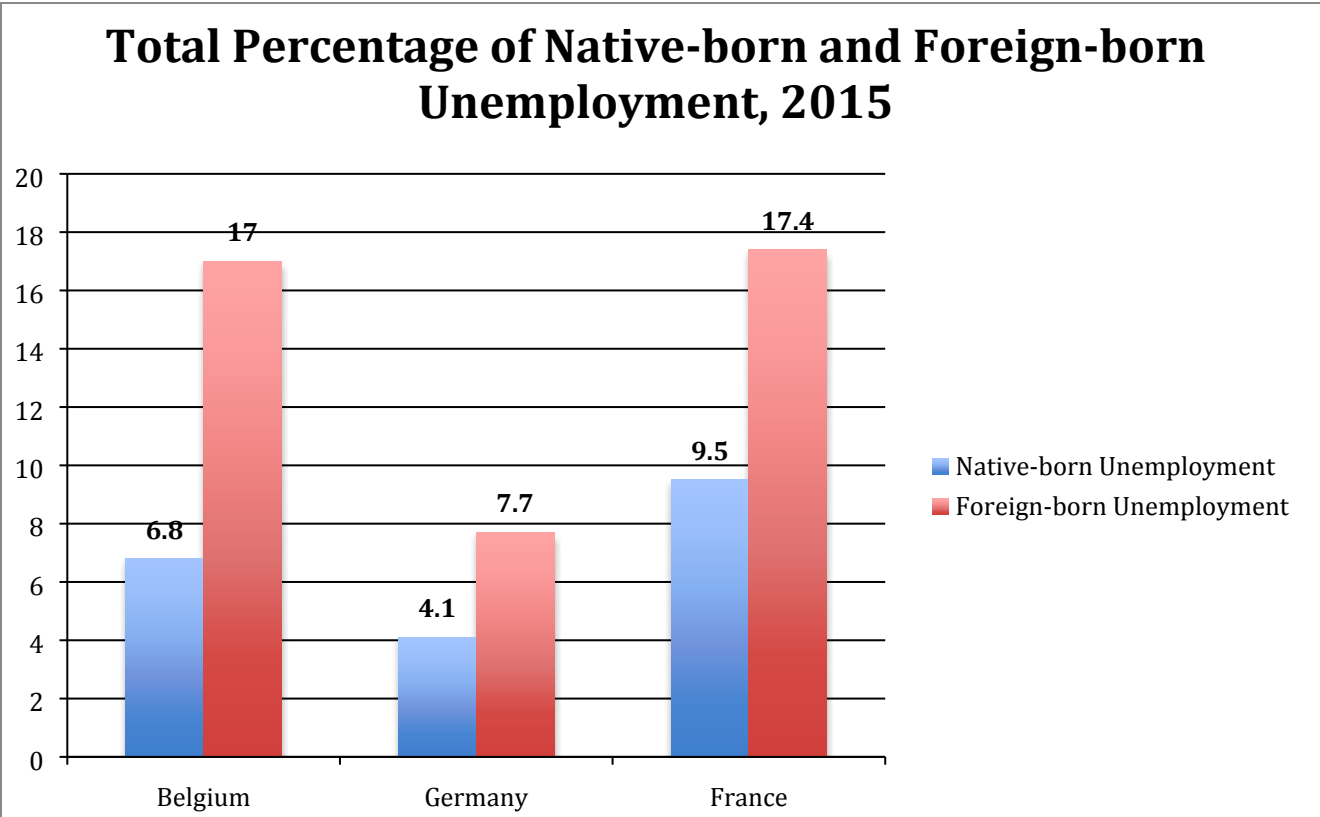


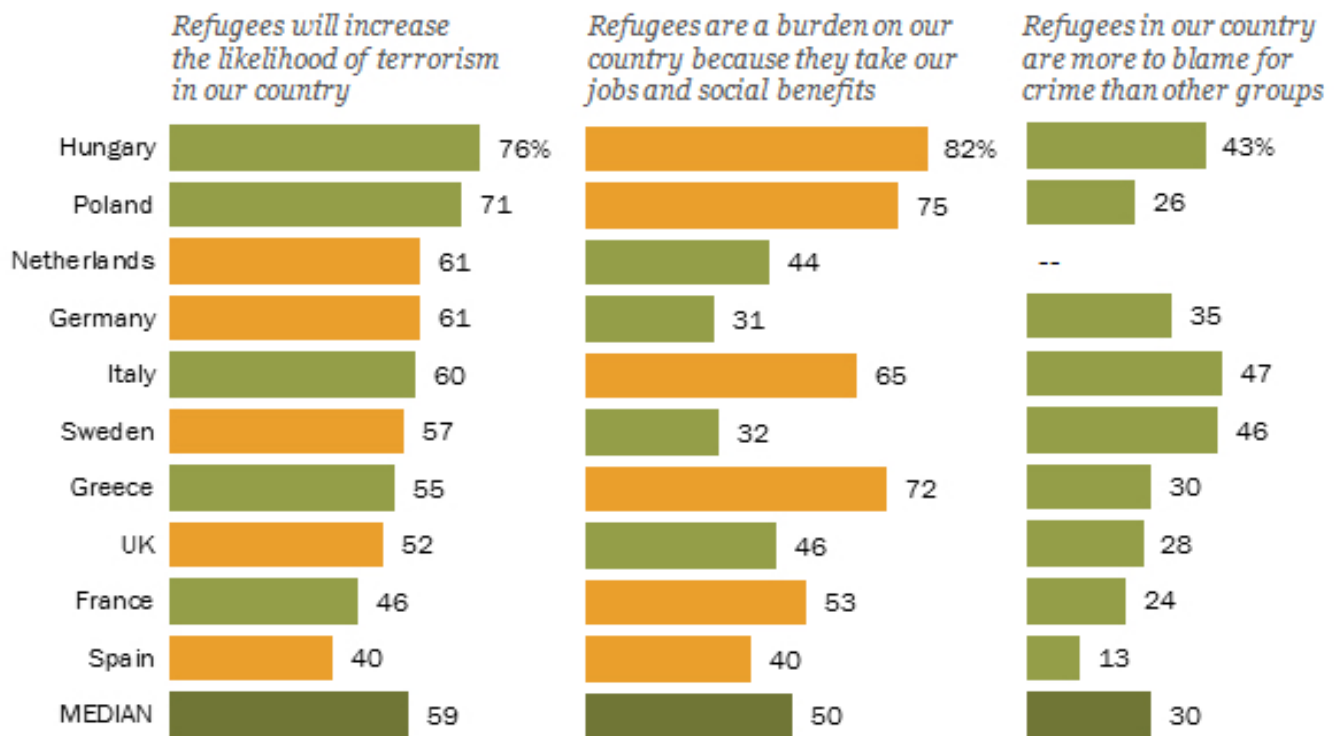
Figure 6: Unemployment of native-born and foreign-born populations, Source: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

The higher level of unemployment among immigrant populations has led to difficulty integrating immigrant populations.

The Pew Research Center recently conducted its Spring 2016 Global Attitudes Survey in which 10 European nations were surveyed. The results found that many Europeans feel that the refugee crisis in Europe and terrorism are related to one another (Pew Research Center, 2016). Countries such as Germany –which has been much more affected by the refugee crisis- had greater fears about terrorism caused by refugees than countries such as France. Conversely, French citizens were more concerned than German citizens that refugees would take jobs and social benefits from citizens.

### Many Europeans concerned with security, economic repercussions of refugee crisis

■ Top choice



Note: Netherlands excluded on question about crime (Q51b) due to administrative error.

Source: Spring 2016 Global Attitudes Survey. Q51a-c.

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Figure 7: Perception of refugee impact on terrorism, jobs and social benefits, and crime

The survey also found that individuals who had a negative view of Muslims were much more likely to be concerned about the perceived threat of refugees than those who had a favorable view of Muslims. This finding was consistent throughout all 10 countries that were surveyed.

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## **Across Europe, concern about refugees tied to views of Muslims**

*Among those with a \_\_\_ view of Muslims in our country, % saying refugees will increase the likelihood of terrorism in our country*

	<b>Favorable</b>	<b>Unfavorable</b>	<b>Diff</b>
	%	%	
UK	39	84	+45
France	34	75	+41
Greece	30	66	+36
Sweden	45	79	+34
Germany	52	84	+32
Poland	53	84	+31
Netherlands	51	82	+31
Spain	23	54	+31
Italy	40	69	+29
Hungary	64	79	+15

Note: Differences shown are statistically significant.

Source: Spring 2016 Global Attitudes Survey, Q51c.

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*Figure 8: View of refugees versus view of Muslims*

The findings of the 2016 Global Attitudes Survey helps to explain the rise of far-right movements and traction that far-right parties have gained within the past few years throughout parts of Western Europe.

## **Germany**

### ***Far-Right Politics***

The Alternative for Germany (AfD) party is a far-right political party that was started four years ago. The party is Germany's fastest-growing and appeals to voters who identify as anti-establishment and are critical of immigration (Aisch, Pearce, & Rousseau, 2017). Following the creation of the party several years ago, it has gained support due to a feeling among some Germans that the country's borders, economics, and politics are no longer under control (Taub, 2017). The AfD promises to reinstate a national identity and feeling of pride that the German state is missing.

While the AfD was unsuccessful in winning seats in the German Parliament in 2013, it was able to claim up to 25% of the vote in German state elections this past year (Aisch, Pearce, & Rousseau, 2017). This shift has shown that German citizens are starting to challenge Chancellor Merkel's leadership. Despite the rise in the party's popularity, Merkel stood by her policies throughout 2016 to continue integrating more than a million refugees into German society (Smale, 2016). Merkel's policies regarding immigration have helped to shape the policy points of far-right groups such as AfD. The AfD platform purports that "Islam does not belong in Germany" and seeks to prevent the building of mosques in Germany (Aisch, Pearce, & Rousseau, 2017). Recently, the party has struggled due to internal division among different regions. Recently, Wolfgang Gedeon, a regional lawmaker from the AfD party, was expelled due

to his anti-Semitic remarks (Goulard, 2016). While the group openly opposes Islam throughout Germany, it did not tolerate anti-Jewish remarks from group leaders.

In addition to the rise of the AfD, Germany has also witnessed an increase in right-wing marches in the years following the European Immigration Crisis. Groups such as the Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the Occident (PEGIDA) have attracted thousands of followers in Germany (ICCT, 2016). Pegida is an anti-Islamist German political movement that opposes what it sees as an increasing influence of Islam throughout Europe (BBC, 2015). The group has organized marches throughout different parts of Europe to increase its following base. In addition to organizing marches, PEGIDA has vowed to work with the AfD in the 2017 elections after creating its own political party, the Popular Party for Freedom and Direct Democracy (Goulard, 2016).

### ***Far-Right Attacks***

Germany has struggled to combat the issue of right-wing extremist in the wake of the European Immigration Crisis. As of 2016, German authorities are aware of 23,000 right-wing extremists in Germany (Dick, 2016). This number grew by 400 people from 2015 to 2016. Of the 23,000 people, 12,100 have been classified as “violence-prone” (Deutsche Welle, 2017).

Throughout 2015, there was an increase in the number of far-right violent attacks from the previous year. There were a total of 1,408 violent attacks in 2015 compared to 990 violent attacks in 2014 (France-Presse, 2016). In addition to the violent and nonviolent attacks that were carried out, authorities have also foiled plots from far-right groups. German authorities arrested four suspects in May 2015 for their suspected involvement in the creation of a right-wing terror

group. The group, the Old School Society, was created to carry out attacks against foreigners and left-wing activists (Europol, 2016).

The Global Terrorism Database recorded 50 terror attacks in Germany in 2015. Of the 50 attacks, 45 of the attacks targeted refugee shelters or housing, mosques, or pro-refugee politicians. The attacks overwhelmingly targeted either current refugee homes and hostels or construction of future homes. Assailants threw incendiaries, set fire to, or fired at 38 refugee shelters or homes throughout 2015. In addition to attacks on shelters, right-wing extremists also attacked refugees directly. In October 2015, two Syrian refugees were beaten with baseball bats in Wismar and Henriette Rekker, a pro-refugee mayoral candidate in Cologne city was stabbed. The refugees and Rekker were all injured but survived the attacks. Extremists also set fire to two mosques in different parts of Germany. The remaining attacks targeted government buildings such as the Bundestag building and Bellevue Palace.

## **France**

### ***Far-Right Politics***

As it was previously observed, refugees have not been responsible for any of the terror attacks that have struck France following the European Immigration Crisis. Despite this, French citizens have begun to blame weak border security and migrant flooding for the increase in terror attacks over the past two years (Nail, 2016). This reaction to refugees and immigrants has led to the rise of the National Front<sup>3</sup> within France.

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<sup>3</sup> The National Front is a far-right political party in France that was founded in 1972. The party has historically supported stricter immigration policies and French nationalism. The National Front has been criticized for being xenophobic and anti-Semitic. Jean-Marie Le Pen ran the party until 2011 when he was banned from the party by his daughter, Marine Le Pen. Marine now serves as the head of the party.

Marine Le Pen, the presidential candidate for the National Front political party, is a major contender in the 2017 presidential election. Le Pen has attempted to reconstruct the image of the National Front Party after assuming control in 2011. While she has distanced herself from her father, Le Pen still maintained the party's strict policies on immigration. In a 144-point manifesto, Le Pen outlines her platform and vision for France. This manifesto includes a referendum to consider leaving the European Union, deporting all foreigners linked to Islamic fundamentalism, leaving the euro, closing extremist mosques, automatic deportation of foreign offenders, leaving the European Union's Schengen zone, reinstating national borders, and prioritizing French nationals over immigrants (Sandford, 2017). Additionally, Le Pen has made incendiary remarks about France's migrant populations. In a recent speech at a rally, Le Pen stated, "this migratory influx will be like the barbarian invasion of the 4th century, and the consequences will be the same" (Nail, 2016, p. 165). Comments like these, and her commitment to heavily regulating immigration have appealed to disillusioned populations who have felt the effects of unemployment and a stagnant economy.

Le Pen polls at 40% of support from 18-24 year olds in France. This number is unusual, because France is historically known for leftist youth movements (Beardsley, 2017). Additionally, French voters aged 18-34 support the National Front political party more than any other party in the upcoming presidential election. Recent terror attacks and high unemployment rates have been cited as reasons why this demographic is supporting Le Pen in the election (Chadwick, 2016).

Le Pen and her supporters have cited the presidential election of Donald Trump in the United States and Britain's vote to withdraw from the European Union as support for their



movement. Unlike the election and vote, Le Pen is most popular among younger voters while this demographic did not support President Trump or Brexit (Melander, 2017). While Le Pen is projected to advance to the second round of voting in the French presidential election, she is projected to lose in the second vote (Sandford, 2017). Despite the current projections, Le Pen's election has the possibility to be another upset election in 2017.

### ***Far-Right Terror Attacks***

In 2015, the Global Terrorism Database recorded 36 terrorist attacks in France. Of the 36 attacks, there was one attack that sources confirmed had been carried out by a right wing extremist. An assailant attacked a rabbi and Jewish civilians outside of a synagogue in Marseille, France. While this is the only case that the database attributes to right wing terrorism based on information from sources, 13 of the attacks resemble right-wing terrorism but were not claimed by any group. Of the 13 attacks, 10 involved attacks on mosques or Muslim prayer halls. In the various attacks, the holy sites were fired at, firebombed, lit on fire, or hit with grenades. In addition to targeting Muslim places of worship, two attacks involved shootings at Muslim owned butcher shops in January and December 2015. The final attack involved an assailant targeting a Muslim civilian in Marseille, France. According to sources, the assailant accused the civilian of being a "terrorist."

## **Belgium**

### ***Far-Right Politics***

The Vlaams Belang party is a right-wing populist party in Belgium. The party branched off from the Belgian far-right party known as Vlaams Blok which was ordered to disband in 2004 due to the decision of the Count of Cassation (Erk, 2005). The group was found in violation

of racism laws and while it was required to disband, party leaders have simply rebranded the group. The group removed some of the more extreme parts of its statutes and renamed itself as a Flemish nationalist group (Erk, 2005). Historically, the group has not been as popular as other far-right movements in Germany and France. Vlaams Belang only won 3.7% of the vote in parliamentary elections within Belgium during 2014 (Aisch, Pearce, & Rousseau, 2016). Despite this, the group has started to grow in popularity and interest in the group surged following the 2016 Brussels attacks. The group's Facebook presence rose 3,675% through "likes" following the week of the attacks (Byrne, Cohen, & Sieadzki, 2016). The group has risen to 12% of support in some parts of Belgium and has cited the U.S. president victory of Donald Trump as momentum for the group (Blenkinsop, 2016).

Following the 2016 terror attacks in Brussels, Vlaams Belang tweeted the Prime Minister of Belgium, Charles Michel to demand changes. The tweet read "Please close the borders. We can not stop #terrorism if they remain open" (Gray, 2016, p. 1). Other far-right leaders across Europe, including leaders from the U.K., Holland, France, and Italy, all expressed distrust and feelings that open E.U. borders were to blame for the Brussels attacks (Gray, 2016).

### ***Far-Right Terror Attacks***

There have not currently been any documented far-right terror attacks following the 2015 European Immigration Crisis. Despite this, it is important to continue watching Belgium due to the rise in popularity of the far-right group, Vlaams Belang.

### **Pre-2015 Right Wing Movements**

While each of the three nations has seen a rise in right-wing movements over the past few years, these parties have steadily been gaining in popularity prior to the European Immigration Crisis.

While right-wing movements at the national level were originally unsuccessful in Germany following World War II, Germany witnessed an increase in xenophobic sentiments during the 1990s. A large increase in the number of asylum seekers helped right-wing parties and extremists to find footing in East Germany (Greven, 2016). Additionally, the AfD gained support in 2013 after it was established as a response to the Euro crisis and subsequent bailout policies. Some members of the Christian Democratic party and the Free Democratic party felt that their interests were no longer represented and decided to join the right-wing AfD instead. More recently, the AfD has adopted Pegida rhetoric and calling for antiestablishment, anti-Islam, anti-media, and anti-immigration policies in Germany (Greven, 2016).

National Front was founded in 1972 and run by Jean-Marie Le Pen, the father of Marine Le Pen. While the party has recently become increasingly popular in France, it first gained popularity in the 1980s (Lazaridis, Campani, & Benveniste, 2016). From the beginning, the party has focused on anti-immigration policies. Following Jean-Marie Le-Pen's retirement in 2011, Marine has revolutionized the party. The party has gained support for its opposition to capitalism, strong nationalism, and a focus on social and conservative values. Islam has recently become the main opponent of the party over the past few years (Lazaridis et. al, 2016).

Unlike the right-wing parties in Germany and France, Vlaams Belang has not witnessed as much success or interest from the Belgian population. The party did change its mainly

Flemish national agenda to an agenda more focused on immigration after witnessing the success of the National Front party (Barker, 2007). After updating its platform, Vlaams Belang has gained more support over time. The party argues that it is anti-establishment. Throughout the past decade, the success of Vlaams Belang has varied in elections. It has lost supporters to similar, less radical parties in Belgium (Wolf, 2016). Despite this, the party has started to gain more support following the 2016 Brussels attacks.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

Terror attacks across countries such as Germany, France, and Belgium coupled with growing pressures from the public, have led to the implementation of new policies. Efforts to curb the effects and frequency of terror attacks have led the three nations to adopt new legislation that affects both counterterrorism efforts and immigration policies within each of the three nations. The three nations have struggled to balance an approach that would adequately address the growing issues while also still protecting civil liberties.

### **Germany**

#### ***Changes to Terrorism Laws***

In the wake of recent terror attacks, Germany implemented new legislation to help thwart potential attacks. In June 2015, Germany approved amendments to the German Criminal Code. The new additions to Section 89 of the Germany Criminal Code target the foreign terrorist fighter phenomenon and the financing of terrorism. The first piece of legislation criminalizes travelling outside of the state with the intent of carrying out a violent attack against the state or in order to receive terrorist training (Europol, 2016). A new section on the financing of terrorism also made the crime more broad. The new amendment eliminated former threshold of “not unsubstantial assets” and also eliminated the requirement that funds needed to have a direct link to terrorist act (Europol, 2016, p. 56).

Following an increase in terror attacks during 2016, policymakers once again reevaluated current terrorism laws. In late 2016, the German Interior Minister Thomas de Maizière unveiled several proposals for new security measures. These proposals include banning showing support for terror groups, revoking German citizenship from dual-passport citizens who joined terror

groups, increased video surveillance in public places, greater measures to identify Islamic radicals among asylum applicants, and closer monitoring of the “darknet” (Thomas, 2016). The increased surveillance would be made possible by Maizière’s proposal to create 4,600 new national security jobs that would include 3,250 more police officers (BBC, 2016F). Additionally, the proposals seek to make it easier to deport foreigners who are believed to be dangerous and allows for closer monitoring of refugees (Smale, 2016B). While the proposals will still need to be passed by parliament, Merkel’s majority in the legislative body means that the proposals are likely to pass. Despite their passage, some of the proposals, such as stripping citizenship and increased surveillance, may face constitutional impediments (Thomas, 2016). The new proposals exhibit the pressures that Merkel and her government are facing from the increased pressures of right-wing movements in Germany.

### ***Changes to Immigration Laws***

Chancellor Merkel has been confronted with the realities of her open-door refugee policy. While she has been widely criticized for this decision within her own coalition and by the Germany public, Merkel has defended her policy. Following the 2016 terror attacks committed by asylum seekers in Germany, Merkel urged the German people to not allow the actions of a few attackers who abused the policy to preclude refugees and asylum seekers who wish to live in peace (Bulman, 2016). While Merkel has stood by her previous policies regarding refugees, she introduced a new law in April 2016 that targets the integration of refugee populations.

This new law requires asylum seekers to take part in mandatory integration programs such as classes on German language, laws, or cultural basics. In addition to being required to take courses, the new law also changed rules regarding permanent residency status and gave

local governments more control over the settlement of refugees. The law extended the permanent residency status deadline from three to five years after arrival and indicated that refugees must have also learned adequate German and secured their own living. Additionally, regional governments were given the ability to prevent refugees from settling in certain areas or allocating certain areas for refugee settlement (Knight, 2016).

Merkel argues that this law will allow for asylum seekers to not only integrate into society, but also, to gain new access to the German labor market. Individuals who do not complete the mandatory integration program receive a cut to the government support that they are offered as refugees or asylum seekers (Oltermann, 2016). While Merkel has touted the new law as a solution to the refugee crisis that will allow Germany to witness the benefits in a few years, an alliance of refugee aid organizations and charities have condemned the new law. The organizations argue that the new law does not protect the rights of refugees and does not necessarily facilitate integration of refugees (Knight, 2016).

## **France**

### ***Changes to Terrorism Laws***

Following several major attacks that took place in France during 2015, legislators were pressed to find solutions to France's terror problems. In order to address the fear among policy makers and citizens, a series of laws were enacted to address the heightened terror threat in France.

In response to the terrorist attacks on the Charlie Hebdo office and a kosher supermarket in January 2015, French lawmakers passed a controversial bill that expanded the surveillance abilities of intelligence agencies. The law, which passed with overwhelming support from the

Parliament, grants intelligence agencies the ability to tap phones and emails without seeking permission from a judge (Chrisafis, 2015). Intelligence services would also have the capabilities to install recording devices in private homes and keyloggers on targeted computers. These loggers allow for the collection of every keystroke on a computer. Intelligence services also gained the ability to track anonymous metadata from users and request deeper surveillance of individual users. In addition to the collection of metadata, these agencies are also able to set up algorithms to track online behaviors that include visiting certain websites or searching for certain keywords (Chrisafis, 2015).

In May 2016, France once again took several steps to broaden its legislation regarding potential terror suspects. The French Parliament approved a new law that had several major implications for both police authority and surveillance.

New, expansive changes were made to the actions that authorities are permitted to take against suspected terrorists. First, the law allows for individuals to be detained for up to four hours without access to a lawyer. This is intended to allow authorities to check the identification of suspects. Second, foreign fighters returning from Iraq or Syria can be placed under house arrest for up to a period of one month. Third, authorities are now given greater discretion to use deadly force if an individual is believed to be committing a deadly attack (Breedon, 2016).

In addition to the changes that were made in regards to police authority, surveillance capabilities were also expanded. Changes to surveillance that were previously made to expand the capabilities of intelligence agencies were also given to authorities and prosecutors through the use of electronic eavesdropping devices (Breedon, 2016). Prosecutors were also granted the ability to tap phones, analyze electronic communications, and use hidden cameras. These



abilities were previously reserved for investigative judges (Breedon, 2016). Surveillance on inmates was also expanded under the new law. Under the authorization of a prosecutor, microphones and cameras are now permitted in cells. Individuals can also now be sentenced to two years in prison or have to pay a fine of EUR 30,000 if they are found regularly consulting websites that promote terrorism for non-legitimate academic reasons (Breeder, 2016).

Following the law changes in both 2015 and 2016, human rights and civil liberties groups have protested the expansion of power. The parties have argued that the new powers that were first granted to intelligence agencies –and now broadened to include authorities and prosecutors– infringe on public liberties and place the French people under constant surveillance. Despite these charges, the French government has defended its decision as a means of protecting French citizens from terrorism (Rubin, 2015).

### ***Changes to Immigration Laws***

While France has been impacted by major terror attacks over the past few years, it has not responded with immigration laws that seek to limit the flow of refugees or migrants. This is likely due to the fact that refugees and asylum seekers have not been responsible for terror attacks in France. Rather, France has been more impacted by homegrown terrorism and foreign fighter terror attacks. Legislation has focused on addressing these issues instead. French President Francois Hollande has urged parliamentarians to keep issues regarding refugees and terrorism separate. He argues that changes to the migration policies in France would be a basic reaction that should not be taken because the individual who is responsible for the attack was a criminal not a refugee (Bertrand, 2015).

## **Belgium**

### ***Changes to Terrorism Laws***

Belgium has taken several legislative steps in order to address its fears regarding terrorism over the past few years. In July 2015, Belgium adopted Article 140(e) of the Belgian Criminal Code. This new article makes it officially illegal to either travel to or from Belgium with the intent to carry out terrorist activities. Violators who are convicted for breaking this law may be imprisoned for five to ten years and have to pay a fine ranging between EUR 100 and EUR 5000 (Europol, 2016).

Following the November 2015 Paris attacks and the 2016 Brussels attacks, the Belgian government scrambled to enact new counterterrorism efforts. The changes include holding suspects in temporary custody for up to 72 hours, broadening the ability of prosecutors to tap phones and other communications, and increasing intelligence and sharing information throughout different security agencies (Guerrera & Cerulus, 2016). Previously, authorities were allowed to hold individuals for up to 24 hours. Additionally, authorities are focusing on immigrant quarters such as Molenbeek, an immigrant neighborhood that was responsible for producing some of the November 2015 Paris attackers (Guerrera & Cerulus, 2016).

Groups such as Human Rights Watch have challenged the new laws in Belgium for some of the changes. The group cites new laws regarding extended detainment of suspects, the ability to suspend passports, and increased surveillance capabilities as infringements on the rights of the Belgian people (Lowe, 2016). Despite these claims, Belgian lawmakers passed another set of controversial laws in 2017.

### *Changes to Immigration Laws*

In early 2017, Belgium's Parliament passed a new law that allows for the government to deport legal residents who are under suspicion of engaging in terrorist activities or present a risk to the public order or national security (Schreuer, 2017). These changes do not require criminal convictions or the involvement of a judge. While refugees and Belgian nationals are exempted from the law, foreign residents could be subjected to deportation if they fall under one of the categories. Critics of the new law argue that the law infringes on civil liberties and gives the government too much power due to the vague language of the legislation (Schreuer, 2017). It is still unclear how the law will be implemented in 2017. Due to the concerns of how much power the executive branch is given under the new policy, human rights lawyers have started to build a case against the law (Schruer, 2017).

## **CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Conclusions**

The rise in the number of terror attacks throughout parts of Western Europe has led to increased tension and hysteria among some populations. These reactions have caused demands for immigration reform and stricter policies that target refugees. This paper shows that these concerns may be misplaced. The perceived threat among populations in Western European countries such as Germany, France, and Belgium, does not align with the reality of these terror attacks. Over the past two year, Germany was the only country in which a refugee was responsible for a terrorist attack. While there have been other attacks in Germany –along with attacks in France and Belgium- that have initially been attributed to the refugee crisis, these cases have been misrepresented. Germany has been affected by two other recent terror attacks that were carried out by failed asylum seekers while France and Belgium have been affected by attacks carried out by first-generation immigrants.

Despite these findings, local populations have displayed greater concern regarding immigrant and refugee populations. The refugee crisis along with difficult economic conditions has created the perfect incubator for right-wing sentiments. Each of the three countries has seen a rise in popularity of right-wing organizations and parties. Candidates who support anti-immigration policies and make xenophobic comments are polling higher than ever before throughout the nations. In addition to an increase in right-wing sentiments, countries such as Germany and France have reported violent, right-wing terror attacks. The effects of these attacks have marginalized refugee and immigrant populations.

While refugees did not carry out the vast majority of terrorist attacks that have occurred in Germany, France, and Belgium since the European Immigration Crisis, there have been reactionary policy changes. Leaders who are struggling to address concerns following the increase in terrorist attacks and the growing public disapproval of refugees and immigrants have implemented stricter terrorism laws and inhibitory immigration policies. All three nations have implemented broad surveillance policies that have been challenged by civil rights groups due to the breadth of government oversight. Efforts to curb terrorism have led some policy makers to consider revoking citizenship or deporting legal citizenship. These policies are likely to lead to incendiary responses from rights groups.

The initial hypothesis was due to the increase in terror attacks throughout Western Europe over the past few years, it is likely that there is a link between the rise in terrorism and the 2015 European Immigration Crisis. Attacks within countries such as Germany, France, and Belgium have probably led to an increase in popularity among far-right groups and subsequently stricter immigration policies from lawmakers. After completing this project, there is not a clear link that exists between the rise in terrorism and the European Immigration Crisis. Out of the three countries that were evaluated, only one refugee carried out a terror attack. Issues such as refugee crime, the foreign fighter phenomenon, and right-wing attacks are possible culprits for the hysteria that has surrounded the refugee crisis.

These issues have sometimes been misattributed or misconstrued as refugees committing terror attacks in Germany, France, or Belgium. The second part of the hypothesis was true from the findings. There has been an increase in far-right sentiments in each of the countries. Germany and France have been affected by right-wing terror attacks as well. Resulting policy implications

in each country have sought to limit the effects of terrorism through expansive reforms and often limited the rights of immigrants.

Germany witnessed a 285% increase in terror attacks between 2014 and 2015. France witnessed a 157% increase in terror attacks between 2014 and 2015. These numbers appear staggering, but it is important to understand that out of all of the attacks in each country, only one has been attributed to a refugee.

### **Recommendations**

It is difficult to fully assess how the European Immigration Crisis has fully affected Western Europe because it happened recently. The effects will likely be felt for years to come throughout parts of Europe. It is important that continued research is done on this topic because of this. It is clear that the issue has divided governments and peoples within these nations as they scramble to find solutions. Rather than focusing policies that would prevent or inhibit refugees or immigrants, it seems that it would be more advantageous to focus on integration efforts. Policies such as Germany's integration law should be monitored to determine its effects.

Rather than criticizing refugee populations that settle within these nations, nations should focus on the foreign terrorist fighter phenomenon. This also relates to better integration efforts for immigrant populations. Disillusioned populations with little connection to their nation are more likely to travel to join a terror group. Germany, France, and Belgium have been some of the most affected European nations in regards to foreign terrorist fighter populations. Returned fighters will continue to pose a threat to these nations without stricter controls to monitor these populations.

In addition to better integration for immigrants and refugees, these countries must also address anti-immigrant and xenophobic sentiments. Germany and France have witnessed unprecedented levels of right-wing violence. These attacks destabilize populations and have made integration into the community even more difficult. By addressing this divide, it may be possible to achieve more stability.

Better intelligence practices and increased communications are also imperative to addressing the current terror problems. The Turkish government had communicated with both France and Belgium about suspected foreign fighters within their borders. Despite these warnings on different occasions, neither country took action. Some of these fighters went on to carry out the November 2015 Paris attacks and the 2016 Brussels attacks. Similar failures were seen in Germany where psychological reports outlined the 2016 Ansbach bombing before it occurred.

The final recommendation offered echoes the views of President Hollande. Policy makers should exercise extreme caution when enacting changes. Policy changes should not be reactionary and should address the true issue rather than the convenient issue. Individuals who choose to enact changes that focus on immigrant and refugee populations unfairly have the potential to further undermine integration and cohesion. These policies prevent integration, which is critical to addressing current issues among these populations in each of the three countries. This recommendation does not assert that it would be inappropriate to propose changes to terrorism laws or immigration laws. Rather, each country should exercise considerable caution when these changes only affect limited populations. Laws and proposals that promote national

security without targeting immigrant populations can offer more realistic solutions to the terror problems in Western Europe.



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