The Refugee Crisis in Europe: How Crisis facilitates Multilateral Cooperation and Expedites European Union Legitimacy

1 Migrants waiting outside of the train station in Budapest, Hungary, after the government suspended all rail travel to Western Europe in September of 2015.

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1. Introduction

“Europe will be forged in crises and will be the sum of the solutions adopted for these crises” – Jean Monnet, one of the EU’s founding fathers

On August 26th 2015, Austrian authorities uncovered a grizzly discovery. 71 bodies were left in the back of an unventilated refrigerated truck. It was discovered that human traffickers were using the truck in an attempt to smuggle displaced refugees from Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan with hopes of immigrating into Western Europe. They were picked up in Serbia, and it is believed that they perished some 60-90 minutes afterwards, in the back of an unventilated meat hauling truck somewhere in Hungary. They were abandoned off of a busy highway in Austria, left to decompose for days until someone reported the smell of death.

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Approximately one month later, a devastating photo was taken in Turkey of 3 year old Aylan Kuridi, a Syrian toddler who drowned near the Turkish resort of Bodrum. His small lifeless body, washed ashore after the boat he was on capsized on its way to the Greek island of Koz. His mother and older brother also perished in the cold, dark sea sometime in the middle of that September night. Their father was the only member of their immediate family to survive, carrying this enormous burden as he made his way to European shores.4

These devastating stories highlight the plight of Syrian and Iraqi refugees. They paint a heartbreaking picture, with a story that is nuanced and politically polarizing. Currently, there are more displaced people and refugees throughout the world than at any other time in recorded history.5 There are between six million and eight million people displaced in Syria, along with more than four million Syrian refugees in Lebanon, Turkey and Jordan. Over 4 million displaced Iraqis. The crisis in the Middle East has exploded in recent months, with devastating photos of children and families who perished while attempting to make the dangerous trek from war torn Syria and Iraq to European shores, plastered on the front page of every international newspaper and periodical. Refugees are fleeing ethnic, religious and political persecution as the consequence of civil war, and government breakdown. Power vacuums have led to extremist parties dominating vast areas while perpetrating unthinkable atrocities against minorities and opposition groups. The crisis has been growing over the past few years but in the last few months it has garnered international attention as the number of refugees has grown exponentially, specifically as a consequence of the Syrian Civil War. They arrive daily, in the thousands, from to shores of Italy and Greece, to the borders of Serbia and Hungary.

While the flow of refugees to Europe this year already denotes the greatest influx from outside the continent in modern history, many experts caution that the mass movement will most likely continue and could even increase — possibly for years. Therefore, it has put the spotlight on Europe, specifically the European Union (EU), placing into central focus their ability or inability to adequately handle the streams of refugees arriving at their borders daily. With Germany’s Angela Merkel taking the lead, the EU has attempted to address this mass migration through international cooperation and institutionalized charters and amendments. The Dublin Agreement, which was amended in July of 2013 in response to the sheer volume of refugees arriving at Europe’s doorstep, establishes a hierarchy of criteria for identifying the member state responsible for the examination of an asylum claim in Europe.\(^6\)

Unfortunately, Dublin has led to increasing animosity towards the EU from member countries whose borders are on the periphery of the union, which necessarily puts an undue burden on these border states to accept and process refugees at a higher rate than other countries. More times than not, these periphery countries do not have the means to accomplish this, lacking both resources and political will. This has led to certain countries completely ignoring Dublin, allowing refugees and migrants to pass through their borders in order to gain entry into wealthier countries like Sweden, and Germany, who have both offered to take hundreds of thousands of refugees over the next year alone. Furthermore, it has helped fuel animosity among the constituents living in individual member states as refugees are arriving daily, in the thousands.

Compounding the refugee crisis, nationalistic, Eurosceptic political parties have been gaining momentum throughout the EU, specifically in the wealthier countries in Western Europe, who are arguably, the most equipped to handle the stream of refugees. In the 2014 European Parliament election, France’s National Front, a right-winged nationalist party, received almost 25 percent of the French vote, winning the most seats in the European Parliament for France.\(^7\) Greece’s Golden Dawn won 9.4 percent of the votes, increasing from only a ½ percent in the 2009 elections. While these nationalist parties may have vast differences on the intricate domestic issues in their respective countries, they are bonded by their anti-immigration, Eurosceptic platforms. What’s more, the recent terrorist attacks that occurred in Paris on November 13\(^{th}\), 2015 have again raised major security concerns and backlash throughout EU member countries. Specifically of course, in France, a country where minorities notoriously have a tough time assimilating, living in areas where the unemployment rate tops out at 13 percent, which breeds more anti-immigrant sentiments and which arguably fuels nationalistic, xenophobic sentiments.\(^8\) Amid the current political climate in the EU, coupled with recent security concerns its difficult to imagine that EU member countries would be willing to grant asylum to the flood of refugees.

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The current refugee crisis is one of historical proportions. Not since World War Two has Europe seen such high levels of refugees seeking shelter on its shores. The largest points of entry are the countries along the Mediterranean, especially Greece and Italy, as well as Turkey and the Balkans to the east. There are over 4 million displaced Syrians alone, not to mention Iraqis and Eritreans escaping armed conflict in Africa. The bulk of the refugees from Syria are in camps set up in Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey. However, over 700,000 have attempted the dangerous trek to Europe to seek refuge and protective status. A recent UNHCR report shows that in 2014, asylum claims continued to rise throughout the world, especially in Europe. Out of a total of 866,000 asylum applications registered in the 44 industrialized countries in 2014, the 38 countries in Europe received 714,300 claims, an increase of 47 per cent compared to 2013 (485,000 claims). The 28 Member States of the EU registered 570,800 new asylum claims in 2014, a 44 per cent increase compared to 2013 (396,700). These 28 States together accounted for 80 per cent of all new asylum claims registered in Europe. Germany and Sweden accounted for 30 and 13 per cent of all asylum claims in the EU, respectively.

The influx has created a range of responses from member state governments and EU citizens. Hungarian Prime Minster, Viktor Orbon, proclaimed that Europe is: “In the grip of

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“madness…” over the current crisis. Furthermore, he defended his decision to build a fence along the Croatian border, asserting that he is protecting European Christianity against Islam. More apprehensive but seemingly willing, David Cameron committed to accepting 20,000 refugees, and France’s François Hollande has committed to accepting roughly 30,000 refugees, which he asserted even after the terror attacks in Paris on November 13. German Chancellor Angela Merkel has been criticized by her own party for a seemingly ‘open door’ policy regarding the refugees. Her uncharacteristically bold and decisive move to allow hundreds of thousands of refugees to apply for asylum in Germany has led to both cheers of support and angry protests throughout the country. Furthermore, Merkel, along with her Italian and French counterparts, argued for the implementation of mandatory quotas, in an effort to ease the burden of peripheral countries like Greece, Hungary and Italy through redistribution of refugees. Donald Tusk, the current president of the EU, articulated that Europe seems to be divided, with Western Europe arguing for quotes and mandatory reception of refugees, and Eastern Europe attempting to erect border fences, and some countries, such as Slovakia and Latvia, proclaiming that they would only be willing to accept Christian refugees.

European Cooperation was born out of necessity following World War Two. The European Economic Community eventually became the European Union, which is now composed of 28 states including parts of the former Yugoslavia. The idea for the EU being that economic interdependence would foster political cooperation and hence, would lead to peace and economic growth throughout the continent. In most of the 20th century, this hypothesis has been true. Generally, there has been peace in Europe, and the economy has been extremely prosperous, so much so that many countries within the EU needed workers to fill the demand of their booming economies. The Schengen area, which allows free travel within the area for citizens of participating member states and a common visa policy, allows for no internal border patrol checks which naturally fosters further economic interdependence by allowing wealthier countries to pull workers from less prosperous countries within the area.

Schengen has without a doubt contributed to a more prosperous Europe, but it is not without its difficulties. The current crisis has exposed the EU’s limits and weaknesses specifically pertaining to the handling of asylum claims and refugees. The Dublin Regulation, which first came into force in 1997, deals with member state responsibility regarding an asylum claim from a refugee who has entered the EU. The agreement places the responsibility on the member state that initially receives the refugee, which disproportionately burdens peripheral states and those in close proximity to outside borders and waterways (for example, Greece, Spain, and Italy along the Mediterranean). Presently, many member states are disregarding Dublin, allowing refugees to pass through their borders to gain entry to more prosperous countries in the union, like Germany and Sweden, who both, for the most part have been outwardly accepting of them.

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B. Research Question and Theoretical Inquiry:

Nationalistic, xenophobic beliefs are arguably, incompatible with a European policy that offers safe haven to streams of refugees. Therefore, how does this rise in anti-immigration platforms affect the plight of refugees trying to enter Europe? This paper initially anticipated that it would inevitably lead to less receivership of refugees within member countries, especially in those that demonstrate a rise in support for xenophobic parties in different levels of government. Interestingly, and perhaps optimistically, asylum receivership has seen a significant increase in the majority of member countries throughout Western Europe, regardless of their varying levels of support for Eurosceptic, xenophobic parties, especially in the past two years. This could potentially have larger implications for the strength of EU institutions. The tension between individual national identities and one supranational identity is problematic but, the refugee crisis, could potentially act as a catalyst that leads the EU towards stronger integration, and cooperation, proving itself as a strong international, supranational institution that places EU functionality above domestic political leanings. This paper will also demonstrate through past examples that ‘crisis’ in the EU has again and again meant greater interdependence and multilateralism in the region despite repeated claims of it’s probable collapse. Although many headlines and political pundits throughout the years have often equated crisis in the region with its impending failure, historically, crisis has on the contrary, facilitated cooperation and greater reliance among member states.

2. Methods

A. Empirical Methods of Inquiry:

I narrowed my focus to EU member countries, specifically those located in Western Europe, and Hungary. This paper focuses on Western Europe primarily due to its economic and political capacity to process hundreds of thousands of refugees. Furthermore, many countries within Western Europe displayed a noticeable rise in support for Eurosceptic, xenophobic parties over the past decade. Results for Eastern European countries were not as clear as it was difficult to ascertain which parties were Eurosceptic and/or xenophobic.14 Focusing of Western Europe therefore leads to a more robust dataset to truly explore the established hypothesis. In addition to surveying the current literature regarding both European migration policy and EU resilience, this paper also utilizes empirical observation of electoral results both legislative and in the EU parliament, as well as asylum statistics in specific western European countries, in order to elucidate the argument that crisis facilitates cooperation and furthers integration within the EU. The variables asylum receivership by country, and electoral results on both the domestic level, and the EU parliamentary level, are used as an explanatory tool to demonstrate that despite rising rates of xenophobic sentiments throughout Europe, rates of asylee receivership are increasing. This coupled with the Union’s commitment to implementing mandatory quotas suggest Europe is committed to unity and multilateralism despite domestic calls for less European integration. Hence, in conjunction with other scholarly arguments and historical observations to further strengthen
the hypothesis, this display of multilateralism and higher rates of receivership despite growing anti-immigrant sentiment suggest that EU obligations supersede domestic concerns, and that crisis facilitates greater interdependence in the EU.

B. Potential Limitations

Potential limitations to the research surround the empiricism used when attempting to measure rising support for nationalistic parties in Western Europe. First, limiting the examination to specific countries in Western Europe lends itself to the potential to overlook the importance of younger EU members, primarily those of the former Yugoslavia. By focusing primarily on Western Europe, this paper employs historical context when discussing EU past crisis as well as researching members states who account for the highest rates of GDP per capita and presumably have the capacity to absorb large numbers of refugees. However, a potential shortcoming with this is perhaps not adequately measuring if levels of anti-immigration sentiments, and primarily, Islamophobia in that particular region could foster more xenophobic policies in their respective governments, which could eventually impact EU parliament.15 More scholarship is necessary to adequately measure its impact on regional stability and multilateralism.

Another potential limitation with the empirical research is the sole focus on electoral results. For purposes of this paper, electoral results were found to be a more trusted measure of actual support for nationalistic parties for two reasons: 1. Polling across countries is difficult to adequately compare, therefore results may have been skewed based on inaccuracies in both the definitions used to explain an individuals support, and the tools used to measure support. 2. With the increasing cost of polling due especially to decline of landline telephones, and the cost it takes to conduct polls with calls to cellular phones, its become increasingly more expensive to conduct meticulously accurate polling which causes less and less scientifically valid inquiries.16 Future research on this subject would benefit greatly from accurate polling done across EU member states in order to secure a more robust data-set. For purposes of this paper’s theoretical inquiry, electoral results will suffice; This paper is primarily interested in support for Eurosceptic parties in parliament, both EU and domestic.

3. Definitions

A. Nationalism:

It is important to understand the context used when this paper discusses the increase in ‘nationalism’ throughout the continent. Here I will briefly unpack this phenomenon. It has been argued that xenophobic, nativist, and nationalistic parties are necessarily far right by nature.17 This is almost always the case when studying the genesis of such parties in the United States, but its much more nuanced when discussing the EU, especially since 2010. In

2014, Maureen A. Eger and Sarah Valdez of Stockholm University sought to find a workable definition for the underlying ideology of the vast amounts of anti-immigrant/nationalistic parties that seemed to be gaining momentum in Western Europe. Through careful analysis of electoral data and espoused platforms of said various parties, they ascertained that the nationalist parties that are currently in existence vary widely on social and fiscal platforms. Some parties may espouse anti ‘welfare state’ positions but many do not, which is explained through the success of several European states’ heavy taxation and government-funded programs, and the idea that the welfare state has morphed from being simple an economic ideology, and instead is now seen as a part of a state’s national culture.

Therefore, they used the word ‘neo-nationalism’ to describe the change from nationalist parties in the EUs early days, to what is occurring throughout the continent now. Furthermore, they established these parties demand attention beyond being considered simply as ‘fringe’ parties. They unquestionably have acquired electoral support over the past decade and it can no longer be argued that their movement is simply marginal. The authors explain: “Before one can begin to understand the electoral successes of these parties, comprehensive and comparative research is necessary to identify the overarching political ideology of these parties and their supporters” (Eger and Valdez, 116). They come to the conclusion that the new nationalist parties flooding Europe have one overarching platform in common, which is an opposition to immigration and to multiculturalism, in favor for a traditional, national way of life. Furthermore they usually also emphasize pro-law and order, and Eurosceptic sentiments. Hence, this paper will use this specific definition when examining the rise of nationalist parties throughout Europe.

B. Refugee vs. Migrant:

The difference between a migrant and a refugee marks a crucial distinction for European countries receiving new arrivals. It is important to explain what is meant by the term “refuge”, which is often used interchangeably with the word “migrant”. According to United Nations’ 1951 Convention on Refugees, a refugee is someone 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 to, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country.”

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This definition makes it implicitly clear that a refugee therefore must meet one of these above criteria to be considered for asylum to any country. The word ‘migrant’ doesn’t necessarily embody the gravity of a refugee’s plight. Various news articles and periodicals often use these words interchangeably, which is misleading. Therefore, it is important to note that for purposes of this paper, when exploring European receivership, it is in reference to the receivership of refugees, and not necessarily the acceptance of migrants who may or may not be attempting to emigrate simply for a more favorable economic or social situation.

C. European Asylum Policy

An international refugee regime was implemented following World War Two, with the passing of the Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, and the subsequent provisions laid out in the Geneva Convention on 1951. Its’ implementation worldwide has varied widely, with it’s vast interpretations being left up to individual states whose domestic policies may sway governments’ responses to humanitarian crises. Therefore, with a lack of international jurisdiction on the plight of refugees, asylum policy varied throughout the world. This played out in Europe following World War Two when there were massive amounts of refugee populations permanently displaced following decades of war. This initially allowed for individual member state’s to apply discretion with regard to asylum issues in the EU.

Two major events helped facilitate a more cohesive policy on refugees in the EU; First, the changing geopolitical landscape with the impending break up of the Soviet Union, and second, the economic crisis of the 1970s. The former led to floods of refugees escaping violence in ex-soviet block countries, and the latter, which made it extremely difficult for countries to absorb the population influx due to their economic predicaments. Furthermore, Europe’s lack of border security helped facilitate the constant influx of refugees moving freely from country to country, with almost untethered mobility, which inevitably made it nearly impossible for asylum policy to be left to national devices.

Following this geopolitical instability, the Schengen area was established, and then eventually, in 1992, the Maastricht Treaty saw the creation of what is now known as the EU. In 1999, the European Commission sought to implement a Common European Asylum System (CEAS), which set out minimum standards that all member states were required to comply with. It was amended first in 1990 with the passing of the Dublin Agreement, which was subsequently amended multiple times, with its actual enforcement commencing in 2013. Dublin establishes a hierarchy of criteria for identifying the member state responsible for the examination of an asylum claim in Europe. Furthermore, it prevents a refugee from applying for asylum to multiple countries, and places the burden of processing on the member country where the refuge was first received. As was explained in the introduction,

this has led to resentment from peripheral/southern states that view Dublin as privileging the northern states as the point of entry is predominantly in the south.  

5. European Nationalism, Euroscepticism, and Anti-immigrant Sentiments

Based on the data offered below, it is clear that over the past decade, nationalistic, populist parties have been gaining momentum and proving to be more than just a peripheral movement throughout the EU. Parties like the National Front in France, The Independence Party in the United Kingdom, and Golden Dawn in Greece, have all attracted a substantial following, which has resulted in seats attained in both the European Parliament and their respective legislatures. This year has seen continent wide protests regarding the EU’s handling of the most recent debt crisis in Greece and the ongoing migrant crisis affecting the southern countries in particular. One would guess that the support for these parties will continue to climb in many countries and while some saw a dip in support in their 2013 or 2014 elections (The Party for Freedom in the Netherlands lost a few percentages of support, as did the Northern League in Italy), one would assume that the trajectory for these parties will be to remain strong, attracting citizens who are unsatisfied with the status quo. Data for this paper were compiled using statistics already collected by Maureen A. Eger and Sarah Valdez in their 2014 paper on the growth of Nationalism in Western Europe that was explored above. I added any 2015 election results to their existing data and also collected data specifically displaying European Parliamentary results in the last two election cycles, which is displayed in the table below. While the data collected for member states electoral results was mixed, the EU parliamentary data shows that from the 2009 election to the 2014 election, nationalist parties garnered a significant growth in support in many Western European countries.

This growth could potentially be problematic for the EU and multilateral procedures. Nationalism was essentially one of the root causes of decades of war on the continent and no major power wanted to return to that devastation. Therefore, nationalism was seen as a peripheral political notion is European countries in the decades following the war. However, some scholars argue that nationalism is symptomatic of ‘democratic malaise’ and a lack of legitimacy of the institution. Since the end of the Second World War and the beginning of the European Economic Community, the idea of nationalism was a polemic notion. However, nationalism and populism, which often accompanies it, are not necessarily in opposition to democratic procedures and multilateralism. Margaret Canovan, an expert in the field, argues that populism especially, can be analogous to democracy. Nationalism, populism, and Euroscepticism are often times a reaction to a ‘democratic deficit’ affecting the EU and member states. The EU has been described as a form of governance ‘without...
government'. There is no definitive authority that is clearly responsible for specific decisions and policy outcomes, and government opposition parties within the institution are not strong. Therefore, this ‘lack’ of political conflict as described by Christopher Lord and Paul Magnette in their 2004 article exploring the EU common market, leads to a ‘technocratic’ bureaucracy rather than a thriving democratic institution. One could therefore take this argument a bit further; this surge in nationalism and Eurosceptism could lead to a stronger democratic institution, allowing for competing ideals, political discourse, and a better functioning, legitimate international regime. Taken in a vacuum, Euro-sceptic and anti-immigrant sentiments is seemingly incompatible with multilateralism. However, if it is appreciated as a symptom of this ‘political malaise’ affecting the region, then it is very possible that it will lead to more democracy, cooperation, and authoritative legitimacy.

Furthermore, the growth in nationalistic parties that argue for less immigration would seem to predict a negative correlation with asylum receiverships. Interestingly, the opposite it would seem, is occurring. As displayed below, receivership in Western European countries has been increasing, with a significant increase seen in the year 2013-2014, which is also the time frame when nationalism garnered a huge growth in support in specific countries. One can see from the data however, that regardless of the increase in the level of support for anti-immigration parties, receivership is increasing for most countries in Western Europe. (see table 3 below).

Table 1. Parliamentary Election results of radical right parties in Western Europe

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>% Vote</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>% Vote</th>
<th>Change</th>
<th>% in Parliament</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>Freedom Party of Austria</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>Alliance for the Future of Austria</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>-7.2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>The Flemish Interest</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>-4.1</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>Danish People’s Party</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>20.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>True Finns</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>-1.4</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>National Front</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>National Democratic Party</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Alternative For Germany</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Popular Orthodox Rally</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>-2.7</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Golden Dawn</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>Northern League</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>-4.2</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>Party for Freedom</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>-5.4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>National Renovator Party</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>Sweden Democrats</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>British National Party</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Source: Parties and Elections (http://www.parties-and-elections.eu)\textsuperscript{31}

### Table 2. European Parliamentary Election Results in Western Europe 2009:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>Percent Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Austria (Alliance for the Future of Austria)</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>-89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria (Freedom Party)</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium (Flemish Interest)</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>6.76</td>
<td>-57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark (Danish People's Party)</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>70.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland (True Finns)</td>
<td>9.79</td>
<td>12.87</td>
<td>31.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France (National Front)</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>24.86</td>
<td>294%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany (Alternative For Germany)</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>24.86</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Britain (British National Party)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece (Golden Dawn)</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>9.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece (Popular Orthodox Rally)</td>
<td>7.15</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>-62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy (The Northern League)</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>-39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands (party for Freedom)</td>
<td>16.97</td>
<td>13.35</td>
<td>-21.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden (Swedish Democrats)</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>193.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom (British National Party)</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>-69.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom (Independence Party)</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>65.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal (National Renovator Party)</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>1780%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: European Election Database\textsuperscript{32}

### Table 3. Asylum Receivership in Western Europe, 2009-2014:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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6. EU Vulnerability: Arguments Asserting EU Vulnerability and Potential Demise:

This paper argues that this particular crisis has and will continue to strengthen EU institutions and integration. While it is parochial to assume that there is a definitive way to assess the EU’s fate based on past variables, it is prudent to try in order to broaden the fields’ knowledge of how multilateralism and international institutions function. Due to the enormity of the current circumstances, member states have been put in a position where they must preference EU regimes and authority over their own particular wants and needs, which demonstrates the strength of the EU as an international institution. Much of the current scholarship on the EU portrays an institution barely surviving, composed of various cracks, which undeniably will lead to its demise.

John Mearsheimer saw European multilateralism as extremely bleak following the fall of the Berlin Wall. He asserted that the European Economic Community would eventually disintegrate. Without that common threat (the Soviet Union) the idea of European cooperation seemed preposterous. Mearsheimer asserted that without the large presence of US military in the region, member states would eventually look at one another with fear and distrust, which would lead to the eventual break down of NATO and EU relations. However, the US military has reduced its European presence significantly, and European interdependence has grown stronger in spite of it. In 2010, he discussed the issue of peace throughout Europe in a keynote lecture at the University of Chicago. He asserted that there is peace in the region because of American involvement. He specifically mentions European leaders assisting the US as a ‘watch dog’ around the world, which lends itself to peace in the region, as they are looking outward instead of at each other. While this argument may have valid and real concerns, it does little to prove EU’s potential disintegration. US commitment to the region has stayed consistent and historical interdependence and common interests among member states make the cost of exit extremely high.

Douglas Webber analyzed competing theoretical perspectives on EU disintegration, in an article for the European Journal of International Relations. He asserts first that: “Nonetheless, the fact that the EU has surmounted previous crisis does not alone guarantee that it will prove equally capable of overcoming the current crisis (debt crisis), especially if it

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37 Kay, Sean. "Time to Pull Our Troops from Europe." Foreign Policy Time to Pull Our Troops from Europe Comments. N.p., n.d. Web. 28 Nov. 2015
is indeed more profound than it's predecessors”(Webber, 342). He goes on to argue that historically, more regional organizations have failed than succeeded. He asserts as his key argument that the EU's crisis (debt crisis) is perhaps symptomatic of a broader crisis or 'malaise' of regional and international multilateralism.

One of the most compelling arguments for potential vulnerability and disintegration in the EU is the idea of Hegemonic Stability Theory. Webber explains that hegemonic stability theorists argue that regional political institutions are dependent on one country that acts as the hegemon and has strong; “economic and political incentives in the maintenance of a politically and economically stable Europe that its governments have historically seen as being best secured through integration”(Webber, 352). In the European example, this country is Germany. Webber goes on to explain that due to the current increase in Euro scepticism and populism throughout the country, he argues that Germany's leaders may end up kowtowing to domestic political pressures in lieu of the burdens that accompany hegemonic leadership. Below, I will demonstrate how current leadership displayed by Angela Merkel counters this assertion. Germany's commitment to hegemonic leadership has been for the most part, unwavering despite the most recent debt crisis in Greece, and now with the upheaval in protests from Euro sceptic and nationalists throughout the country.

Section 7: Counter Arguments and Concluding Remarks

A. Past Crises Overcome:
Past crisis have been overcome, leading to more integration and stronger EU frameworks. Furthermore, membership has expanded significantly since the Maastricht Treaty was signed, with countries waiting patiently to gain entry. Essentially every single decade since the creation of the common market following World War Two, there have been repeated claims that the institution was on the verge of collapse. Various financial and currency crises, arguments over the Maastricht treaty, specifically by France who's halfhearted approval of the fundamental treaty led many scholars to view the EU's survival as unlikely. A recent article written in the Council on Foreign Relations aptly named, The Eurozone in Crisis, echoes many earlier articles and claims from previous euro crises. For example, in 1964, Harold Cleveland, one of the most important US economists who aided the Marshall Plan following WW2, asserted that: “Trouble is no stranger in Brussels. From the beginning the EEC has lived from crisis to crisis, but recently the community’s problem’s have worsened”. Cleveland was speaking specifically to the European ‘crisis’ over the United Kingdom’s bid to join the EEC and France’s (De Gaulle mainly) vehement objection to it for fear it would

allow the United States greater access to influence policy in Europe.\textsuperscript{44} Examining a more recent crisis, the great recession undoubtedly hurt the EU but with Germany’s tutelage, the Eurozone is still intact with no loss of membership, despite intense disagreements. Most recently, the argument over Greece and its inability to pay its debts to the International Monetary Fund put the EU’s frameworks to the test. Merkel was adamant that Greece’s banking structure had to be dramatic reworked if it wished to stay in the Eurozone and subsequently receive EU support through the European Stability Mechanism.\textsuperscript{45} Greece’s government was staunchly against the banking overthrow, but eventually acquiesced in order to allow Greece to remain the Euro. Had Greece withdrawn there would have been dramatic repercussions but multilateralism and cooperation allowed for compromise on behalf of the Greek government.

Wallace J. Thies of the Catholic University of America argues that many claims of past Euro crisis are exaggerated and are failing to take into account the normal ebb and flow of political discourse and crisis management that occurs within democratic institutions regularly. He argues that not only do these hiccups fail to indicate an institution’s impending doom; on the contrary, they in fact facilitate more democratic integration with more cohesive frameworks built to better endure future crises.\textsuperscript{46}

B. Observation of Current Asylum Statistics:

Based on Western Europe’s rise in support for Eurosceptic, anti-immigration parties, one would expect that national policies and rates of receivership would correlate inversely in countries that saw a significant rise in support for said parties. However, this is clearly not occurring, and in fact, countries are accepting higher levels of refugees now than ever before, despite growing anger within their domestic populations (see above, table 3). One could infer that member states are therefore adhering to general EU policy as directed by the EU council and the Strategic Committee on Immigration, Frontiers and Asylum (SCIFA), instead of their domestic constituents. This would demonstrate the strength of the EU as a supranational institution, which governs EU member state policies that go way beyond open borders and a common currency.

Of course, some member states are not necessarily embracing EU directives regarding refugee policy, but the EU has unprecedentedly, over ruled opposing states in a recent policy decision. In September of 2015, European governments, guided by Germany and France, pushed through a divisive mandatory quotas deal. The negotiations, which endured for months, were meant to diffuse roughly 120,000 refugees from Italy, Greece, in order to more adequately share the burden among most EU member states. The UK, Denmark, and Ireland have an opt-out, but Ireland and Denmark have already committed to taking in refugees. The negotiations were divisive and in an unprecedented decision, the EU forced through, allowing a majority rule vote, instead of unanimity. Four former soviet countries voted against the quotas, and have asserted that the forced quotas are an assault on their sovereignty.\textsuperscript{45} In reality, the mandatory quota decision is more a political statement


rather than an actual solution to the current crisis. 120,000 refugees in the grand scheme of it is inconsequential, seeing that thousands are arriving daily; but the decision to force EU member states to abide by a EU directive, at the alleged expense of their respective national sovereignty demonstrates EU authority and legitimacy.

C. Deconstructing Hegemonic Stability Theory:

Arguments that utilize Hegemonic Stability Theory to demonstrate the EU’s weaknesses fail to take current events into account. As was stated above, Hegemonic Stability Theory with regard to international institutions, claim that multilateralism only works if there is a hegemon willing to forgo its national interests for the good of the institution. Although German Chancellor Angela Merkel has, in the past has been rebuked throughout Europe for her indecisiveness and unwillingness to make difficult decisions, her recent decisions demonstrate her willingness to steer the EU and avert disaster at the expensive of political support and legitimacy in her own country. Her often described ‘open door’ policy regarding the refugee crisis, has led to outcries in her own government, as well as country wide protesting against the acceptance of more migrants. With this growing discontent in her country and her own party, Merkel has not wavered in her resolve to guide Europe through this migration crisis, clinging rhetorically to European ‘ideals’ of human rights. Just recently, she emphatically defended her position against assigning a limit to how many refugees Germany will receive, despite outcries in her own party. Germany’s own interior minister, Thomas de Maiziere, argued against her, urging the EU Council to set limits. And finally, Merkel’s pushed for mandatory refugee quotas for Schengen area member states, despite widespread disagreement and adamant opposition by some member states.

D. Political Contestation

Political contestation can lead to legitimacy in both sovereign governments, and democratic institutions. Therefore political discourse and even political conflict help facilitate debate and discussion among varying populations: “As different ideas and opinions meet in public debate, the audience is exposed to the various arguments and could potentially be persuaded in various directions. While politicization thus features disagreement, it could simultaneously signify a process towards reaching a new (or old) consensus” (Wilde, 766).

48 Huggler, Justin. "Minister Calls for EU Limit on Refugee Numbers as over 950,000 Arrive in Germany." The Telegraph. Telegraph Media Group, n.d. Web. 28 Nov. 2015.
dynamic charters. Therefore, The EU’s multiple crises have expedited greater interdependence through democratic procedure since its establishment.

E. Concluding Remarks:

The EU has repeatedly exhibited commitment to robust frameworks that promote multilateralism, allowing for adaptation as a consequence of a variety of calamities. The commitment by the original six member states and their respective leaders especially, to pursue cooperation, oftentimes at the expense of political power in their own country, demonstrates the EU’s resilience. Political will may ebb and flow but history has shown that crisis facilitates EU legitimacy and furthers its interdependence. Theoretically, this paper contends that the current crisis will allow for comprehensive asylum reforms for all member countries, as well as an over-hall of the current Schengen area agreement, with an emphasis on collaboration of law enforcement agencies, in order to better track population movements throughout the region. Both reforms would greater strengthen the EU as an institution, and afford further validity to the EU parliament.

8. Works Cited:


Huggler, Justin. "Minister Calls for EU Limit on Refugee Numbers as over 950,000 Arrive in Germany." The Telegraph. Telegraph Media Group, n.d. Web. 28 Nov. 2015.


