

IREb2014

CULTURE, SOCIETY AND POLITICS IN THE GERMAN-SPEAKING COUNTRIES

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Fall 2020-2021

Session 13: Contemporary Challenges

On the Agenda for Today

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Contemporary Challenge => Europe's Refugee Crisis

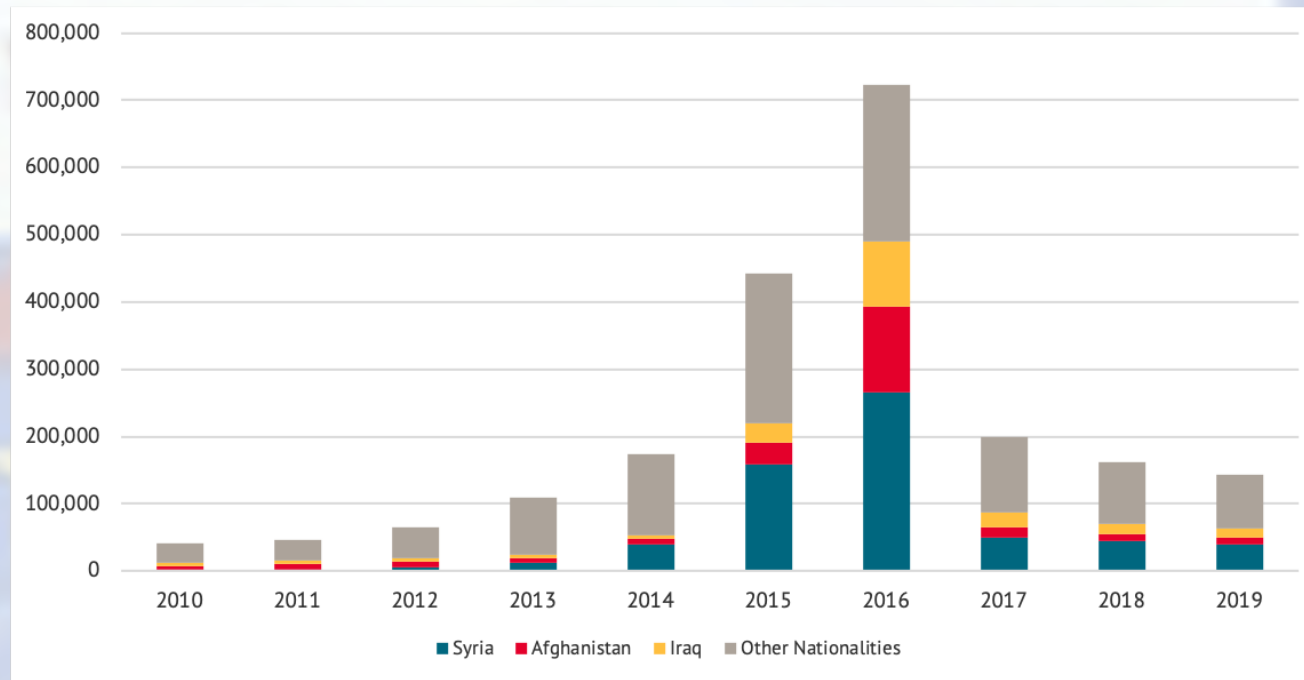
- Introduction
 - Who is a **Migrant**?
 - Who is a **Refugee**?
 - Migrants Vs. Refugees
- The Refugee/Migrant **Crisis**
- Merkel's '**Open Door**' Policy
 - German Motives
 - Ambivalent social attitudes
 - The EU Turkey Statement
- How did the refugee crisis **impact Europe**?
- Further **Challenges**
- The final **exam**

Introduction

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- Germany has one of the **highest numbers of refugees** of any country worldwide
 - The **only western industrialized nation** of ten **top host countries**
- **Migrant flows to Germany** hit a **peak** in 2015- 2016
- **Refugees in Germany** are mainly from **Syria, Iraq & Afghanistan**
- Germany is still among the nations receiving the **most applications**
- **Integration: a challenge**

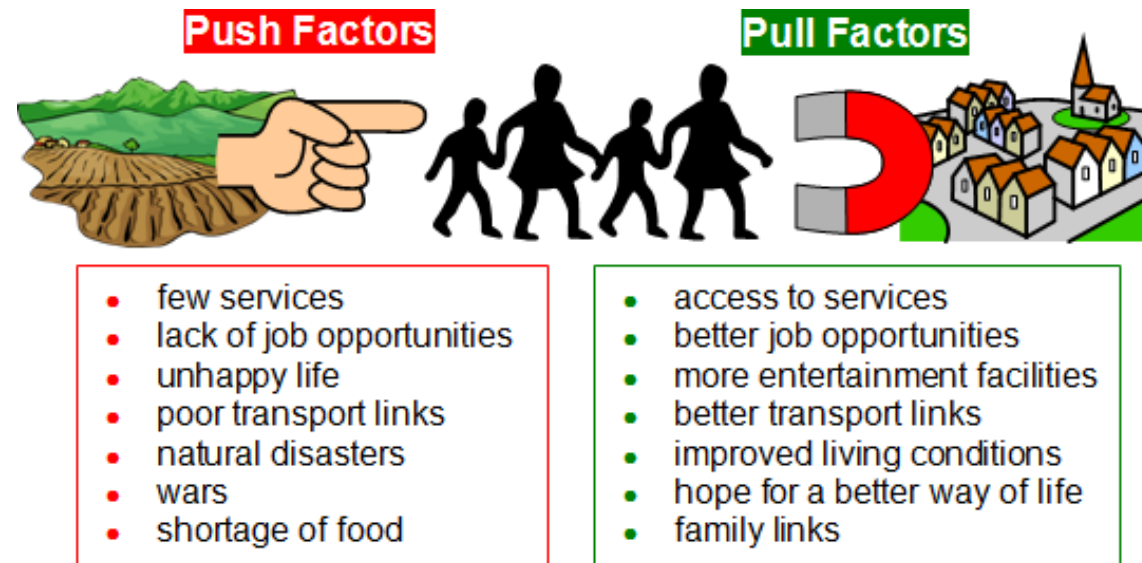
First-time asylum applications to Germany, 2010-2019



Who is a Migrant?

Migrant =>

- Any person who lives **temporarily/permanently** in a country where s/he was **not born**, and has acquired some significant **social ties** to this country
- **UN Convention on the Rights of Migrants** => "The term 'migrant' ... should be understood as covering all cases where **the decision to migrate is taken freely** by the individual concerned, for reasons of '**personal convenience**' and without intervention of an external compelling factor"
 - **Voluntary** decision
 - Migration/Immigration



Who is a Migrant?

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- **Dominant forms of migration can be classified according to:**
 - **Motives to migrate**
 - **Legal status**
- **Common categorization of immigrants:**
 - **Highly skilled & business migrants**
 - **Family reunion**

The screenshot shows the website **migration.gv.at** with the sub-header **LIVING AND WORKING IN AUSTRIA**. The navigation menu includes **Living and working in Austria**, **Service and links**, and **FAQ**. The main content area is titled **Austria-wide shortage occupations** and lists five categories for the year 2021:

1. Graduates in power engineering (DiplomingenieurInnen für Starkstromtechnik)
2. Technicians with a higher level of training (engineer) for power engineering technology (TechnikerInnen mit höherer Ausbildung (Ing.) für Starkstromtechnik)
3. Agricultural Equipment engineers (LandmaschinenbauerInnen)
4. Black toppers (SchwarzdeckerInnen)
5. Technicians with a higher Level of training (engineer) for data

On the right side, there is a **Search** bar and a **QuickCheck** section. The QuickCheck section asks "In Austria, I'd like to..." and offers four radio button options: **work**, **move to my family**, **study**, and **start a business**. A **Start** button is visible at the bottom right of the QuickCheck section.

Who is a Migrant?

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- **Common categorization of immigrants:**
 - **Illegal migrants => Migrant smuggling**
 - **Consent to being engaged in criminal activity**
 - **Economic deprivation, political instability + ethnic strife** may motivate individuals to **illegally cross borders** in search of a better life
 - Essex lorry deaths (October 2019)
 - About 300k people are smuggled into western Europe each year (estimated)



Who is a Migrant?

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- **Common categorization** of immigrants:
 - **Temporary labour migrants**
 - **'Guest workers'** in Post WWII West Germany => **Cheap labor**, necessary to fuel the economic miracle driven by the rapid expansion of production
 - Labor was recruited from Italy, Greece, Spain, Turkey, Morocco, Portugal, Tunisia, Yugoslavia (up to 1968)
 - Many guest workers **never left**, forever changing changed German demographics



Who is a Refugee?

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Refugee =>

- UN convention relating to the status of refugees (1951) => A **Refugee** is a person who, owing to a well-founded fear of persecution 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, unwilling to return home
- Recognition as a refugee is **declaratory**, not **constitutive**
- Aaka **asylum seekers**

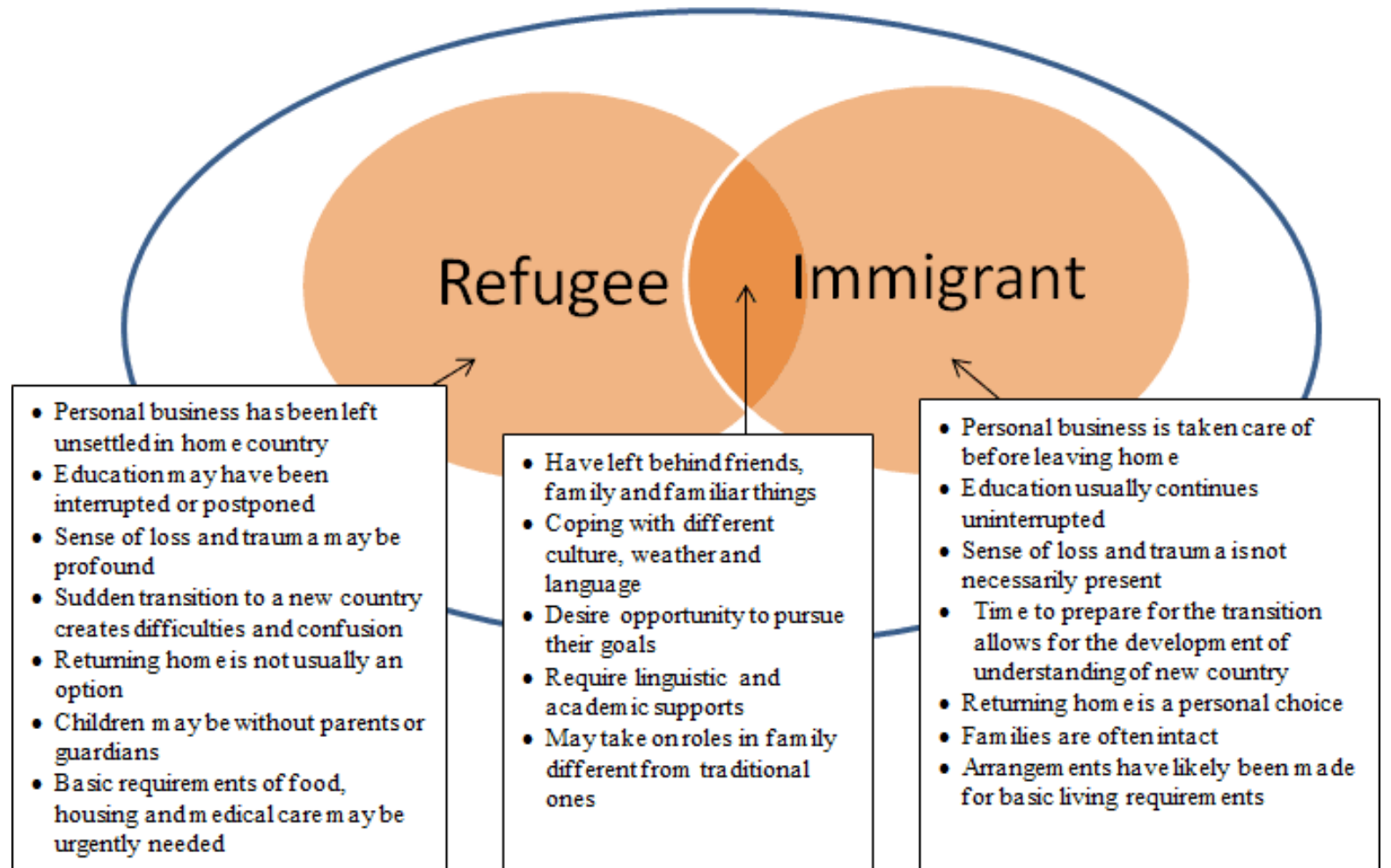


UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

Migrants Vs. Refugees

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- While **commonalities** between **immigrants** and **refugees** exist, the significant difference is **choice**
- Migrants are people who **choose when to leave and where to go**
- **Refugees** are people who were forced/compelled to leave their homes



Europe's Refugee/Migrant Crisis



Europe's Refugee/Migrant Crisis

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- **Syrian refugee crisis** resulting from the **Syrian civil war (2011-)** is the **worst humanitarian crisis** of our time
 - About 5.6 million Syrian **refugees**, 6.2 million **displaced** within Syria. Nearly 12 million people in Syria in need of **humanitarian assistance**
- The refugee crisis felt in **Europe** since 2005 is **not a new phenomena**, but became a topic for **massive news coverage** as it reached the **heart of the European Union**



Europe's Refugee/Migrant Crisis

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- An **attempt** to find a **European solution** to the crisis



- As the **crisis deepened**, so did **divisions** among and within the EU member states

UNITED KINGDOM

The U.K. which is not part of Europe's border-free travel area, is working to stop migrants entering the country through the channel tunnel, which originates in France.

FRANCE

The political powers that be in France, where the population is already 7.5% Muslim, are under pressure from the far-right National Front party to limit immigration.

ITALY

With 4,700 miles of coastline -- a length it is almost impossible to patrol -- Italy has been the landing point for an outsized share of refugees reaching the European Union.

GREECE

With 8,500 miles of coastline, Greece is the entry point of many migrants seeking refuge in the European Union.

LIBYA

Refugees have flocked to war-torn Libya to cross by boat to Europe. Thousands have perished in the sea.

GERMANY

One of the EU's most welcoming countries for migrants, Germany has an average annual income of \$47,590 per person -- compared to \$1,606 for Syria.

AUSTRIA

Austria, a major transit country for migrants seeking to reach Germany, recently instituted border checks after bodies of 71 refugees were discovered in an abandoned truck that had traveled through Hungary.

HUNGARY

Hungary, a major transit point between Greece and Germany, is planning to build a 13-foot-high fence, 110 miles long, along its border with Serbia to stop the flow of migrants across its territory.

AFGHANISTAN

Until it was overtaken by Syria, which is now producing one-quarter of the world's refugees, Afghanistan spent decades at the top of the list, with at least 1.66 million Afghans submitting asylum applications in other countries in 2014.

IRAQ

The takeover areas of northern Iraq by the terrorist group ISIS, or Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, is reported to have displaced more than 3.3 million people in Iraq -- many of them fleeing to other countries.

ERITREA

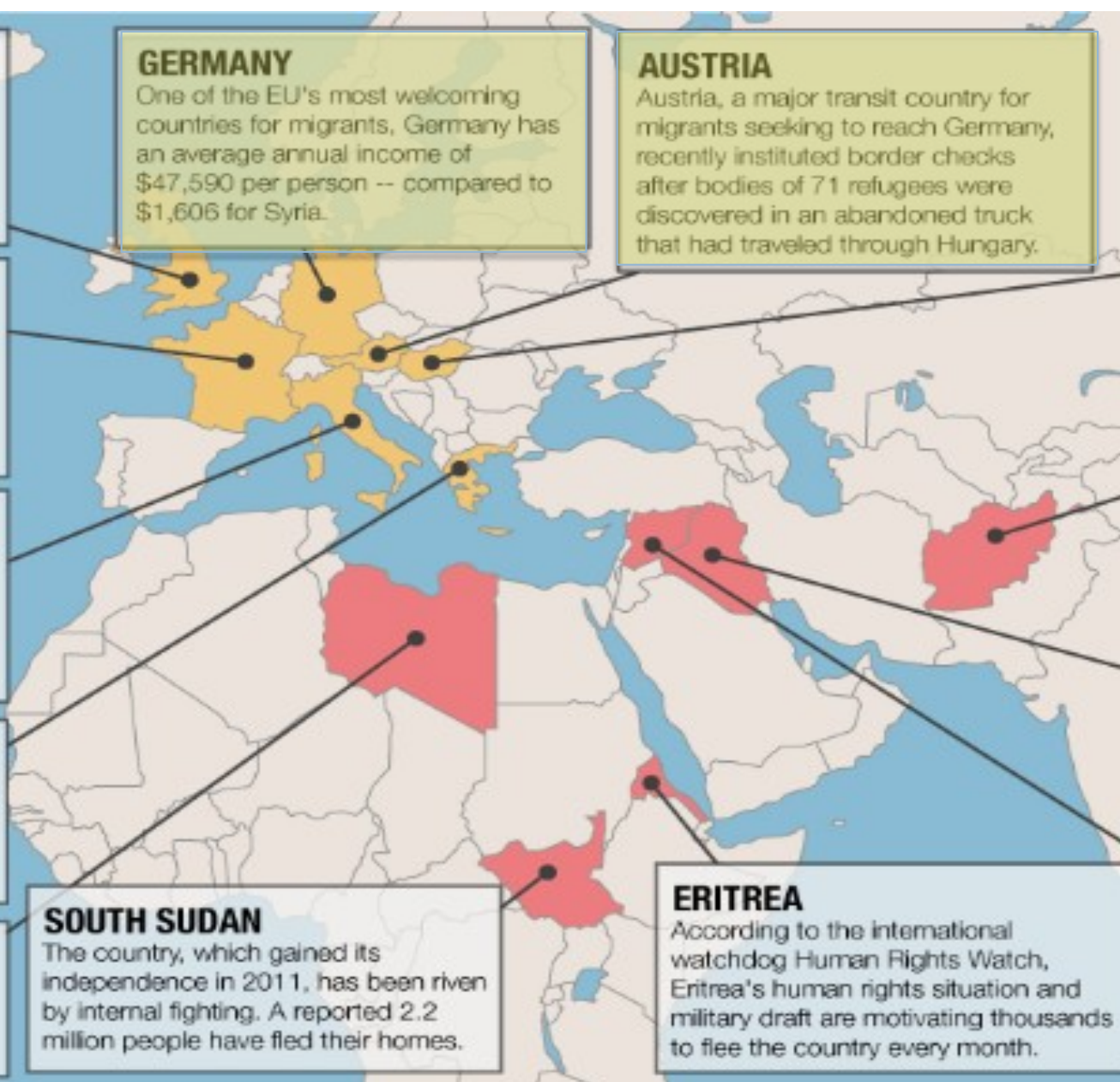
According to the international watchdog Human Rights Watch, Eritrea's human rights situation and military draft are motivating thousands to flee the country every month.

SYRIA

A civil war that began in 2011 has killed more than 300,000 people, reduced major cities to rubble and prompted more than 4 million people to run for their lives.

SOUTH SUDAN

The country, which gained its independence in 2011, has been riven by internal fighting. A reported 2.2 million people have fled their homes.



Merkel's 'Open Door' Policy

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- Early September 2015: Germany **allowed refugees** coming from Hungary to enter + **“we can do it” rhetoric**, believed to have been understood as an **invitation => Influx of refugees**
 - Actually a **response** to the **humanitarian refugee crisis**
- What can explain the **unprecedented scale of refugees from outside Europe?**
 - People in search of protection- **all-time high**
 - The **civil war in Syria** => Spillover of refugees, difficult situation in states of first arrival
 - **Deterioration** in the supply of **World Food Programme** food aid during 2015
 - Changes to the **main migratory routes**: Via Turkey & Greece, rather than Italy



Merkel's 'Open Door' Policy

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- **Why** do refugees seek protection in **Germany** (and a few other countries)?
 - Level of **prosperity, social support** and, above all, migrants' already **existing social networks**
- Substantial **differences** within the **EU** concerning refugees' **countries of origin: Germany => Afghans, Syrians** and refugees from the **Western Balkan** countries



Merkel's 'Open Door' Policy

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- **Refugee policy** in Germany gradually **liberalised** over the years due to:
 - Moderate number of applications, positive economic development + awareness of accelerating demographic ageing
- Germany does not want to lag in the competition for talented people + **avoid** the **past mistakes (failed integration of the 'Gastarbeiter')** => **Integration of refugees is encouraged**
 - Access to language + integration courses
 - Ban on employment- shortened
 - Programmes for admitting temporary refugees from Syria on a larger scale
 - Family members of Syrian refugees in Germany can join them

Merkel's 'Open Door' Policy

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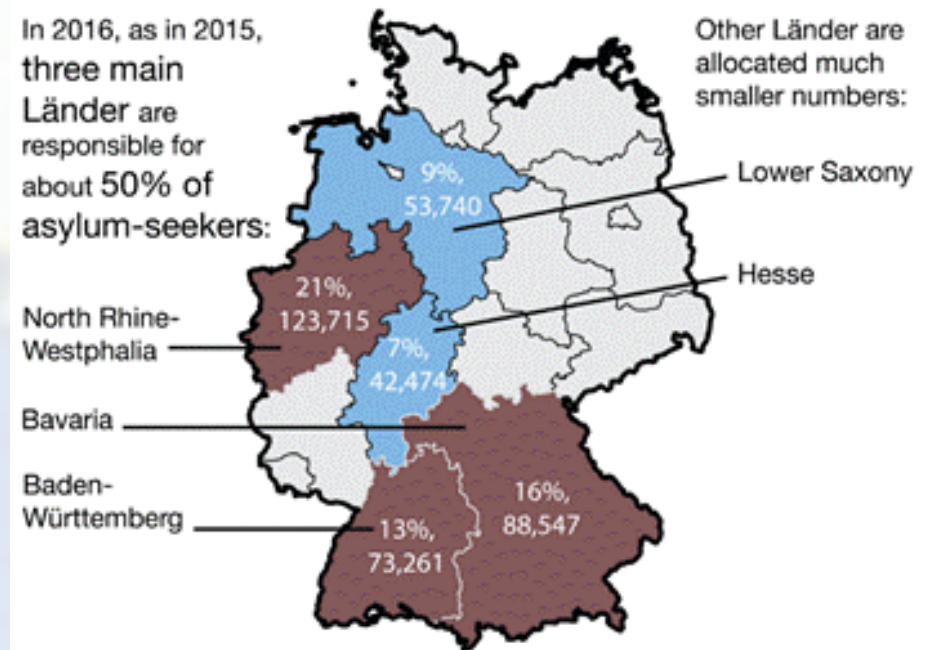
Asylum Package I =>

- Greater participation of the **federal government** in the **cost** of financing of **refugee accommodation**
- Measures aimed at accelerating the asylum procedure
 - **Reinforcement of civil servants** dealing with immigrants and refugees (**Federal Office for Migration and Refugees**)
- Refugees were **proportionately** distributed across German regions

Quota of selected Länder, respective numbers of registrations

In 2016, as in 2015, three main Länder are responsible for about 50% of asylum-seekers:

Other Länder are allocated much smaller numbers:





Sure about leaving?

On your way?

Need to return?

Fact checker

Check the facts – here's what migrants need to know

The biggest lies told by traffickers

Human trafficking is a criminal business. And to win clients and



Young Refugees fighting Covid-19

Refugees and their host communities are amongst the

My country has an agreement which allows me to enter the Schengen area without a visa. Can I stay as

Merkel's 'Open Door' Policy

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German Motives =>

openness, generosity, solidarity

■ Political Considerations

- Popularity + possible re-election

■ Moral obligation

- Merkel: "*Humanitarian values of Europe*"
- Historical duty (WW II)

■ Germany's Image/Reputation:

- Defender of refugees, example of

■ Economic & Demographic Considerations

- Aging population
- Technical skills necessary



Merkel's 'Open Door' Policy

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- **Political and social debate** on asylum and refugee protection in Germany:
 - Opening of temporary shelters often led to **conflict** with local residents



- The Federal Office for Migration and Refugees couldn't cope the **high volume of asylum applications** => Increased backlog of cases, extended processing times

Merkel's 'Open Door' Policy

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Ambivalent social attitudes =>

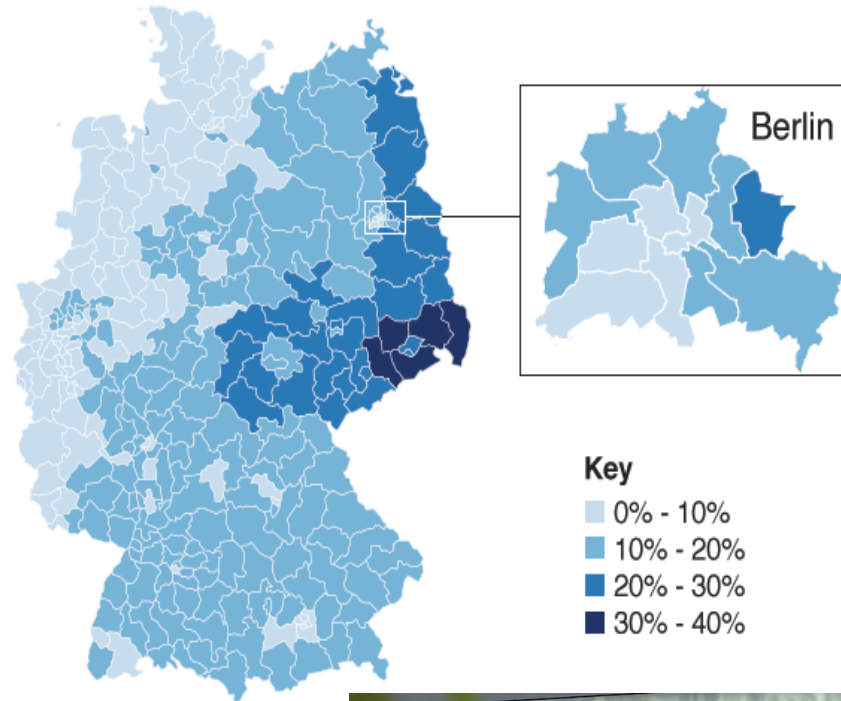
- Responses to the challenges of refugee reception in Germany **vary + ambivalent**
- German society demonstrated **solidarity & spontaneous support** for refugees, yet
- Civic movements **sceptical/hostile** to the creation of emergency **shelters** in their neighbourhoods
 - Right-radicals (NPD) initiated **anti-refugee protests**
- **Violence** against refugee shelters, **arson attacks**



Ambivalent Social Attitudes

- **Rising support for:**
 - PEGIDA
 - 'Alternative for Germany' (AfD)

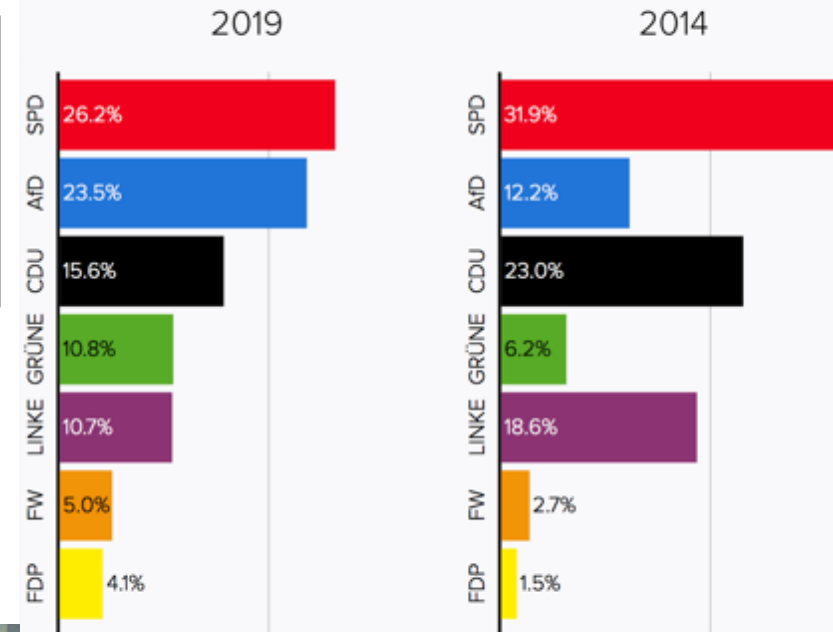
AfD vote share: party list



Source: German federal returning officer

GERMAN FAR RIGHT GROWS IN BRANDENBURG ...

On September 1, voters elected the 88 members of Brandenburg's Landtag.



2014 vote share corresponds to party list vote, not constituency vote.



Ambivalent Social Attitudes



Ambivalent Social Attitudes

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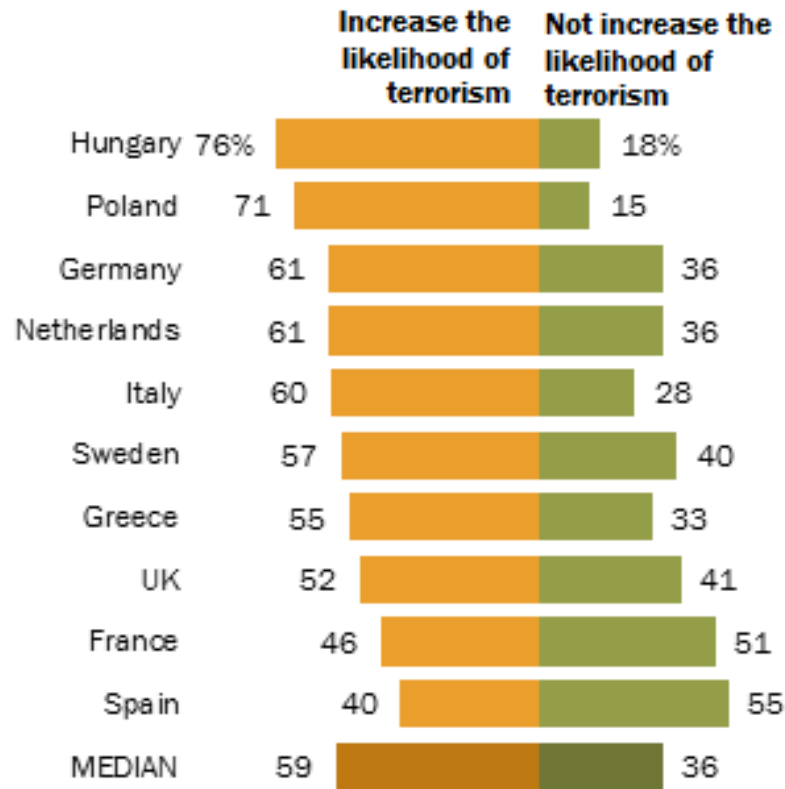
- **Shifting public opinion** following **terror attacks** (Paris, Brussels), **crime** (New Year eve in Cologne, 2015-2016) involving immigrants
 - **Inducing fear, racism**
 - **Hostility + anti immigration/ refugees voices** in Europe & Scandinavia
- The **refugee crisis** and the threat of **terrorism** are **related** in the **minds** of many **Europeans**



Ambivalent Social Attitudes

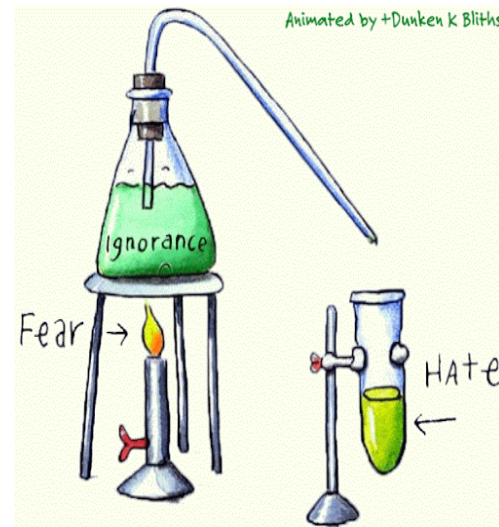
Many Europeans concerned refugees will increase domestic terrorism

Refugees will ___ in our country

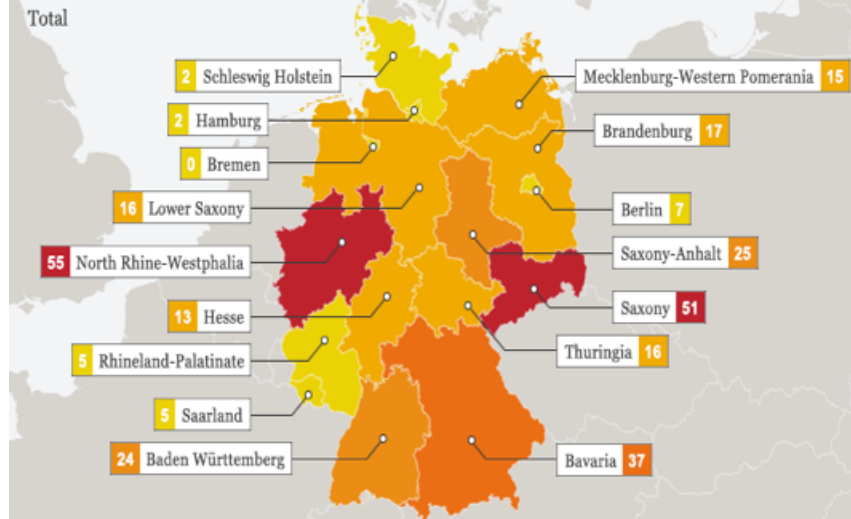


Source: Spring 2016 Global Attitudes Survey.

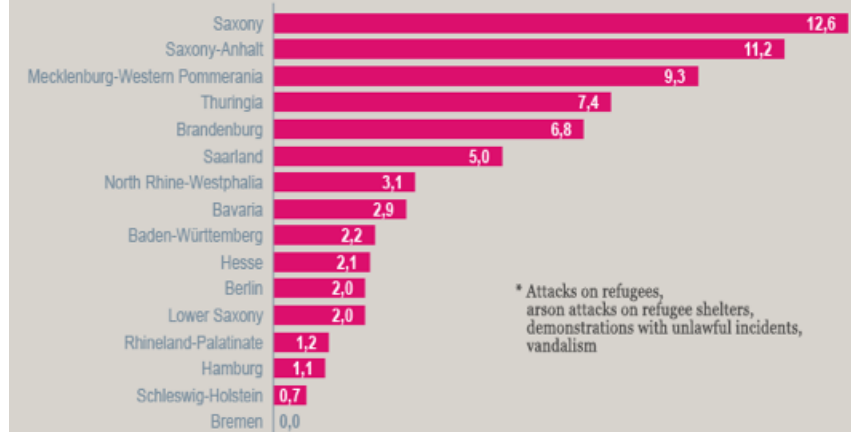
- Xenophobic Incidents
- Chancellor Merkel paid a **high political price** for her migration policy => **CDU lost public support**



Xenophobic incidents* targeting refugees 2016



Per 1,000,000 inhabitants



* Attacks on refugees, arson attacks on refugee shelters, demonstrations with unlawful incidents, vandalism

The EU-Turkey Statement

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- Middle East countries offered refugees low protection & socioeconomic rights: temptation to reach Europe => externalising the refugee problem to Turkey
- **AKA EU-Turkey Refugee Deal (2016)**
 - Turkey agreed to stop the tide of refugees to Europe in return for certain concessions (e.g., financial aid)
- The EU-Turkey refugee deal managed to greatly **reduce** the number of refugees entering the EU
- **2020: Turkey opens its border to Greece**



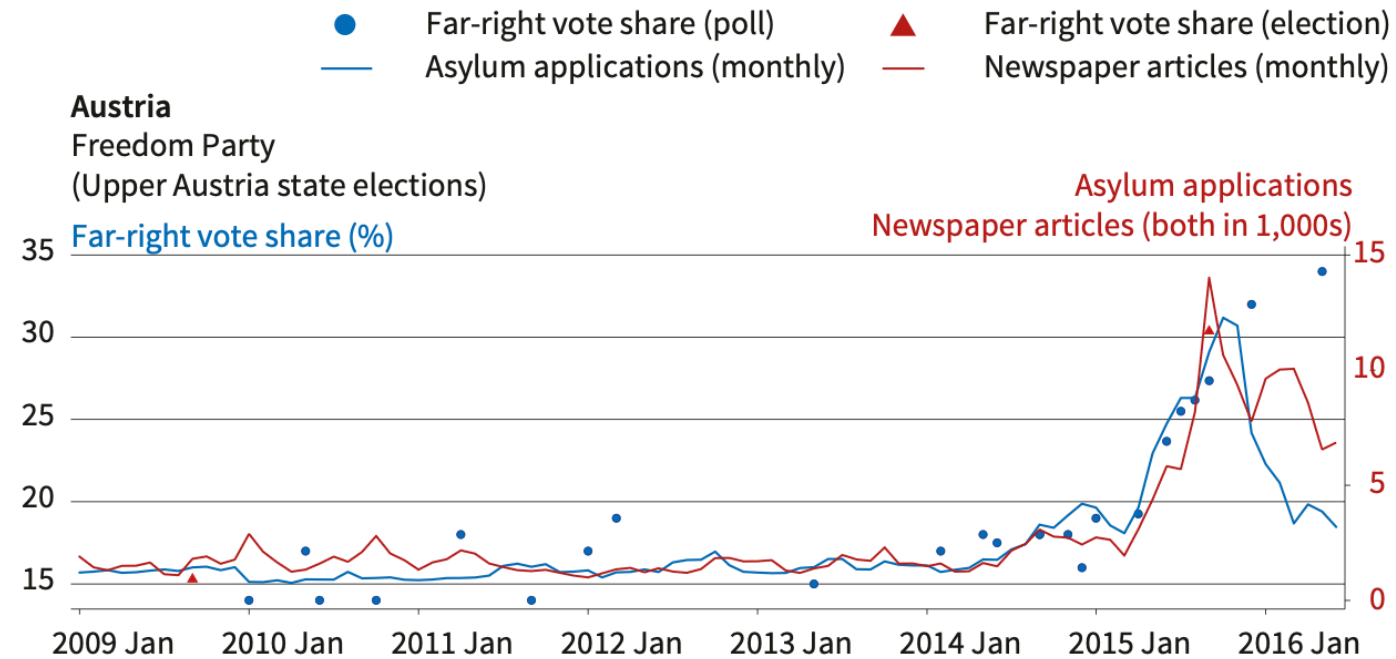
How did the Refugees Crisis impact Europe?

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- Rise of **right wing parties**
- Re-establishing **border control/check points**



Number of Asylum Applications and Support for Far-Right Parties in Europe



- BREXIT
- Increased Xenophobia, Islamophobia, racism

Contemporary Challenges

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- Increasing pressure on living & working conditions, social protections systems, public services
 - Privatization of public services (health system)
 - Aging population- Pensions
- Rising inequalities in society
- Sustainable Growth
- Climate Change
- Integration of refugees, Immigration



The Final Exam

■ Dates:

- I => 25.01
- II => 8.2 (+ resit)
- III => 15.2 (+ resit)
- IV => 23.2 (+ resit)

- 10 AM CET, via the IS
- Open Questions
- **Register** for the exam (IS)
- Need **60% to pass**



**Thank you for your attention,
attendance and interest in the
course!**

Questions???

