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# **CHARLES UNIVERSITY**

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

International Area Studies

European Politics and Society

## **Master's Thesis**

**2021**

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International Area Studies

European Politics and Society

**LOST CHILDREN OF EUROPE: EUROPEAN UNION AND  
UNACCOMPANIED MIGRANT CHILDREN**

Master's thesis

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Year of the defence: 2021

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## References

Abuselidze Salome, „*Lost Children of Europe: European Union and Unaccompanied Migrant Children*“, Praha, 2021. 97 pages. Master's thesis (Mgr.). Charles University, Faculty of Social Sciences, International Area Studies. European Politics and Society. Supervisor prof. JUDr. PhDr. Ivo Šlosarčík, Ph.D., LL.M..

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## ABSTRAKT

Problematika nezletilých migrantů bez doprovodu (NBD) v Evropské unii je jedním z nejuznávanějších a jedním z nejvíce prozkoumaných témat. Jen v roce 2015 přišlo do Evropy téměř 100 000 nezletilých bez rodičů nebo zákonných zástupců. A více než 10 000 krátce poté zmizelo. Tyto děti byly a nadále jsou vystaveny vysokému riziku obchodování s lidmi, dětské práce, sexuálního a fyzického zneužívání a vykořisťování nějakého jiného druhu.

Je to 6 let od počáteční krize, ale statistiky se nezlepšují. Tendence zůstává taková, že za poslední 3 roky zmizelo beze stopy téměř 19 000 NBD, což představuje až 17 zmizení denně.

Navzdory závazku Evropské unie chránit práva NBD jsou podmínky těchto dětí hrozná. V některých členských státech je situace tak špatná, že jsou porušována základní lidská práva. To vyvolává následující otázky:

*Otázka 1: Proč EU není schopna přijmout společnou politiku týkající se nezletilých migrantů bez doprovodu?*

*Otázka 2: Jak EU přispívá ke zmizení NBD?*

Kvalitativní a kvantitativní data i velké množství primárních a sekundárních zdrojů pomáhají porozumět problému NBD. Obsahová analýza evropských médií přispívá k ilustraci vnímání migrace a dětí bez doprovodu. Teorie sociální konstrukce cílových populací a teorie kulturní odvety jsou rámcem pro analýzu studovaného tématu.

Bylo zjištěno, že spolupráce a solidarita mezi členskými státy klesá, stejně jako postoje evropských společností k migraci. Na druhé straně protiimigrační strany (pravicově populistické) rostou od roku 2015. Krizi využily ke svému zisku a prosazovaly své domácí ambice. Přitom zpochybnili jednotu EU a přeshraniční spolupráci.

**Klíčová slova:** Evropská unie; nezletilí migranti bez doprovodu; pravicový populismus; protiimigrační strany; sociální konstrukce; spolupráce; solidarita

## ABSTRACT

The issue of unaccompanied migrant children (UAM) in the European Union is one of the most acknowledged and one of the most under researched topics. Close to 100,000 minors arrived in Europe in 2015 alone, without parents or guardians. And more than 10,000 disappeared shortly after. These children have been and continue to be under high risk of human trafficking, child labour, sexual and physical abuse, and exploitation of some other kinds.

It has been 6 years since the initial crisis, but the statistics are not getting better. Tendency remains as close to 19,000 UAMs have perished in the past 3 years, which accounts to 17 disappearances a day.

Despite the European Union's commitment to protect the rights of UAMs, the conditions of these children are dire. In some member states the situation is so much poorer, that basic human rights are violated. This raises the following questions:

*Q1: Why does the EU struggle to adopt common policies on unaccompanied migrant children?*

*Q2: How does the EU contribute to the disappearance of UAMs?*

Qualitative and quantitative data, as well as large amount of primary and secondary sources help navigate through the problem of UAMs. Content analysis of European media contributes to the illustration of perceptions towards migration and unaccompanied children. Social Construction of Target Populations and Cultural Backlash Theory are the framework through which the topic is analysed.

It was found that cooperation and solidarity among member states is on decline, as is European societies' attitudes towards migration. On the other hand, anti-immigration parties (right-wing populist) have been on the rise since 2015. They have used the crisis to their gain and advanced their domestic ambitions. And while doing so, they challenged EU's unity and cross-border collaboration.

**Keywords:** The European Union; Unaccompanied Migrant Children; Right-wing Populism; Anti-immigration Parties; Social Constructions; Cooperation; Solidarity

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CRC	Committee on the Rights of the Child
EASO	European Asylum Support Office
ECPAT	Every Child Protected Against Trafficking
EU	The European Union
EUROPOL	The European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation
FRONTEX	Frontières Extérieures
GMDAC	Global Migration Data Analysis Center
INTERPOL	The International Criminal Police Organization
NGO	Non-governmental organization
PP	Populist Parties
RAS	Refugee and Asylum Seeker
SIS	Schengen Information System
SCTP	Social Construction of Target Populations
THB	Trafficking in Human Beings
UAM	Unaccompanied Minor
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

## 2 INTRODUCTION

The disappearance of unaccompanied migrant children<sup>1</sup>, their rights, and concerns have intensified in the past decade. Nevertheless, 2015 migration crisis has exposed European Union (EU) to a new kind of challenge that it was not prepared for. It has demonstrated a lack of solidarity among its 28 members (now 27), resulting in fewer common policies between the countries. This challenges not only the organization's responsibility to protect missing children, but it also jeopardizes the security of the Union, as tens of thousands of unaccompanied minors have crossed the borders, but it is unknown where and under what conditions they are now. There are various reasons why children make their way to Europe without parents or guardians, but one thing is clear, the route to a better life is not safe, and it does not guarantee that everyone will make it. International Organization for Migration (IOM) reported that about 2,300 children have died from 2014 to 2020 while attempting to reach European shores<sup>2</sup>. This number is in its estimates, as bodies of 70 percent have never been recovered and age group was determined in only 14 percent of the deceased.<sup>3</sup>

Number of unaccompanied migrant children (UAMs) who disappear after entering EU, are way less precise and a lot more worrying. Member States have reported that one-fourth of all UAMs go missing within the first 48 hours and as many as 50 percent disappear from shelters and reception centres.<sup>4</sup> It is estimated that about 30,000 UAMs have gone missing between the years of 2014 and 2017 (21 children a day). However, in the past three years the number has dropped to 18,292 (17 minors a day). It is troubling that last year, Covid-19 pandemic greatly effected the efficiency of data collection and communication. Only 10-13 European countries have reported statistics in 2020 and methodology used to derive to those calculations were not compatible with each other either. This means the actual number are lot higher than 18,000.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Note: term Missing (Disappearing) Unaccompanied Migrant Child refers to all non-EU nationals and stateless persons who are below the age of 18, have arrived at the border without a guardian or responsible adult or were left unaccompanied after arrival (UNHCR 1997) and their whereabouts are not known to their parents, guardians, employers, school, or public authority. The Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons consider the rights of these children to be violated and in danger. (Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons, 2017)

<sup>2</sup> International Organization for Migration, "Child and Young Migrants", *Migration data portal*, Last updated May 6, 2021, accessed June 17, 2021, <https://migrationdataportal.org/themes/child-and-young-migrants>

<sup>3</sup> Laczko, Frank, Black, Julia and Singleton, Ann, "Fatal Journeys: Missing Migrant Children", IOM's Global Migration Data Analysis Centre 4, (2019):5-6, accessed June 17, 2021, <https://publications.iom.int/fatal/journeys>

<sup>4</sup> Di Stefano, Manlio, "Harmonising the protection of unaccompanied minors in Europe", *Council of Europe: Committee on Migration Refugees and Displaced Persons*, doc.14142, (September, 2016):7-8

<sup>5</sup> Einashe, Ismail, and Adriana Homolova, "Nearly 17 Child Migrants a Day Vanished in Europe since 2018", *The Guardian*, Last updated April 21, 2021, accessed June 17, 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2021/apr/21/nearly-17-child-migrants-a-day-vanished-in-europe-since-2018>

Despite the severity of the conditions these children go through to get to Europe, the social perception of immigration is not favourable in the region. According to Special Eurobarometer, in 2017, about 69 percent of the EU citizens surveyed said that they saw immigration as a problem, even though some of them see it also as an opportunity. The top countries that considered immigration from outside the EU to be a problem include Hungary (84%), Malta (80%), Greece (86%), Slovakia (82%), Italy (83%), and Czech Republic (81%)<sup>6</sup>. According to Camilli (2018), in 2017, 40 percent of all the newspaper headlines in Italy had a critical tone towards the refugees and 16 percent focused on the crimes that were committed by asylum seekers<sup>7</sup>. One of the reasons why European communities are growing fear when it comes to migration, is the lack of common policies and coordination within the EU. Debeuf (2018) suggests that since politicians around the continent focus more on the risks and threats, they propose harsher policies to keep migrants out. This narrative creates and criminalizes already marginalized group and affects people's perceptions<sup>8</sup>.

The topic of unaccompanied migrant children is widely acknowledged, however there are still many complications and uncertainties around it. The main one is lack of quantitative information and statistics. Paper will use available data on the subject matter, however it is important to note that they do not represent most accurate numbers. Therefore, despite author's intentions to stress the urgency of UAMs, we need to keep in mind that the reality is much more dreadful than records show. According to Di Stefano (2016), after 2015 flow of immigrants in the EU, the latter lacked a united front and unified system for sharing and registering the information.<sup>9</sup> Even today, files on missing migrant children are not complete and often it is assumed that child is safe, despite absence of cross-border cooperation<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> European Commission, "Integration of Immigrants in the EU", *Special Eurobarometer 469 – Wave EB88.2 – TNS opinion & social*, (April, 2018):7

<sup>7</sup> Dempsey, Judy, "Is Europe Afraid of Migration?", *Carnegie Europe*, Last updated September 13, 2018, accessed June 17, 2021, <https://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/77246>

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Di Stefano, Manlio, "Harmonising the protection of unaccompanied minors in Europe", *Council of Europe: Committee on Migration Refugees and Displaced Persons*, doc.14142, (September, 2016):7-8

<sup>10</sup> Einashe, Ismail, and Adriana Homolova, "Nearly 17 Child Migrants a Day Vanished in Europe since 2018", *The Guardian*, Last updated April 21, 2021, accessed June 17, 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2021/apr/21/nearly-17-child-migrants-a-day-vanished-in-europe-since-2018>

According to Hedjam and Boeton (2010), as far back as in 2010, none of the EU Members States could provide reliable statistics on UAMs<sup>11</sup> and if they were unable to do so in a year with only over 10 000, than they were not ready for 2015 crisis with over 95 000 UAMs<sup>12</sup>.

Additionally, surveys and social experiments conducted rarely cover specifically unaccompanied migrant children. They tend to combine all immigrants and refugees together. Furthermore, due to the sensitivity of the topic, many primary sources are unavailable. Therefore, another complication is that most of the information is based on the reports from organizations. There is also little to no authentic material from actual interview transcripts with the UAMs, and thus, it is also based on secondary sources.

It is truly sort of a paradox how problem of these children is largely acknowledged in official statements and documents, yet EU has failed repeatedly to adopt actual common policy. Consequently, every member state has its own procedure and to avoid case studies, successful practices will be drawn to showcase what can be done but unfortunately is not.

It has become a rising concern among European politicians and societies that migrants in general, especially young refugee seekers, are involved in criminal activities and are a danger to European values and principles. Preserving Western culture is a priority to many. It is often overlooked what risks UAMs are forced to take and many ways they can be exploited. Sometimes it is much easier to mobilize society against common enemy than it is to fight social perceptions. Therefore, the research goal is to analyse the topic from European Union's perspective. Paper aims to find out why and how the EU is a threat to the security of unaccompanied migrant children.

Thus, the research questions are as follows:

Research Question #1: *Why does the EU struggle to adopt common policies on unaccompanied migrant children?*

Research Question #2: *How does the EU contribute to the disappearance of UAMs?*

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<sup>11</sup> Hedjam, Sofia, and Bernard Boëton, "Disappearing, Departing, Running Away: A Surfeit of Children in Europe?", *Terre Des Hommes-Helping Children Worldwide*, (2010):31, accessed June 17, 2021, <https://www.tdh.ch/en/media-library/documents/disappearing-departing-running-away-surfeit-children-europe>

<sup>12</sup> Eurostat, "Asylum Applicants Considered to be Unaccompanied Minors by Citizenship, Age and Sex-annual Data (rounded)", *Database Eurostat*, Last updated June 3, 2021, accessed June 17, 2021, [https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=migr\\_asyunaa&lang=en](https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=migr_asyunaa&lang=en)

*Hypothesis: Social constructions against immigrants and emergence of right-wing populist parties across European Union, paralyze decision making on regional level and lead to harsher immigration policies, which jeopardizes the safety of UAMs.*

Independent variables: Social constructions; emergence and power of right-wing populist parties.

Dependent variable: Safety and disappearance of Unaccompanied Migrant Children.

The matter of unaccompanied migrant children has been massively under researched compared to other elements of migration. And when it has, the focus always has been on European Union's security challenges. Hence, it is essential to study where and why EU, as an organization, fails to protect itself and the UAMs from criminal, trafficking, and terrorist organizations recruiting and victimizing the vulnerable.

Many children traveling to Europe have fled countries and regions where terrorism and criminal is on rise. Some have escaped those groups themselves, and some have been trafficked through the borders, not having any proper documentation. This makes them easy targets. Tens of thousands of UAMs have disappeared since 2015, and the EU has not seen the outcome results of it just yet. According to Missing Children Europe, the average age of disappearance varied between 13 to 15 during the 2015 to 2016 crisis<sup>13</sup>. This means that the average age of these children today is between 18 and 21. Keeping in mind criminal gangs and human trafficking groups, we have yet to wait and see how past 5 years affected organization's stability. When minors go missing, they can cross national borders easier, therefore no country is fully aware of how many leaves, how many remains, and how many new arrives.

In an attempt to conduct an in-depth analysis of UAMs and EU's perspectives, this paper will contribute to both, migration, and EU studies. As this research investigates how European Union puts UAMs under risk and contributes to their disappearance, the following studies can examine how in contrast these UAMs pose a threat to the security of EU. The future dissertation can combine both perspectives and provide a full, completed study of unaccompanied children and security concerning EU and its policies.

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<sup>13</sup> Missing Children Europe, "Figures and Trends of 2015 and 2016", *Missing Children Europe*, accessed June 17, 2021, <https://missingchildreneurope.eu/annual-reports/>

## METHODOLOGY

Following paper is not conducting a case study on any specific Member States. As mentioned above, the author is interested in the EU as a regional power. However, individual practices of its member countries are referred only when relevant and it aims to demonstrate the differences among them and possible successful solutions to common challenges.

This paper is explanatory research that seeks to uncover the effect of social constructions and right-wing populist parties in EU member states on the policies towards unaccompanied migrant children. The paper chooses to explain Social Construction of Target Populations and Cultural Backlash Theory as the main approaches of the thesis.

The research includes both, qualitative and quantitative data. The primary documents are represented as original reports or as secondary sources based on them, resulting in an extensive study of literature to examine statistics from all available sources.

Notably, Coronavirus pandemic has significantly affected information collection and release. Data from 2020 is underreported, but the author has gathered all what is available. Additionally, any potential attempt to conduct interviews with UAMs has suffered from global lockdowns and isolations. Even if this variable was removed, however, the bureaucracy connected to reaching and approving interviews is not only tiring, but time stretched. And even if the latter was not a factor either, the risks of putting the children thru possible re-traumatizing experience or PTSD is too great to take.

Consequently, to gather available data, the author will be conducting:

1. Analysis of the qualitative sources on the subject matter (Document Analysis). Current academic articles, books, reports, and opinion papers, as well as journals are intensively studied.
2. Study and interpretation (Document Screening) of quantitative sources such as statistics. For this purpose, the author has mainly gathered information from United Nations Agencies and Institutions, such as UNHCR; also, from the EU and its Agencies, such as Interpol; Save the Children, from international or national organizations, for example, Missing Children Europe; IOM.

3. Analysis of opinion polls on Populism and Social Constructions. For this purpose, author selected Special and Standard Eurobarometer, Statista, Pew Research and Eupinions to gain more knowledge of the voters' demographics and sentiments.

4. Content Analysis on the presence of refugee immigration to the European Union between January 1, 2020 and June 17, 2021. Over 15,000 Euronews (English) articles were analysed to determine the concentration of migration in socio-political and economic life of the EU during selected period. Selection of Euronews was based on its ranking in trustworthiness and reach.

The following chapter will combine existing debates on the subject matter and then introduce the two theories. Later, to understand the EU's contribution to the disappearance of UAMs and its possible protection policies, legal framework will be briefly overviewed. It will combine international, regional, and national practices and connect it to missing UAMs. The same chapter will also explain the status of the children in the European Union. Chapter 5 will concentrate in explaining the social perceptions of EU citizens towards migration and a media analysis on UAMs. The final chapter will combine anti-immigration parties and therefore the lack of cooperation in the region. It will also evaluate one of the most valuable benefits of the EU - Schengen Area.

### 3 LITERATURE REVIEW

Existing literature on migration, refugee seekers, and the EU policies is extensive. Migration as a broad topic has been explored in many different directions throughout the past several decades. One of the main focuses has always been security<sup>14</sup> and threats that irregular migration especially brings on European soil. Schmid (2016)<sup>15</sup> explored migration in connection with terrorism. Migrants in refugee camps are actively recruited, both within and outside Europe. And integration of migrant children can play crucial role in the process. Schmid explains that many children, especially those who arrived unaccompanied and have no one to care for them, fail to integrate into European communities as there are no practical tools and policies for integration. This leads to identity crisis in a child, and as a result, they become even more vulnerable than before. Thousands of such children have already been recruited by jihadists and they returned to Syria to join the terrorist organization. Sometimes the travel back to origin

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<sup>14</sup> Refer to Bigo (2005), Robinson (2017).

<sup>15</sup> Schmid Alex, "Links Between Terrorism and Migration: An Exploration." *International Centre for Counter-Terrorism Studies* 7, no. 4 (May 2016): 5, doi:10.19165/2016.1.04

countries is through human trafficking as well. Schmid also pointed out that besides life threatening risks that migrants are forced to take to reach Europe, xenophobia and discrimination is one of the top difficulties they have to face in the West. Study of smuggling of migrants in the concept of security found that many Trafficking of Human Beings (THB) organizations avoid being caught for illegal transport of people from Turkey to Greece by appointing migrants themselves as the captains. Carmikli and Kader (2016)<sup>16</sup> emphasized that sometimes they choose unaccompanied minors for such a task, knowing that they will not be prosecuted as adults or that their rights will be more protected. The authors talk about criminal activities the children are forced to participate in and explain how the EU-Turkey deal has failed to protect the rights of children and migrants in general. They emphasize how the attempts to keep its borders safe have caused more long-term security challenges for the entire organization. The subject of the smuggling of underage migrants has been studied before,<sup>17</sup> however, Baird (2013)<sup>18</sup> stated that it is still an under-researched topic. According to him, there was a growing tendency of unaccompanied migrant children benefiting from smuggling while reaching Europe as far back as 2013. Despite, the data available is largely incomparable and inconsistent. Though acknowledging the lack of studies, the author does not explore UAMs further either and focuses on migrant smuggling in general.

Among the literature on 2015 crisis, topic of institutional changes and preventive measures in the EU comes up. Money and Lockhart (2018)<sup>19</sup> explored the failure of multilateral cooperation when it comes to the rights of migrants. They concluded that there is a huge gap between following international treaties and commitments to their citizens' and non-citizens' freedoms and rights. The authors also stressed that there is a heavy responsibility on every state to protect children's rights based on international conventions. However, the absence of strong actors interferes a potential cooperation among EU states. Clayton, et al. (2019),<sup>20</sup> determined that UAMs are usually either treated as victims or perceived as a threat, having nothing in between. They extend the subject by referring to three years old Alan Kurdi, a Syrian boy whose body was washed up the shores of Turkey back in 2015. The authors explain that the tragedy of a

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<sup>16</sup> Elif Çarmikli and Merve Kader, "Migrant Smuggling In Turkey: The 'Other' Side of the Refugee Crisis.," *International Strategic Research Organization (USAK)*, no. 45 (April 1, 2016): 21-38

<sup>17</sup> Refer to Uecchling (2008); Derluyn, et. al (2010); Broekaert & Derluyn (2005)

<sup>18</sup> Theodore Baird, "Theoretical Approaches to Human Smuggling," *Danish Institute for International Studies*, (January 1, 2013), 21-22.

<sup>19</sup> Jeannette Money and Sarah Lockhart, "Migration Crises and the Structure of International Cooperation," *Athens: University of Georgia Press*, 2018, 206-220, doi:10.2307/j.ctt22nmcdt.

<sup>20</sup> Sue Clayton, "Narrating the Young Migrant Journey: Themes of Self-Representation," *Unaccompanied Young Migrants*, 2019, 115-134, doi:10.1332/policypress/9781447331865.003.0006.

child is enough to change the narrative in an entire country, but it still does not reflect on the rest 95,000 UAMs who already were in the EU. These children though had not passed away, their living conditions were disastrous. Another troubling narrative that the authors observed was the portrayal as victims by the media. The latter mostly focused on wounded children from specific war-time countries, and this can create perceptions of “deserving” and “undeserving” subgroups among UAMs.

On the moral responsibility to protect, Gupta (2019)<sup>21</sup> concludes that current legislation and policies are not compatible with the best interest of the child and are not in respect of human rights and personal distress of these children. She proposes more engagement of social workers in the lives of UAMs so that they are properly represented. Obertova and Cattaneo (2017)<sup>22</sup> on the other hand, discuss the identification of unaccompanied migrant children that have been exploited or trafficked. They cover the EU’s Anti-Trafficking Directive and state that besides mechanisms involved in the document, health officials are one of the professionals that can recognize those who had been under harm. They specify that many times children who have been trafficked or exploited are not going to talk to the police out of fear; however, they might often seek medical help. These are the opportunities for doctors and other medical staff to find those who potentially are under risk and report it to the relevant law enforcement. The authors propose that since forensic practitioners are trained and have enough expertise, they can too assist. Bright (2017)<sup>23</sup> also pays attention to the importance of risk assessment. He studied UAM experiences in the United Kingdom. The author supports more collaboration between national and local governments in order to share existing practices and exchange information. Bright also proposes that the awareness and expertise should be enhanced among caretakers and professionals so that victims of modern-day slavery are recognized more effectively. He also concluded that assessment of every UAM on the likelihood of them being victimized would be an asset and it would help social workers to keep track of the children.

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<sup>21</sup> Anna Gupta, “Caring for and about Unaccompanied Migrant Youth,” *Unaccompanied Young Migrants*, 2019, 77-102, doi:10.1332/policypress/9781447331865.003.0004.

<sup>22</sup> Zuzana Obertová and Cristina Cattaneo, “Child Trafficking and the European Migration Crisis: The Role of Forensic Practitioners,” *Forensic Science International* 282 (2018): 46-59, doi:10.1016/j.forsciint.2017.10.036.

<sup>23</sup> Cordis Bright, “Local Authority for Non-EEA Migrant Child Victims of Modern Slavery,” *Department for Education, Government Social Research*, December 19, 2017, 20-23, [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/669077/Local\\_authority\\_support\\_for\\_non-EEA\\_migrant\\_child\\_victims\\_of\\_modern\\_slavery.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/669077/Local_authority_support_for_non-EEA_migrant_child_victims_of_modern_slavery.pdf).

Arufat (2019)<sup>24</sup> claims that the best interest of children has only been met on the official documents, and they have not been implemented in practice. In his paper, he discusses the action plans and corrections made in the existing laws and conventions but acknowledges that the rights described in the new adaptations are only the extension and concretization of already set out rights in the Rights of the Child. He proposes that an independent group of experts must be established to assess the performance of individual EU member states, as according to Arufat, the treatment of UAMs is unequal among the countries of the organization. However, turning EASO (European Asylum Support Office) into the EU Asylum Agency is a step forward, and in principle, it should create an environment for member states to comply with the regulations of EASO under Union Law, however major changes have yet to come. Kanics, Hernandez, and Touzenis (2010)<sup>25</sup> conducted a study on the legal frameworks (both international and national) under which the unaccompanied migrant children are received and protected and what practices are used by European countries. They considered provisions that reflected global migration of children to Europe and gave an assessment of the situation before the migration crisis in 2015. One of the findings and recommendations that the authors proposed was to introduce guardians and caretakers to the unaccompanied children as soon as it was logistically possible. They considered that the sooner the relationship between a professional and a child develops, the better chances will be to understand the needs and their best interests so that appropriate help can be provided. Clayton et al. (2019)<sup>26</sup> also suggested that the interests and relationships of children must be respected and kept in mind while registering in shelters. Despite almost a decade between Kanics recommendations and Clayton's concluding remarks, no notable step has been taken. According to the report, the route that UAMs take to get to Europe is dangerous and long. They usually travel to several countries before they can reach the continent, and they are under constant risk of being assaulted, trafficked, or exploited in some ways. That is why, in many cases, these children form friendships with the same age group minors, and they deal with the stress together. They tend to protect themselves and each other while forming a team, and their trust and relationships are as important as the bond some share with their siblings and relatives. However, as Clayton

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<sup>24</sup> Alberto Arrufat, "The Protection of Migrant Children in the European Union: A Reading in the Light of the Committee on the Rights of the Child's General Comment (Nos. 22 and 23) on the Rights of the Children in the Context of the International Migration," *Spanish Yearbook of International Law* 23 (2019): 10-103, doi:10.17103/sybil.23.4.

<sup>25</sup> Jyothi Kanics, *Migrating Alone: Unaccompanied and Separated Children's Migration to Europe* (Paris: UNESCO, 2010).

<sup>26</sup> Clayton, Sue, Anna Gupta, and Katie Willis, eds. *Unaccompanied Young Migrants: Identity, Care and Justice*. Bristol: Bristol University Press, 2019, 115-134, doi:10.2307/j.ctvbd8jc1.

describes, in most EU countries, these connections are not respected at all, and the children are separated. There are, however, certain reception centres (for example, Palermo and Catania) where these informal networks are supported, and children are placed together, at least during the first stages of resettlement. Signorini (2016)<sup>27</sup> also talks about the importance of integration and relationships. The author concludes that the disappearance of unaccompanied migrant children is an outcome of EU member states' unwillingness to adopt and implement relevant legislative provisions. Especially when it concerns the relocation of minor migrants. Signorini studied the case of Italy with the general observations on other EU countries and found that most UAMs aim to find a job to sustain themselves or their families back in their countries of origin. For better integration, the author proposes more effective cultural mediators as well as acknowledgment of the important role that education carries among these children. Proper guardianship system can help assess the needs of UAMs and help them figure out their role in the new communities. Signorini also determined that one of the most important rights that these children lack is the right to participation. According to her, many UAMs around Europe feel like they do not belong, and they feel like they have no say even in the matters that concern them directly. Therefore, the author considers appropriate guardians and national legislations to be the solution to this problem and ensure that every child's voice is heard, respected, and considered. Guardianship program is even more beneficial because it is the best way to get information to UAMs on the dangers and risks they might encounter.

Lems, Oester, and Strasser (2020)<sup>28</sup> also revealed that depiction of UAMs as vulnerable victims ceases their chances to be decision-makers and independent actors. Decisions are always made for them, and they do not have much to say in the matters that concern them. The importance of guardianships is discussed by Derluyn and Broekaert (2005)<sup>29</sup> as well, as they consider the system to be protection and awareness tool that can help avoid trafficking, abuse, illegal child labour and other kinds of exploitation. Pupavac (2001)<sup>30</sup> explained that it is not always the

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<sup>27</sup> Signorini, Beatrice, "Reintegration as a Problem of Unaccompanied Refugee Minors in European and Italian Legislation." *The Interdisciplinary Contexts of Reintegration and Re-adaptation in the Era of Migration – an Intercultural Perspective*, Wydawnictwo APS, Edited by Urszula Markowska-Manista, 2016, 52–84.

<sup>28</sup> Alberto Arrufat, "The Protection of Migrant Children in the European Union: A Reading in the Light of the Committee on the Rights of the Child's General Comment (Nos. 22 and 23) on the Rights of the Children in the Context of the International Migration," *Spanish Yearbook of International Law* 23 (2019): 10-103, doi:10.17103/sybil.23.4.

<sup>29</sup> Ilse Derluyn and Eric Broekaert, "On the Way to a Better Future: Belgium as Transit Country for Trafficking and Smuggling of Unaccompanied Minors1," *International Migration* 43, no. 4 (October 2005): 31-56, doi:10.1111/j.1468-2435.2005.00332.x.

<sup>30</sup> Vanessa Pupavac, "Misanthropy Without Borders: The International Children's Rights Regime," *Disasters* 25, no. 2 (December 16, 2002): 95-112, doi:10.1111/1467-7717.00164.

perception of media or politicians that disrupts the independence of the UAMs. It is also the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) itself, which despite granting rights to minors, does not consider them capable enough to determine those freedoms independently and usually involves intervention from adults.

Lems (2019)<sup>31</sup> observed the integration of UAMs, but in the case of Switzerland. She found a worrying gap between theory and practice. Based on her research, there are all the official guidelines to make a life for the children easier; however, it only gets harder in reality. The expectations of the children are rarely met, and they are excluded from the social and political lives. They are under constant fear of what might happen after they turn 18 and are in the list of deportable refugees. Wernesjö (2012)<sup>32</sup> further extends the topic and emphasizes the psychological and emotional standing of the unaccompanied migrant children and the possible reasons that can cause anxiety among them. She argued that experiences gained after arrival in Europe are just as important, if not more, for children's psychological development. She pointed out that studies in this field mainly concentrate on the trauma that UAMs received while separating from their families and taking dangerous routes to the EU, but they do not consider the racism and social alienation as contributing factors to children's psyche. She states that sometimes due to the vulnerability of the UAMs, they are not perceived as capable actors of the society, and that puts more stress on their well-being. Curtis, Thompson, and Fairbrother (2018)<sup>33</sup> also discuss the health of UAMs. The research studied various previous enquires in the subject matter and found that an eating disorder was one of the health problems identified; however, not so common. More widespread was PTSD, depression, and anxiety. The authors also confirmed that application status, relocations, and discrimination towards them only intensify the mental health issues that RAS children show.

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<sup>31</sup> Annika Lems, "Being inside out: the Slippery Slope between Inclusion and Exclusion in a Swiss Educational Project for Unaccompanied Refugee Youth," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 46, no. 2 (March 20, 2019): 405-422, doi:10.1080/1369183x.2019.1584702.

<sup>32</sup> Ulrika Wernesjö, "Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children: Whose Perspective?," *Childhood* 19, no. 4 (January 18, 2012): 495-507, doi:10.1177/0907568211429625.

<sup>33</sup> P. Curtis, J. Thompson, and H. Fairbrother, "Migrant Children within Europe: a Systematic Review of Children's Perspectives on Their Health Experiences," *Public Health* 158 (May 2018): 71-85, doi:10.1016/j.puhe.2018.01.038.

Hornsby, Harvey, and Booth (2017)<sup>34</sup> based on nine interviews of UAMs who have been exploited prior and following their arrival in the United Kingdom, concluded that the THB organizations often force UAMs to lie. Care facilities in many instances are located near entering points, therefore traffickers can quickly and effectively convince them to abandon shelters. According to the authors, sometimes these shelters are known as “holding pens” among THB organisations. It was highlighted that stricter procedures at airports or certain entry points have already forced the traffickers to change their location. It is a good illustration that effective implementation of provisions can lead to elimination of such organizations. Bolborici (2017),<sup>35</sup> focused more on long-term solutions rather than short-term resolutions. She stated that the children should be given more information on the risks of irregular migration and must be informed on the opportunities in their countries of origin. Of course, this cannot apply to those children who flee areas affected by war, armed conflicts, persecution, abuse, and total disregard of human rights. However, to generalize the findings of the author, working on the origin states is a step forward to making other countries secure for children. The EU cannot accommodate further waves of immigrant children if that were to take place in the future. It will only underline the flaws of the Union and increase xenophobia.

Meloni and Humphris (2019)<sup>36</sup> have determined that when there is a risk assessment with UAMs, it is more about the pressures applied to host country’s society and economy, as well as the humanitarian and legal aspects of irregular migration and possible crimes accompanied with the disappearance of the children. Therefore, if the integration or assimilation process goes well, the praise is put on social workers, but if due to organizational limitations, the process is disrupted, the blame goes to the children, and they are labelled as reckless and deviants. Allsopp and Chase (2019),<sup>37</sup> on the other hand, discuss the policy ineffectiveness for the UAMs after they turn 18. They note that after becoming adults, they no longer benefit from the international protection programs and can no longer be guaranteed that their best interests will be considered. The authors define that one of the reasons why these children go missing is

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<sup>34</sup> Hornsby, Rob et. al. “Trafficked, Smuggled or Exploited. Ignore the Labels, They All Involve Abuse”, *The Many Faces of Crime for Profit and Ways of Tackling It*, eds. Van Duyne P., Georgios H., Antonopolos A., Von Lampe K., (Oisterwijk: Wolf Legal Publishers, 2017), 325-349

<sup>35</sup> Bolborici, Ana-Maria. "Eu Actions on Children in Migration." *Law Review* 7, no. 2 (2017): 46-53.

<sup>36</sup> Francesca Meloni and Rachel Humphris, “Citizens of Nowhere? Paradoxes of State Parental Responsibility for Unaccompanied Migrant Children in the United Kingdom,” *Journal of Refugee Studies*, May 18, 2019, 1-19, doi:10.1093/jrs/fez037.

<sup>37</sup> Jennifer Allsopp and Elaine Chase, “Best Interests, Durable Solutions and Belonging: Policy Discourses Shaping the Futures of Unaccompanied Migrant and Refugee Minors Coming of Age in Europe,” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 45, no. 2 (December 20, 2017): 293-311, doi:10.1080/1369183x.2017.1404265.

the uncertainty that the age of 18 brings for them. They report that migrant minors come to the EU to search for a better life, earn money and help their families; therefore, they are more likely to leave their host societies and find other ways (despite risks those new opportunities might bring) to achieve their goals. Thus, they recommend that the EU take more interest in young migrants that are reaching the age of maturity.

Wenden (2017)<sup>38</sup> concluded that lack of solidarity among European Union member states has contributed to fewer common policies. The author emphasized that EU response to the crisis was securing external border and leaving the burden to its southern states (mainly Greece and Italy). The idea of solidarity, unity and share of burdens is one of the main basic principles of the organization and it has been reiterated over the past several decades. Even after the collapse of Berlin Wall, member states pledged to aid in flow of immigrants. However, recent crisis has showed how divided Europe is and how apart its member states have grown since the past century. Author specifies division among Western and Eastern bloc of the EU and notes that that is what has damaged cooperation.

Oltean (2016)<sup>39</sup> studied refugee crisis in relation with Copenhagen School on securitization theory. This theory explains how any topic can become a security issue if it is prioritized and dramatized. European societies since 2015 have experienced growing fear of losing their culture, religion and safety. The author also talked about anti-immigration parties in the EU and their role in the process of securitization. As affirmed, migration flow back in 20<sup>th</sup> century was also a security challenge, however it was more from the sense of intelligence agencies and governments fearing espionage and hidden identities. However, As Oltean concludes, this time around the concern was to preserve European values and Christianity. As Visegrad leaders openly connected terrorism with migration, it played a role in mobilizing their citizens. Consequently, leading to clash between the West and East and South and North. On the implications of linking migration with terrorism, Buonanno (2017)<sup>40</sup> writes that Berlin, Paris, and Brussels attacks have been a major turning point. It reinforced right-wing positions and led to temporary border controls in 22 EU member states. Additionally, fences were put up alongside Slovenia and Hungary closed entry points. It has been reiterated that eurozone crisis,

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<sup>38</sup> Catherine Wihtol de Wenden, "Actual Patterns of Migration Flows: The Challenge of Migration and Asylum in Contemporary Europe," *Solidarity in the European Union*, July 1, 2017, 72-75, doi:10.1007/978-3-319-57036-5\_6.

<sup>39</sup> Oltean Priscilla, "How Securitization Works" in *The Refugee Crisis in the European Union*, ed. Alexandrescu Mihai, (Cluj-Napoca: CA Publishing, 2016), 91-123

<sup>40</sup> Buonanno Laurie, "The European Migration Crisis" in *The European Union in Crisis*, eds. Dinan D., Nugent N., Paterson W., (England: Palgrave, 2017), 111-117

though important, is not as urgent as refugee crisis. Author also reinforced the idea that it was 2015 when the fundamental values and principles of the EU were challenged. It still is under question if EU can defend its citizens and if it is powerful enough to regulate region wide issues in Europe.

Iusmen (2020)<sup>41</sup> used diffusion of responsibility as one of the reasons why UAMs rights are not protected. This theory indicates that while in an emergency, the likelihood of an actor to help the victim decreases, as the number of bystanders increases. Regarding UAMs, this means that the more institutes are involved on national or regional levels, the less likely it is to be effective, because the responsibility will be divided (diffused) among them. This phenomenon not only interferes with the principle of responsibility to protect, but it also helps avoid responsibility all together. With diffused obligations, it is hard to impossible to determine which department or regulation is to blame for unsuccessful practices. Gontijo and Lana (2020)<sup>42</sup> on the other hand focus on the sense of “otherness” in relation with Muslim and Arab migrants. European military experience in the Middle East has created division among its societies on us vs them. They were drawn as terrorists and dangerous, while we were liberal and peaceful. Such perceptions took decades to form, and it is not easy to tackle. Especially with growing number of right-wing leaders emphasizing on these differences. Such understanding of migrants and local populations led to negative attitudes towards refugees.

## LIMITATIONS TO EXISTING LITERATURE

The main gap in the literature on unaccompanied migrant children is the lack of reliable data. Most of the statistics come from organizations such as UNICEF, Missing Children Europe, and Europol. Through their attempt to collect accurate numbers is respected, they have acknowledged that their data does not mirror reality. Furthermore, another shortcoming is the lack of research that is solely focused on UAMs. Most of the literature available discusses the irregular migration and children in migration in general, and UAMs in Europe take up only a small part in them. Therefore, there is a need for more subject-oriented studies.

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<sup>41</sup> Ingi Iusmen, “Whose Children? Protecting Unaccompanied Migrant Children in Europe: A Case of Diffused Responsibility?,” *The International Journal of Children’s Rights* 28, no. 4 (December 14, 2020): 99-107, doi:10.1163/15718182-28040006.

<sup>42</sup> Gontijo Lorenzo and Lana Ana, “Fear of the Other within the Contemporary Migration Crisis: Arab-Muslim Migration towards Europe and the Condition of Otherness”, *Journal of Identity and Migration Studies* 14, no.2 (Winter, 2020): 99-107

On the other hand, there is extensive information from the faculty of law in relation with regulations and detention procedures. There also are several attempts to observe psychological state of UAMs. Still, as mentioned before, security studies and globalization have widely been connected to immigration. There is a lack in social sciences however, especially with the theoretical frameworks that this paper follows.

The dangers that the EU puts UAMs in, is a topic that is widely under-researched. Relationship between anti-immigration parties, cultural and social constructions, and their effect on the UAMs, has been neglected. If discussed, researchers only consider the impact on immigrants generally, adults and children alike, but its effect on UAMs is not adequately examined.

Since this research cannot fill the gap in data and information sharing, it will attempt to demonstrate the correlation between emerging populist ideas and social perception with UAMs in Europe. The following paper does not follow the dominant sentiment that EU is a safe place and UAMs are posing a threat to the stability, security, and well-being of European societies. It more critically assesses the harmful practice and handing from the EU.

## 4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Theoretical framework of the paper will consist of two following approaches: 1. Social Construction of Target Populations (SCTP) and 2. Cultural Backlash Theory

### 4.1 SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF TARGET POPULATIONS

Ingram and Schneider's (1991)<sup>43</sup> public policy theory of social construction of target populations is a framework which is the main theory of the paper. It observes that specific groups (target populations) can be awarded or punished based on the perception and power they hold in the society. At the same time, politicians who propose and approve benefits in legislature, base their position on deservedness and political influence. These lawmakers act with the desire to be re-elected and with the motivation to follow public sentiment. Generally, target population is a group of people who share power and worthiness and have similar behavioural responses to the policies adopted. Therefore, they will react to the government's attempts to introduce benefits or punishment in a group or individually, depending on the type of target population it represents.

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<sup>43</sup> Ingram Helen, and Schneider Anne, "The Choice of Target Populations." *Administration and Society* 21, no. 3 (November, 1991): 334-35, Accessed June 8, 2021. doi: 10.1177/009539979102300304

Ingram and Schneider (1993)<sup>44</sup> have introduced five propositions to explain social constructions and policy designs, as well as correlation between the two. Firstly, they propose Social Construction and Power Typology (See Figure 1) to illustrate four primary target populations. The advantaged group is the middle class and small business owners on the figure. They hold the most power and are considered to be the most deserving. Therefore, favourable policies are often adopted with no resistance. On the other hand, there are very powerful, but negatively perceived groups, contenders, that include super rich and big corporations. They too receive benefits, however it is not as transparent. That is because legislators do not want to openly cut taxes and give more to those who already have a lot. On the positive social construction, the authors list mothers, children, and students. They include those who in the society are thought to be worthy but at the same time they lack political power, therefore loans instead of scholarships and shortfalls in grants are often reported. Due to the nature of their contribution to the economy, they are referred as dependents. The lowest position in the hierarchy is called deviants. These groups have no power and are “undeserving”. Illegal migrants, young foreign males and generally non-EU migrants are the target populations here. Therefore, instead of benefits they receive burdens and punishment.

Pierce et al. conducted a study of over hundred different research all focusing on SCTP and found that about sixty-seven percent of cases combined deviants and dependents to identify their target populations. One of the very few topics where such combination is practiced is immigration<sup>45</sup>. This is due to the fact that immigrants have very little to no power and despite particular groups within having more deservedness in the eyes of the society, they all still suffer/benefit from the same policies. Because the regulations nowadays intend to reduce the number of incomers in the EU and send away those who already arrived, restrictive and punitive procedures have been largely enforced on entering and receiving permits, especially since 2015. Unaccompanied migrant children too represent two categories on the Typology. As minors, they have certain amount of positive construction, but the circumstances of their arrival in the EU and illegality of certain procedures pushes them further from dependents and towards to deviants. additionally, older, male immigrants are already considered undeserving. And what is more important, none of them have any political or otherwise power.

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<sup>44</sup> Schneider, Anne, and Helen Ingram. "Social Construction of Target Populations: Implications for Politics and Policy." *The American Political Science Review* 87, no. 2 (June, 1993): 335-36. Accessed June 8, 2021. doi:10.2307/2939044

<sup>45</sup> Pierce, Jonathan et al., “Social Construction and Policy Design: A Review of Past Applications,” *The Policy Studies Journal* 42, no. 1 (March, 2014): 12-13. Accessed June 8, 2021. doi:10.1111/psj.12040

Ingram and Schneider's (2014)<sup>46</sup> second proposition extends the previous assumption and discusses to Feedback and Feed Forward. It is noted that public policies effect on individuals' political participation and on alignment with the government. Policy designs represent the idea on who belongs and what are the rules of participation in politics. These messages impact how society sees TPs, how they see themselves and encourages/discourages mobilization. As an example, in some US states, inmates are not allowed to vote even after they are released. This sends a powerful message to citizens and alienates a group of people and their abilities. Therefore, their political participation is very low, and experiences are only getting more negative. On the other hand, financial help to veterans turns them into worthy members of the society.

Theorizing SCTP from early stages (Skocpol 1991; Kumlin 2004), concluded that there also are universalistic and particularistic policy rules, where the former was thought to gain more public support. For example, adopting protective measures for all children is something that entire society can get behind of. However, the later studies have shown that (Lawrence, Stroker and Wolman, 2013) particularistic policy rules can gain more favour if the advantaged part of the citizenry will benefit from it as well. For example, setting out guidelines for citizenship for undocumented, but PhD education level immigrants will be more desirable than providing it to all undocumented incomers<sup>47</sup>. In the same sense, caring and protecting under 15 years old, unaccompanied migrants is far more deserving than providing benefits for older male migrants. Ingram and Schneider (2005)<sup>48</sup> also discuss that one of the reasons why negatively perceived group stays the same is because some individuals manage to distance themselves from the rest, or the policies force them to, as seen in the examples of education and age. While infants or five years olds are vulnerable, older male migrants exploited into criminal clandestine is often interpreted as less advantaged who is responsible for his own troubles. This sentiment is dominant among more powerful groups and such strategies allow persistent social constructions.

Third proposition of the theory explains that politicians have predetermined socially constructed ideas and positions towards specific issues and specific groups. This results in their

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<sup>46</sup> Ingram Helen, Schneider Anne and deLeon Peter "Social Construction and Policy Design" in *Theories of the Policy Process*, ed. Sabatier Paul A. and Weible Christopher M., 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (London: Routledge, 2014), 116-19

<sup>47</sup> Ingram Helen, Schneider Anne and deLeon Peter "Social Construction and Policy Design" in *Theories of the Policy Process*, ed. Sabatier Paul A. and Weible Christopher M., 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (London: Routledge, 2014), 119-20

<sup>48</sup> Ingram, Helen, and Schneider Anne, "Public Policy and The Social Construction of Deservedness" in *Deserving and Entitled: Social Constructions and Public Policy*, (New York: SUNY Press, 2005), 3-8. Accessed June 8, 2021. <https://www.sunypress.edu/pdf/61060.pdf>

subconsciousness receiving and remembering information and facts that strengthen their existed views and reject contradictory evidence. This is referred as “confirmation bias” as it confirms what you already believe in, thus making change much more difficult.<sup>49</sup> Stereotypes, labelling, stigma, and bias are common in every society and one of the mechanisms where they are reinforced is the justice system and public policies.<sup>50</sup>

Following proposition argues that though pre-determined and powerful, social constructions are not necessarily resistant to change. And while there are many variables that lead to such transformations, Ingram and Schneider discuss that often consequences, intended or unanticipated, derived from adopted public policies are the foundation for change. Deservedness is a social construction that is more easily embraced than altered. Once the society’s image forms against a specific group, it becomes much harder to adjust the existing picture. However, policy designs can offer resources, shift focus and mobilize actors that help fight these constructions. It was also debated that presentation of the topic by media to public can aid the perceptions. Along with policy changes, it can lead to a creation of intermediary groups that provide relief and any other assistance to the disadvantaged target populations. Ingram and Schneider compare social constructions with Newton’s second law of motion according to which “a body at rest tends to remain at rest until an external force acts upon it”<sup>51</sup>. Furthermore, it is not impossible to say that allocating governmental benefits can only be perceived positively. Certain shift has shown to trigger opposite reaction. It can be explained by a simple fact that institutionally more advantaged only get stronger as the time goes by, since the system and policies are designed to benefit them. In contrast, less powerful are usually robbed of a knowledge of their own rights and concerns. They sometimes decide that aid they receive is how it is supposed to be, as often resources spent on target populations is exaggerated<sup>52</sup>.

The final proposition explains that depending on where target population is on Social Construction and Power Typology, policies can allocate either burdens or benefits (See Figure

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<sup>49</sup> Ingram Helen, Schneider L. Anne and deLeon Peter “Social Construction and Policy Design” in *Theories of the Policy Process*, ed. Sabatier Paul A. and Weible Christopher M., 3rd ed. (London: Routledge, 2014), 121-22

<sup>50</sup> Kahneman Daniel, “A Machine for Jumping to Conclusions” in *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, First ed., (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2014), 62-63.

<sup>51</sup> Ingram Helen, Schneider L. Anne and deLeon Peter “Social Construction and Policy Design” in *Theories of the Policy Process*, ed. Sabatier Paul A. and Weible Christopher M., 3rd ed. (London: Routledge, 2014), 128

<sup>52</sup> Ingram, Helen, and Schneider Anne, “Public Policy and The Social Construction of Deservedness” in *Deserving and Entitled: Social Constructions and Public Policy*, (New York: SUNY Press, 2005), 7-8. Accessed June 8, 2021. <https://www.sunypress.edu/pdf/61060.pdf>

2). If new legislations intend to introduce unwanted and inflicting regulations on groups that are high in deservedness and power, there will be complications. Advantaged groups are capable and likely to devalue any policies that puts their benefits under risk. Ingram and Schneider (2014)<sup>53</sup> recall 1985 immigration act that sanctioned those who hired illegal immigrants. However, there have been so many revisions and court proceedings that it has weakened the effect this policy was supposed to carry. At the same time, the proposition clarifies that because deviants tend to have less power, it is more unlikely for them to speak out and organize against punitive measures. And if they were to, the change is much slower. Additionally, if there are any regulations that aim to strengthen these groups, the advantaged might still oppose since it is believed that certain target populations are not worthy of that many resources. Since young, male migrants are the deviants of the society, officials will introduce more punishing measures. And since these groups have little power and are very negatively viewed, politicians are expected to prioritize the topic in their agendas during election campaigns. According to Ingram and Schneider (1993)<sup>54</sup>, beneficial policies for these target populations is achieved mainly thru court mandates and universal, international laws and appeals. They note that sometimes it is far more effective to assign resources than introduce punishment, but as officials are motivated by public sentiment and desire to be re-elected, they do not want to be seen as soft and would rather encourage penalty. On the other hand, dependents which include children, tend to gain more favour. In these instances, lawmakers would align themselves with the best interest of children in mind. However, since the latter has no political power, support will be displayed via symbolic policies and concerning conversations. Therefore, it is expected that non-governmental and private organizations take more action. According to Ingram and Schneider:

“Advantaged groups resent government spending on dependents, even though they recognize the importance of caring for children and others. They believe the needs of dependents should be met by local governments, families, and nonprofit organizations. Even more resented are funds allocated to deviants, except those funds necessary to inflict punishment.”<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Ingram Helen, Schneider L. Anne and deLeon Peter “Social Construction and Policy Design” in *Theories of the Policy Process*, ed. Sabatier Paul A. and Weible Christopher M., 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (London: Routledge, 2014), 129-30

<sup>54</sup> Schneider, Anne, and Helen Ingram. "Social Construction of Target Populations: Implications for Politics and Policy." *The American Political Science Review* 87, no. 2 (June, 1993): 337-38. Accessed June 8, 2021. doi:10.2307/2939044.

<sup>55</sup> Ingram, Helen, and Schneider Anne, “Public Policy and The Social Construction of Deservedness” in *Deserving and Entitled: Social Constructions and Public Policy*, (New York: SUNY Press, 2005), 17. Accessed June 8, 2021. <https://www.sunypress.edu/pdf/61060.pdf>

Additionally, entrepreneurship can be an important force for change in assigning deservedness. These can be political, social, moral, or economic entrepreneurs and due to their power as authorities, they have unique ability to address the masses and alter public opinion. If in some cases the narrative is positive, it is still more commonly observed in attempts to strengthen racism, populism, xenophobia, etc<sup>56</sup>. It is also important that these new actors have not only authority but some kind of legitimacy at the same time. Only in this case can they truly affect the discourse. Moreover, the mere existence of new entrepreneurs may open conversations and give space to new ideas, which positively effects target populations' social constructions. It is essential to keep in mind that many policies in place will stay in place even though new revisions are adopted. And social image of TPs largely comes from already existing regulations. Therefore, any new actors that enable interpretation and alternate understanding of less powerful groups is a welcome step towards policy change<sup>57</sup>. Since 2015 migration crisis in the EU, existing and emerging right-wing populist politicians have notably been vocal. They have expressed radical and dangerous narrative against new arrivals and mobilized voters for elections.<sup>58</sup>

In their earlier work, Schneider and Ingram (1990)<sup>59</sup> discuss what policy tools are used in relation with target populations. Disappearance and safety of unaccompanied migrant children revolves around their arrival to the EU and distribution to receiving countries. As this approach suggests, UAMs who do not clearly look underage are strictly evaluated on their age and the assessments cannot always be accurate. This is the case especially for older juveniles as they do not have identification with them, and some countries only accept original/official papers. Consequently, eligibility to receive care and rights that UAMs get, is complicated and not always fair. Council of Europe recommends that everyone who claims to be underage, should be treated so until otherwise is proven. However, Slovakia for example treats them as adults unless examinations conclude opposite. Sometimes age assessment is highly intrusive, stressful, and traumatising. Certain countries use radiation, and, in the UK, it costs to undergo

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<sup>56</sup> Ingram, Helen, and Schneider Anne, "Public Policy and The Social Construction of Deservedness" in *Deserving and Entitled: Social Constructions and Public Policy*, (New York: SUNY Press, 2005), 8-11. Accessed June 8, 2021. <https://www.sunypress.edu/pdf/61060.pdf>

<sup>57</sup> Marier Patrik, Peterson Stephanie, and Angus, Mariel, "From Quacks to Professionals: The Importance of Changing Social Constructions in The Policy-Making Process." *Policy Studies* 35, no. 4 (February, 2014): 4-6, Accessed June 8, 2021. doi: 10.1080/01442872.2013.877582

<sup>58</sup> BBC News, "Europe and Right-Wing Nationalism: A Country-by-Country Guide." Last modified November 13, 2019, accessed June 17, 2021, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-36130006>.

<sup>59</sup> Schneider, Anne, and Helen Ingram, "Behavioral Assumptions of Policy Tools." *The Journal of Politics* 52, No. 2 (May 1990): 514-22. Accessed June 8, 2021. doi:10.2307/2131904.

such evaluation.<sup>60</sup> As the number of people voting for right-wing parties increase, more restrictive measures are in place against refugees. The study<sup>61</sup> has shown that one in four Europeans nowadays vote populist and this is visible in anti-immigration sentiment and restrictive measures.

#### 4.2 CULTURAL BACKLASH THEORY

The paper will study right-wing populism by referring to Norris and Inglehart's extensive study of Cultural Backlash Theory. According to the authors, populist supports lie in the social-psychological condition of the communities, and it can be connected to peoples' dislikes for value change and progressive ideas. Therefore, it is an assumption that the representatives of older generations, who feel more nostalgic towards the traditions; those who have lower education level and are left behind modern liberal views are the ones among which the populism support is unusually high. Immigration, refugees, and generally ethnic and racial minorities have always been in the centre of populist lawmakers and their voters<sup>62</sup>. On the high influx of immigrants and tendencies in Western Europe, Berz (1994) writes:

“The reaction to the new arrivals was an outburst of xenophobia and open racism in a majority of West European countries.... This has made it relatively easy for the radical populist Right to evoke, focus, and reinforce pre-existing xenophobic sentiments for political gain.<sup>63</sup>”

Past five years showed that populist parties do not necessarily need to win majority in order to change public attitude. Back in 2015-16, with the migration crisis, many insurgent parties dominated the agenda. It took years of campaigning, but only one seat in the parliament that set the course and discussion on referendum for Brexit by UK Independence Party (UKIP). 36 out of 45 insurgent parties across the EU considered refugee crisis the biggest external threat for the organization back in 2016. Furthermore, terrorism as well as radical Islamism, in relation to migration, dominated internal risk assessments. Notably, despite their attempts to force national governments to adopt more restrictive laws regarding refugees in their respective

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<sup>60</sup> Council of Europe, “Age Assessment for Children in Migration: a Human Rights-Based Approach”, (2019): 11-17, Accessed June 17, 2021, [www.coe.int/children](http://www.coe.int/children)

<sup>61</sup> Lewis Paul, Seán Clarke, Caelainn Barr, Niko Kommenda, and Josh Holder. “Revealed: One in Four Europeans Vote Populist.” *The Guardian*, last modified November 20, 2018, accessed June 17, 2021 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/ng-interactive/2018/nov/20/revealed-one-in-four-europeans-vote-populist>

<sup>62</sup> Norris Pippa and Inglehart Ronald, "Trump, Brexit, and the Rise of Populism: Economic Have-Nots and Cultural Backlash." *Harvard Kennedy School, Working Paper* No. RWP16-026, (August 2016): 14-16. Accessed June 8, 2021. <https://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2818659>

<sup>63</sup> Berz Hans-Georg, “Immigration and Xenophobia” in *Radical Right-Wing Populism in Western Europe*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1994), 81. doi: 10.1007/978-1-349-23547-6

countries, majority still thought that the whole situation should be resolved on European level and not domestically.<sup>64</sup>

Cultural Backlash Theory Framework (See Figure 3) demonstrates the core idea of the theory. It starts with the notion that structurally different groups (e.g., generational, and educational) develop conflictive positions towards contemporary issues. Groups that develop negative attitudes are often motivated by anti-immigration sentiment and feelings of economic injustices, where the latter can be assigned blame for the former. This is where society reaches a tipping point and consequently cultural backlash takes place. On the second stage we observe emergence of right-wing populist parties and voter mobilization. The final stage presents impacts of new policies, usually stricter towards refugees and damageable to the liberal democracy<sup>65</sup>.

According to Bonikowski (2017), the cultural backlash is also manifested in negative attitudes towards ethnic minorities in general and it is not a contemporary issue. Since the late 1970s, European and American radical right wing has actively influenced and mobilized general public against immigrants. Sense of unity among ethnic majorities of these countries has always been a strong foundation for introducing genuine or abstract threats originating from racial and/or religious subgroups.<sup>66</sup> Additionally, according to Carreras et al. (2019) cultural and generational clash only strengthens populist and xenophobic parties and incites Euroscepticism. In these instances, European Union is identified as a threat to national identities and traditions, especially with overflowing number of immigrants who can travel within the organization freely.<sup>67</sup>

In his earlier works, Daniel Inglehart (1977) studied why populist parties have gained popularity back in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and why they are making a comeback in the recent years (Inglehart, 2018). He explains that up until later years of past century, world has lived on the verge of starvation and survival. However, with the post war era, European countries especially, saw peace, prosperity and development. From bipolar world order, horrors

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<sup>64</sup> Dennison Susi and Pardijs Dina, "The World According to Europe's Insurgent Parties: Putin, Migration and People Power", (London: European Council on Foreign Relations, 2016), 2-6. Accessed June 17, 2021. [https://ecfr.eu/publication/the\\_world\\_according\\_to\\_europes\\_insurgent\\_parties7055/](https://ecfr.eu/publication/the_world_according_to_europes_insurgent_parties7055/)

<sup>65</sup> Norris Pippa and Inglehart Ronald, "Cultural Backlash Theory" in *Cultural Backlash: Trump, Brexit, and Authoritarian Populism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 33-35. doi: 10.1017/9781108595841

<sup>66</sup> Bonikowski, Bart, "Ethno-Nationalist Populism and the Mobilization of Collective Resentment." *The British Journal of Sociology* 68, no. S1. (Nov. 2017): 183-86. Accessed June 8, 2021. doi: 10.1111/1468-4446.12325

<sup>67</sup> Carreras, Miguel, et al. "Long-Term Economic Distress, Cultural Backlash, and Support for Brexit." *Comparative Political Studies* 52, no. 9 (March, 2019): 5-6. Accessed June 8, 2021. doi: 10.1177/0010414019830714

of World Wars and Cold-War, western bloc had time to become welfare states and direct attention to postmaterialist values. This is when acceptance of foreigners, as well as LGBTQ representatives and people with disabilities has achieved new highs. Democracy and liberal values became almost only right spectrum of politics<sup>68</sup>. 1980s and 90s saw emergence and strengthening of environmentalist parties across Europe. Postmaterialists across the region increased their representation in local and national governments. Alongside postmodern issues raised by these parties, conservative and xenophobic groups still managed to dominate certain discussions. Without even gaining a seat in the parliament, Republikaner party in Germany led a change in immigration and political asylum regulations in the beginning of 1990s. Furthermore, Inglehart (1997) concluded that materialists were six times more likely to reject foreign neighbours and three times more likely to support discrimination at work against immigrants. His study also showed that younger generation is more tolerant towards refugees and right-wing extremist parties massively attract blue-collar workers.<sup>69</sup> As Europe concentrated more on postmaterialist values during peace and prosperity times, sense of insecurity or injustice, at any given time in the past 20 or so years, increased xenophobia. Undoubtedly, economic factors contribute to anti-establishment sentiment which is one of the main manifestations of right-wing populism, but it is argued that significant factor for voters is still cultural identity. As the cultural backlash theory suggests, less educated, older, religious ethnic majority groups are main target population for these parties. Anti-Muslim Danish People's Party gained 20% increase between the years of 2005 and 2014, becoming country's largest party. Between this period two main events contributed to such outcome. One being the 2008 economic crisis and another 2005 cartoon depiction of Mohammed and its surrounding incidents<sup>70</sup>. It has been proven empirically, that main living force for radical right-wing parties is immigration rather than economic decline. Therefore, many prominent researchers and authorities suggest calling all these parties (right-wing populist, radical right-wing, traditional/authoritarian/nationalist) "Anti-immigration parties, because this is their common

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<sup>68</sup> Inglehart Ronald, "Value Change" in *The Silent Revolution: Changing Values and Political Styles Among Western Publics*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1977), 27-30

<sup>69</sup> Inglehart Ronald, "The Rise of New Issues and New Parties" in *Modernization and Postmodernization: Cultural, Economic and Political Change in 43 Societies*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 242-248

<sup>70</sup> Inglehart Ronald and Norris Pippa, "Trump and the Xenophobic Populist Parties: The Silent Revolution in Reverse", *Perspectives on Politics* 15, no. 2 (June, 2017): 445-447, Accessed June 17, 2021, doi:10.1017/S1537592717000111.

denominator<sup>71</sup>”. Thus, to avoid misunderstanding, from this point onward, this paper will use the same name.

According to Inglehart (2018), recent migration crisis increased sense of existential insecurity across western and northern Europe. Unprecedentedly high number of refugees seeking asylum at the borders of Italy and Greece, rarely stayed there and made their way in the North. Denmark, Germany, Netherlands, and Sweden were known to be secure and tolerant, however recent years have shown strong affiliation with xenophobic anti-immigration parties. Besides these political groups, media has played a big role in unintentionally mobilizing voters. It is a fact that chances of dying from terrorist acts is much lower than dying from smoking and/or drinking, however the latter gets in-depth coverage compared to the former. Additionally, airport securities unconsciously lead us to think that foreign threat is right at the corner. undoubtedly, this has been a norm since the beginning of the century, however anti-immigration parties have not been this strong all along. The reason is exponential rise in attacks on European cities since 2015 by ISIS and Al-Qaeda. Public is continuously fed the narrative that all foreigners, especially those who are Muslim, are dangerous<sup>72</sup>. Distinction between white, pre-dominantly Christian arrivals and people of colour coming from Islamic countries fit the narrative. 2004 and 2007 EU enlargement initiated the conversation on migration in the region, yet it was not on the top of the agenda. 2015 refugee crisis however was the top concern as thousands of migrants arrived at the shores of Italy and Greece every day from Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq, etc. This gave a way to anti-immigration parties to depict all refugees as criminals and Islamist terrorists. Additionally, free flow of people in Schengen Area and cultural differences between hosting and sending countries further raised alarms among European communities that encouraged more voters to support anti-immigration parties<sup>73</sup>.

To conclude, cultural backlash is the main predicament for voting for anti-immigrant parties across Europe. Among voters, age, education, and cultural values (materialistic and postmaterialistic) are the indication to supporting left or right wing. It has been determined that older, ethnic majority, non-college educated citizens, living in rural areas have the most authoritarian values that translates into their support to anti-immigration parties. The sense of

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<sup>71</sup> Inglehart Ronald, “Cultural Backlash and the Rise of Xenophobic Populist Authoritarian Parties” in *Cultural Evolution: People’s Motivations are Changing, and Reshaping the World*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 181, Accessed June 17, 2017, doi: 10.1017/9781108613880

<sup>72</sup> Ibid, 185-188

<sup>73</sup> Norris Pippa and Inglehart Ronald, “Immigration” in *Cultural Backlash: Trump, Brexit, and Authoritarian Populism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 182-83. doi: 10.1017/9781108595841

insecurity, physical or cultural, increases with the high influx of immigrants, resulting a tipping point among European communities. As soon as populist leaders mobilize voters and gain power, they reinforce and tighten the common threat, which is immigration.

The sense of insecurity and depiction of refugees, strips migrants from any political power they might have and attach negative social constructions, thus portraying them as deviant dependents of the society. These perceptions are reinforced by media and anti-immigration parties which slows down beneficial policy changes. And since the illustration of refugees is negative, punitive, and restrictive measures are most common. Unaccompanied migrant children on the other hand, gain more favour as the vulnerable, however support is usually symbolic and universalistic.

## 5 MAKING SENSE OF THE EMERGING TOPIC: THE STATUS OF UNACCOMPANIED MIGRANT CHILDREN IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

According to Eurostat database (See Figure 4), number of unaccompanied migrant children applying for asylum increased more than 10 times in 2015 compared to 2010. Statistics started to decline in 2017, however it still has not dropped to the amount that we saw 10 years ago<sup>74</sup>. In total, from 2014 to 2017, over 200,000 unaccompanied minors entered the EU to seek asylum specifically, and an additional estimated 40,000 came under a different status. It is also noteworthy that at least half of that number arrived on European shores in 2015 alone. IOM reports that these numbers indicate, though not accurately, only those who registered for asylum. Meaning, exact number of all UAMs who were left or chose to be left out of the asylum system is still widely unknown.<sup>75</sup> What is known however, is that among all children who crossed Mediterranean in 2016, at least 90 percent were unaccompanied. In 2018, Germany reported that only 34% of UAMs had claimed asylum which gives an estimate to how far available statistics are from real numbers.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Eurostat Database, “Asylum Applicants Considered to be Unaccompanied Minors by Citizenship, Age and Sex - Annual Data (rounded)”, Last updated June 3rd, 2021, accessed June 17, 2021, [https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=migr\\_asyunaa&lang=en](https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=migr_asyunaa&lang=en)

<sup>75</sup> European Migration Network, “Approaches to Unaccompanied Minors Following Status Determination in the EU plus Norway”, *Synthesis Report for the EMN Study*, (2018):6-12, Accessed June 17, 2021, [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/european\\_migration\\_network/reports/studies\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/reports/studies_en)

<sup>76</sup> International Organization for Migration, “Child and Young Migrants”, *Migration data portal*, Last updated May 6, 2021, accessed June 17, 2021, <https://migrationdataportal.org/themes/child-and-young-migrants>

There are many reasons to why UAMs might go missing, but the fear is that children are exploited by trafficking syndicates and organized crime groups. Europol has expressed its concerns that only handful of missing UAMs have been found from tens of thousands that go missing every year.<sup>77</sup> Despite decline in number of immigrants entering EU in recent years, it does not proportionally indicate that condition of UAMs is improving. On the contrary, according to Missing Children Europe, 20% more UAMs have disappeared in the past 3 years than in the years 2014-17.<sup>78</sup>

According to the European Migration Network, more than 11,000 unaccompanied minors disappeared from care facilities or following a return decision in each year of 2015 and 2016. Considering that this data is based on reports from 13 countries only (Belgium, Bulgaria, Germany, Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Italy, Luxembourg, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Portugal) it already is disturbing.<sup>79</sup> The age of these children is also declining. If average age of missing UAMs in 2015 was 15-16, it fell down to 13 the next year. Furthermore, 17% of all UAMs who disappeared in 2018-20 were reported to have been under 15.<sup>80</sup> Thankfully, not all children remain missing forever. About 17% were found within a week and 10% within a month.<sup>81</sup> Concluding that if the child is not located in a month, the chances of finding them falls drastically until it just disappears after one year of searching.

Looking for missing UAMs is one of the most important actions that EU as an organization can take. Unfortunately, most often local governments and police believe that children left on their own accord and are safe in another country. That is why in 2019 the death of 39 migrants who were being smuggled to the UK, sent shockwaves across EU. A truck full of refugees, including minors, was discovered in southern England. It was found that all passengers died from oxygen starvation due to being sealed in an air-tight truck for almost 12 hours. This tragedy has led to arrests of individuals linked to trafficking syndicates. It was found that

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<sup>77</sup> Townsend, Mark, “10,000 Refugee Children Are Missing, Says Europol”, *The Guardian*, Last updated February 11, 2016, Accessed June 17, 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jan/30/fears-for-missing-child-refugees>

<sup>78</sup> Missing Children Europe, “Over 18,000 Children in Migration Missing in Europe between 2018-2020”, Last updated April 20, 2021, accessed June 17, 2021, <https://missingchildreneurope.eu/over-18-000-missing-children-in-migration/>

<sup>79</sup> European Migration Network, “Approaches to Unaccompanied Minors Following Status Determination in the EU plus Norway”, *Synthesis Report for the EMN Study*, (2018):49, Accessed June 17, 2021, [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/european\\_migration\\_network/reports/studies\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/reports/studies_en)

<sup>80</sup> Einashe, Ismail, and Adriana Homolova, “Nearly 17 Child Migrants a Day Vanished in Europe since 2018”, *The Guardian*, Last updated April 21, 2021, accessed June 17, 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2021/apr/21/nearly-17-child-migrants-a-day-vanished-in-europe-since-2018>

<sup>81</sup> Missing Children Europe, “Figures and Trends of 2016”, accessed June 17, 2021, <https://missingchildreneurope.eu/annual-reports/>

unaccompanied migrant children are most vulnerable against such groups and as young as 13 years olds have been sexually exploited across the region.<sup>82</sup>

Besides disappearance and trafficking, UAMs also have to face harsh conditions of detention centres. In 2020, Anita Bay Bundegaard, Director of Save the Children Europe reports:

“On any given day since August 2019, an average of 10,000 children were stranded on the Greek islands, 60% of them are under 12 years old. While some efforts were made to relocate children out of Greece, thousands have been abandoned due to the unwillingness of some European countries to take in and care for some of the most vulnerable children in the world.”<sup>83</sup>

Situation in Greece has understandably been very challenging, but Ms. Bundegaard has underlined the financial help that the country has been receiving since 2015. She also noted that among 35,000 asylum seekers in Italy and Greece who have been relocated since the crisis, only 2.3% has been unaccompanied minors. Detention centres in receiving countries such as Greece cannot possibly offer appropriate accommodation for children. In Greece it is a common practice to put minors with stranger adults, especially that age assessment process is complicated and often unfair. Furthermore, since Greece cannot detain UAMs for longer than 25 days as per international laws, it continues to hold them for much longer period under the category of “protective custody”. This clearly goes against revisions calling for special treatment of children in migration, but since EU does not have common policy, it can only make recommendation.<sup>84</sup> Another challenge concerning accommodations is the age of maturity among UAMs. In most European countries, number of migrant children aged 16-17 is higher than other age categories. Also, in 2019, 85% of all UAM asylum applicants were males. Therefore, majority of unaccompanied migrant children are boys who are close to turning 18. This poses risks for the kids, since as soon as they reach age of maturity, they are stripped of legal protection, are asked to leave care facilities immediately and depending on their location might have additional struggles to find some sort of accommodation. That is why there has been high number of UAMs forced to sleep on the streets in various European cities. Besides

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<sup>82</sup> MacGregor, Marion, “More than 18,000 Migrant and Refugee Children Missing in Europe”, *InfoMigrants*, Last updated April 19, 2021, accessed June 17, 2021, <https://www.infomigrants.net/en/post/31613/more-than-18-000-migrant-and-refugee-children-missing-in-europe>

<sup>83</sup> Save the Children International, “Over 200,000 Lone Child Migrants Left to Uncertain Fates in Europe,” Last updated September 2, 2020, accessed June 17, 2021 <https://www.savethechildren.net/news/over-200000-lone-child-migrants-left-uncertain-fates-europe#>

<sup>84</sup> Bakshi, Gursimran Kaur, “The EU’s Relocation of Unaccompanied Migrant Children to Safe Havens: A Good Practice?” *Refugee Research Online*, Last updated October 7, 2020, accessed June 17, 2021 <https://refugeereseearchonline.org/the-eus-relocation-of-unaccompanied-migrant-children-to-safe-havens-a-good-practice/>

housing, they also lose their guardian's or representative's guidance and sometimes education is jeopardised as well.<sup>85</sup> This is not only physically difficult to deal with, but also psychologically stressing. This is one of the reasons why older UAMs go missing from the beginning. They attempt to access labour market and unwillingly might get caught in criminal organizations. It was reported that more than 17,000 male UAMs have gone missing in the past 3 years.

All unaccompanied children are under the risk of being exploited. However, there is a difference between undocumented and documented minors crossing the Schengen borders. According to the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons, undocumented migrant children are under much higher risk than those who made their way to the EU with documentation. Therefore, in December 2019, the Committee urged the EU and Schengen member states to work towards preventing the minors from becoming undocumented as they can quickly vanish into clandestine criminal networks. To do so, it advised authorities to register and identify every child and share the corresponding data via Interpol; Schengen Information System; Frontex, as well as thru relevant networks and bilateral agreements that can aid in reaching the goal. Along with identifying, finding family members, and helping reunifications was referred to as a useful tool in order to avoid disappearance<sup>86</sup>. Deputy Chair for Human Rights at the Justice and Development Party (AKP) in Turkey, Leyla Şahin Usta reported in February 2019 that unaccompanied refugee children in Europe are often victims of violence, including and not limited to human organ trading and human trafficking among other physical and psychological assaults. It is alarming that if Europe is not able to take an effective step to protect these children, despite numerous security precautions adopted within the organization, "these children can emerge as members of terrorist organizations in the future."<sup>87</sup>

The main challenge to all the issues described above, is the absence of specific laws concerning the rights of UAMs. None of EU states, except Belgium<sup>88</sup>, has any single UAM concerning

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<sup>85</sup> Pasic, Lana, "Young Refugees' Transition to Adulthood", *Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth*, accessed June 17, 2021 <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/42128013/47262325/Refugees+transition+to+adulthood.pdf/9a064fa1-ee97-be3f-84fd-5a27d85e15a6>

<sup>86</sup> Yaşar, Serap, "Missing Refugee and Migrant Children in Europe", *Council of Europe, Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons*, doc. 15026, (2017):3-4, Accessed June 17, 2021, <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/missing-refugee-and-migrant-children-europe>

<sup>87</sup> Karakiş, Gizem, "Over 96,000 refugee children missing in Europe since 2015", *Daily News*, Last updated February 25, 2019, Accessed June 17, 2021, <https://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/over-96-000-refugee-children-missing-in-europe-since-2015-akp-deputy-chair-141466>

<sup>88</sup> Bakshi, Gursimran Kaur, "The EU's Relocation of Unaccompanied Migrant Children to Safe Havens: A Good Practice?" *Refugee Research Online*, Last updated October 7, 2020, accessed June 17, 2021

regulations. They all depend on a combination of national laws on asylum and international responsibility set forth by the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Since all member states are sovereign nations with different governments and types of decision-making, cooperation is a luxury. And if we add anti-immigration sentiment and right-wing populism across the organization, it is no surprise that the status of unaccompanied migrant children is in danger.

## 5.1 MAIN LEGAL FRAMEWORK REGARDING UNACCOMPANIED MIGRANT CHILDREN IN THE EU

To ensure the representation, development, health, and well-being of UAMs, the EU follows many directives and regulations. These are some of the most important documents that the EU, as an organization, considers while dealing with immigrants. These provisions determine that the topic of UAMs is mainly indirectly covered via amendments or are referred to in different sections of the existing legal documents on rights of children, refugees, and irregular migrants.

Descriptions of the provisions below are brief as their primary purpose is to demonstrate. It shows that the laws on international and national levels are so general that member states can follow them and still manage to avoid the implementation of specific action plans.

Besides *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1989); *UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees* (1951) and *EU Charter of Fundamental Rights* (2000), European countries follow *UNHCR Guidelines on Policies and Procedures in Dealing with Unaccompanied Children Seeking Asylum* (1997). These international provisions have one thing in common. They pledge to act with the best interest of child in mind.<sup>89</sup>

*Reception Conditions Directive*<sup>90</sup> mostly focuses on immigrant children's access to health care, accommodation, food, education, and clothing, primarily basic needs.

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<https://refugeereseearchonline.org/the-eus-relocation-of-unaccompanied-migrant-children-to-safe-havens-a-good-practice/>

<sup>89</sup> The term "Best Interest of Child" refers to a well-being of a minor. Children's wishes should always be heard and considered; however, they cannot always be met. This will depend on the age and ability of the minor; however, no matter what, there always must be an adult who the child trusts, may it be a parent, guardian, or a social worker. Walton, Ronald, "The Best Interests of the Child", *The British Journal of Social Work* 6, no. 3 (1976): 307-13, Accessed June 17, 2021. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23693921>

<sup>90</sup> European Commission- Migration and Home Affairs, "Reception Conditions Directive", *Official Journal of the European Union*, Directive 2013/33/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013

*Dublin Regulation*<sup>91</sup> is a guarantee that every single application requesting international protection in any of the member states will be and must be examined and considered.

*Qualification Directive*<sup>92</sup> lays out criteria for determining a status of a refugee or a beneficiary of international protection. It protects asylum seekers from refoulement as well.

*Asylum Procedures Directive*<sup>93</sup> sets out common procedures for granting and withdrawing applications. It guarantees that no matter which member states receives the application, the procedure will be the same.

*Temporary Protection Directive*<sup>94</sup> states that in the matter of high influx of immigrants, EU countries can issue immediate, but temporary protection individually. How it is applied, in what cases it can be extended, triggered, or ended is all defined by the Directive.

*Directive on the Right to Family Reunification*,<sup>95</sup> which was adopted in September 2003, lays out the criteria and rights for families whose member is resident in the EU and who wish to reunite. Article 8 also states that immediate family members of unaccompanied children should qualify for entry to the applicable Member State.

For family reunification or their departure to other member states, or their home countries, EU countries follow Schengen Borders Code and Return Directive with respect to the children's rights. Border guards too, are instructed to pay more attention to children in migration. On top of all these, to prevent trafficking, EU refers to *Directive on Preventing and Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings and Protecting its Victims* (2011) and a *Directive on Combating the Sexual Abuse and Sexual Exploitation of Children and Child Pornography* (2011).

Action Plan(s) adopted by the EU since 2015 tend to be just as general as regional and international level provisions and directives. In 2017, the Council of Europe issued *Action Plan*

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<sup>91</sup>European Commission- Migration and Home Affairs, "Country responsible for asylum application (Dublin Regulation)", Regulation (EU) No 604/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013, accessed June 17, 2021, <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2013/604/2013-06-29>

<sup>92</sup>European Commission- Migration and Home Affairs, "Qualification Directive", *Official Journal of the European Union*, Directive 2011/95/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December, 2011

<sup>93</sup>European Commission- Migration and Home Affairs, "Asylum Procedures Directive", *Official Journal of the European Union*, Directive 2013/32/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of June 26, 2013

<sup>94</sup>European Commission- Migration and Home Affairs, "Temporary Protection Directive", *Official Journal of the European Union*, Council Directive 2001/55/EC of July 20, 2001),

<sup>95</sup> European Commission- Migration and Home Affairs, "Family Reunification Directive", *Official Journal L 251, 03/10/2003 P. 0012 – 0018*, Council Directive 2003/86/EC of September 22, 2003, accessed June 17, 2021, <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2003/86/oj>

on *Protecting Refugee and Migrant Children in Europe* for the years of 2017-2019<sup>96</sup>. It paid particular attention to UAMs, as their well-being is under higher risk than those who with families. This action plan was the one EU document that focused on the dangers and safety of UAMs. However, it only initiated seminars, conferences, trainings. Therefore, it was voluntary rather than mandatory and it aimed to share experiences of member states and encourage others to adopt successful practices. Despite acknowledging the issues and proposing certain solutions, this action plan did not carry the role Council of Europe intended.

Most of legal frameworks in the EU and its member countries are not focused on UAMs and cover wide range of topics, such as migration, security, family reunification, etc. So, it is up to individual states to decide what laws apply where and how. For example: Finland separated the status of humanitarian protection from its Aliens Act as a national residence permit category; Austria introduced integration counselling in 2016 that was a requirement for all unaccompanied minors, and the same year they modified rules on family reunification and determined that after three years, family members of UAMs could apply for entry permits; The Netherlands, just like Belgium, Ireland, and Lithuania, adopted protocols on the collaboration between care facilities, responsible authorities, police, and social services when an unaccompanied child goes missing.<sup>97</sup>

Despite these individual attempts, the Member States continuously acknowledge the gap in handling UAM cases. According to them, there is a deficiency in the collection and sharing of the data on the missing children (according to Denmark and Poland); there is a lack of coordination and common action plan among national (according to Belgium, Netherlands, Sweden) and international authorities (according to the United Kingdom) and there are issues with developing and implementing preventive measures (according to Lithuania, Slovakia)<sup>98</sup>.

European countries individually deal with daily cases of disappearance, acceptance and relocation of UAMs domestically. They do so in accordance with their national laws and international regulations that they have been part of for decades. The latter are so universalistic that it leaves room for interpretation and adjustment. Therefore, on numerous occasions the EU

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<sup>96</sup> COE, “Action Plan on Protecting Refugee and Migrant Children in Europe (2017-2019)”, *Council of Europe*, (2017):9-18, Accessed June 17, 2021, <https://edoc.coe.int/en/children-s-rights/7362-council-of-europe-action-plan-on-protecting-refugee-and-migrant-children-in-europe-2017-2019.html>

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> European Migration Network, “Approaches to Unaccompanied Minors Following Status Determination in the EU plus Norway”, *Synthesis Report for the EMN Study*, (2018):15-16 & 49-51, Accessed June 17, 2021, [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/european\\_migration\\_network/reports/studies\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/reports/studies_en)

has criticized its member states on their handling of the crisis. Especially by pointing out the illegality of some of the actions, however neither the organization, nor international society was able to legally punish any state that was challenged. Undoubtedly, European Court of Justice has ruled against some member countries, but besides recommendations, concerns and advice, no actual power was used. This illustrates EU states' legitimacy as sovereign entities who can singlehandedly disable the organization from effective policymaking. Consequently, until European Union adopts mandatory policies that can not be challenged repeatedly, chaos is unavoidable while dealing with sensitive and important issues.

## 5.2 THE REASONS BEHIND THE DISAPPEARANCE OF UNACCOMPANIED MIGRANT CHILDREN

According to Missing Children Europe (MCE), the youngest UAM to go missing in 2018 was under the age of 1, while the calculated median was 16 years. Based on information received thru MCE's nine hotlines (2018)<sup>99</sup>, the top reasons for disappearance were not having any access to any appropriate shelters or condition of reception centres were not accommodating. Expressing distrust towards the whole system or application process taking too long were also listed as common grounds. Looking for people who they had previous interpersonal links or having psychological distress are also frequently seen among UAMs.

The biggest contribution to disappearance by the EU is expressed in nonexistence of universal data. Sometimes at the borders, the names of the children are misspelled which not only can duplicate the file, but also aid the attempts to cross the border undetected. Additionally, it is a common practice to treat missing children as safe residents of another EU state. Although it is true that quite a lot of UAMs voluntarily leave shelters, it does not necessarily guarantee that it will stay that way. There have been growing reports in the UK<sup>100</sup> that indicate that UAMs who leave care facilities to work, more often than not end up under criminal organizations or are exploited as modern-day labour slavers. And since the EU is no longer looking for the child, fleeing from such situations alone is almost impossible.

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<sup>99</sup> Missing Children Europe, "Figures and Trends of 2018 and 2019", *Missing Children Europe*, accessed June 17, 2021, <https://missingchildreuneurope.eu/annual-reports/>

<sup>100</sup>EMN Inform, "How Do EU Member States Treat Cases of Missing Unaccompanied Minors?", *European Migration Network*, (2020):7, accessed June 17, 2021 <https://emn.ie/publications/how-do-eu-member-states-treat-cases-of-missing-unaccompanied-minors-emn-inform/>

In the beginning of 2019, the refugee camps in Greece were described as “inhuman and degrading”.<sup>101</sup> Besides deprivation of basic human rights, such as water and food, UAMs were exposed to sexually abuse on a larger scale. Being housed with single men, treated violently by the guards, sometimes forced to beg or steal are most common reasons why UAMs went missing from the camp. Furthermore, some number of children either have previously acquired knowledge or personal connections regarding opportunities in other country than the one they applied for asylum for. In these cases, it is expected for them to abandon refuges and look for transit themselves. One of the main challenges to UAMs is communication with EU institutions and defending their rights. One of the major reasons for it is language barrier. It is estimated<sup>102</sup> that many refugee children make mistakes or do not understand the procedures while applying for asylum or permits. This creates the feeling of expecting rejection letters and they decide to cross borders, within or outside the country.

## 6 MIGRATION AND EUROPEAN SOCIETIES

One of the main variables of the paper is social constructions and their role in policy designs towards target populations. As it has been proposed, perception of migrants in the EU has decreased over the course of past 5-6 years. These constructions can be observed in two separate aspects. One being general perceptions on migration in the European Union and second one looking at Media analysis to determine common rhetoric. Migration from within the organization is more widely accepted (61%) than from outside the Union (37%). Among all member states, only 3 countries’ (Sweden, Ireland and Spain) reports showed positive attitude in more than 50 percent of the population. Majorities of the rest see outsider immigration negatively (see Figure 5).<sup>103</sup>

### 6.1 SOCIAL PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS IMMIGRANTS

One of the biggest challenges that refugees face nowadays is Islamophobia. Top three countries of origin of asylum seekers in the EU are Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq.<sup>104</sup> Same trend is observed among UAMs as well. Perception of Muslim migrants has never been positive on

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<sup>101</sup> Deutsche Welle, “Council of Europe Slams Greece over Refugee Camp Conditions”, *Deutsche Welle*, Last updated February 19, 2019, accessed June 17, 2021, <https://www.dw.com/en/council-of-europe-slams-greece-over-refugee-camp-conditions/a-47576477>

<sup>102</sup> Di Stefano, Manlio, “Harmonising the protection of unaccompanied minors in Europe”, *Council of Europe: Committee on Migration Refugees and Displaced Persons*, doc.14142, (September, 2016):10-11

<sup>103</sup> Standard Eurobarometer, Spring-Autumn 2016

<sup>104</sup> “Migrant Crisis: Migration to Europe Explained in Seven Charts,” *BBC News* (BBC, March 4, 2016), <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34131911>.

European soil. Especially since 9/11 attacks in the US; 2004 in Madrid; 2005 in London; 2015 in Paris; 2016 in Brussels, Nice and Berlin and 2017 in Manchester and Barcelona. These terrorist attacks were carried out by Islamic jihadists in their fight against the Western intervention in Middle East. Consequently, European attitudes towards Islam has experienced decrease ever since the beginning of the century,<sup>105</sup> but it spiked after the refugee crisis in 2015. It is noteworthy, that among all migrants in Europe, only 53% are Muslim, while only 22% of refugees come from other religions (mainly Christian). This means that in 2015-16, EU mostly received Muslim males which is the most marginalized group. One of the reasons why this number is high is due to refugees from Iraq and Syria receiving asylums at higher rates. 2017 Pew Research Centre observed if public opinions are affected by rising number of asylum seekers from these countries. They found that the more share of asylum seekers per 10,000 residents, the less perceive it “major threat”. In an example of Poland and the Netherlands it shows that the latter (139 per 10,000) considers large number of refugees from Iraq and Syria minor to no threat (69%), while in Poland (0 per 10,000) 60% classify it as a major threat.<sup>106</sup> Palaghie and Ungureanu (2018) argue about European attitudes in relation to other cultures in general. They discuss that when it comes to West and the East, history reinforced the conflicting views. Now that Europeans face influx of radically different culture, there are only two ways to consider. One being integration thru multiculturalism and second, integration thru assimilation. Based on which approach EU countries will follow, their policies will be in accordance. The fundamental difference between these two options is how Europeans perceive their own against Otherness. Multiculturalism suggests that a society can coexist with opposite religion and traditions, but the law of the majority must be respected. Assimilation according to the authors is the condition where Europeans consider their own culture to be superior and the only one that is right, therefore everyone else must learn their way of life. It is suggested that such perception can give birth to resentment in minority groups that can have devastating outcomes in the future.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Gontijo Lorenzo and Lana Ana, “Fear of the Other Within the Contemporary Migration Crisis: Arab-Muslim Migration towards Europe and the Condition of Otherness”, *Journal of Identity and Migration Studies* 14, no. 2 (November, 2020): 93-95, <http://www.e-migration.ro/fear/of/the/other>

<sup>106</sup> Pew Research Centre, “Europe’s Growing Muslim Population”, Last updated November 29, 2017, 16-24 [www.pewresearch.org](http://www.pewresearch.org)

<sup>107</sup> Palaghie Corina and Ungureanu Monica, “The European Identity and the Refugee Crisis” in *The Refugee Crisis in the European Union: Between the Fundamental Human Rights and the Efforts Towards Securitization*, ed. Alexandrescu Mihai, (Cluj-Napoca: CA Publishing, 2016), 129-140

Back in 2015, 58% of all Europeans believed that foreigners were a burden on the welfare system (see Figure 6).<sup>108</sup> And in 2018, more than half thought that immigrants were unwilling to fit into society, let alone enrich the latter's cultural life (see Figure 7).<sup>109</sup> If in 2015 only 12 member states considered culture to be the most unifying topic among member states, in 2017 the number increased to 19. If 6 years ago economy was still perceived as an important issue, two years later it took 5<sup>th</sup> place, advancing history, values, and sports. Surprisingly, religion has not been an incentive giving EU citizens the feeling of community at all (see Figures 8 and 9)<sup>110</sup>. Christianity was the talking point of certain politicians only. It is no surprise that European societies started seeing immigration and terrorism as the top issues in the second half of 2014 and onwards. These two topics have experienced same curve on the graph (see Figure 10) indicating that the region has always associated the two together.<sup>111</sup>

Social perceptions are also expressed in the willingness of the advantaged (EU populations) to help dependent deviants (refugees). Majority of arrivals had escaped war, terror, and hunger. Therefore, it is no surprise that majority of member states expressed that their countries should help the refugees. However, since 2015, the number of countries where more than 50 percent disagreed with the statement, increased. And in some other states the percentage marks for agreement also decreased, though did not drop below 50. Consequently, in 2016 EU average suffered fall from 65 to 63 percent.<sup>112</sup> More negative attitudes were observed when asked if immigrants contribute to their respective states. Between May 2015 and 2016, EU average of those who did not agree with the statement increased by 8%. Additionally, 59 percent of 27 member states (16) reported such sentiment among more than half of their populations. This number rose to 74% (20) in exactly one year (see Figure 11).<sup>113</sup>

When it comes to particularistic views, more than half the people surveyed (European Social Survey, 2014)<sup>114</sup> considered good education qualifications among refugees to be important, while vast majority thought knowing the country's language was desirable. High number of Europeans also supported those immigrants whose work skills were compatible with the needs of the host community. This indicates that the ethnic majority (advantaged) would support any

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<sup>108</sup> Eupinions, December 2015

<sup>109</sup> Eupinions, July 2018

<sup>110</sup> Standard Eurobarometer, May 2015-May 2017

<sup>111</sup> Standard Eurobarometer, March 2010-March 2018

<sup>112</sup> Standard Eurobarometer, November 2015-May 2017

<sup>113</sup> Standard Eurobarometer, May 2015-May 2016

<sup>114</sup> Dennison James and Drazanova Lenka, "Public Attitudes on Migration: Rethinking How People Perceive Migration", *The International Centre for Migration Policy Development*, (2018):16.

policy changes that would benefit these types of refugees, simply because it can benefit their own societies.

These numbers all show that refugee crisis not only challenged European Union's ability to cooperate, but also values of European people. Each year the number of people perceiving incoming immigrants as a threat, rose. Perceptions of the role of asylum seekers in political or social lives kept decreasing. And the crisis also portrayed how much European communities align migration with terrorism and terrorism with Islam. Additionally, it is the CEE bloc that has especially negative perceptions, due to their history, homogenous populations, and emphasis on religion. It was the anti-immigration narrative that led to the rise of Populist parties across Europe.

Back in 2018, only 38 percent of EU citizens categorized migration as a problem rather than an opportunity. In retrospect, 63 percent of Hungarians claimed the same. If over 50 percent of whole EU considered current integration successful, more than half of Hungary believed otherwise. Despite Budapest being the main transit land for refugees on their way to Germany, there are actually very few asylums requested recognized. So, few that close to 90 percent of Hungarians have no personal link to refugees, but if they did, they would feel uncomfortable (73%). Vast majority of the country (82%) considered 2015 fence an essential policy. Additionally, they scored one of the highest on the necessity to strengthen EU external borders.<sup>115</sup> Neither Viktor Orban, nor official Budapest has negatively taken the subject of children in migration. However, the country has been not only strict, but rather illegal too towards the treatment of UAMs. In 2017, Hungary approved a law bypassing UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. They enabled their police to detain and classify children, especially those between 14-18, as adults.<sup>116</sup> Since most refugees crossing the border were from predominantly Islamic countries and most of UAMs are males between the ages of 14 and 18, Budapest has been openly negative.

Besides CEE countries, Austria has been most against refugees from Western bloc. Since 2000s, it has been the one Western state with same negative perceptions on immigration as Visegrad four. Austrians too, feel uncomfortable having personal relationships with immigrants (54%) and their Chancellor, Sebastian Kurz centred his political career and

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<sup>115</sup> Boros Tomas, "Hungary: A No-Go Zone for Migrants" in *European Public Opinion and Migration: Achieving Common Progressive Narratives*, eds. Funk M., Giusto Hedwig., Rinke T., and Bruns O., (Brussels: FEPS, 2019), 22-26

<sup>116</sup> Johnson, Ian P. "Alarm over Hungary's Treatment of Migrant Children at Border", *Deutsche Welle*, April 27, 2018. <https://www.dw.com/en/alarm-over-hungarys-treatment-of-migrant-children-at-border/a-43557035>.

elections around anti-immigration sentiment. Austria has always been a land for migrants following major geopolitical changes in the continent. Muslim population also was present in the country way before refugee crisis, however heavy media response, humanitarian crisis and political parties' engagement resulted in stronger perceptions from Austrian people.<sup>117</sup>

Another Western European leader who dominated xenophobic narrative was Le Pen and her National Front party (today known as National Rally). Ever since its foundation in 1971, voter mobilization reached its peak after 2015 crisis. If in Hungary the reasons for negative perceptions were connected to the fact that Hungarians have no personal relations with refugees, in France the situation is in reverse. Analysing the past five decades shows that there indeed was correlation between number of immigrants and votes for anti-immigration parties, however it disappeared more than five years before the refugee crisis. This indicates that, in France, negative attitudes are solely based on speculative perceptions rather than reality that can be proven wrong or right. One of the reasons underlined is the concept of “commute”, according to which, most who vote for NR live outside of large cities with higher concentration of refugees. Therefore, they do not have interpersonal relations, but due to their commute to the cities for work or other social reasons, they indirectly encounter migrants. Additionally, there is a phenomenon called principle of affected interests, which explains that people living outside of larger settlements feel that they are affected by the problem, but are not included in the decision-making, therefore they feel stronger against the social issue and support NR.<sup>118</sup>

## 6.2 MEDIA

As the number of asylum seekers spiked in 2015, amount of mentions of migration in the media also experienced exponential rise (see Figure 12).<sup>119</sup> As most of the articles were negative, it contributed to the fear among European communities. However, correlation between media mentions and people considering migration as a top issue (see Figure 13)<sup>120</sup> determines that it was not the refugee crisis itself that influenced the voter mobilization, it was the political debate which is most present in the media. Therefore, media depiction of migrants has been the driving force. Media presence in refugee crisis has been so strong that Boros (2019) reports on Hungary:

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<sup>117</sup> Gruber Oliver, “Swimming Upstream? Attitudes Towards Immigration in Austria and the Electoral Implications for Progressive Politics” in *European Public Opinion and Migration: Achieving Common Progressive Narratives*, eds. Funk M., Giusto Hedwig., Rinke T., and Bruns O., (Brussels: FEPS, 2019), 39-43

<sup>118</sup> Ibid, Le Bras Herve, “Attitudes in France Towards Migration”, 103-16

<sup>119</sup> MIDEM Annual Report 2018, 11

<sup>120</sup> Ibid, 12

“In the last few years, 93% of the news broadcast in the public media has included some reference to the migration crisis, and 95% of the reports have either provided information about or identified with the government’s anti-immigration stance.”<sup>121</sup>

Furthermore, to gain general support, official Budapest also instigated a full media campaign against the infamous quota system. Newspapers suggested that EU’s redistribution plan would increase terror threat as they were no way of knowing how many terrorists would come along with refugees. One of the messages even reported that in every 12 seconds there was an illegal immigrant arriving at European shores. It did not say “refugee”, nor just “migrant”, the emphasis was put on “illegal”.<sup>122</sup>

European Journalism Observatory (2021) concluded that children in migration are rarely making the cover of big media outlets. On the example of Italy, it is noted that minors are usually victimised since they stir sympathy among journalists and public alike. If a refugee ship goes missing or is destroyed, top questions asked to the organizations working on the topic is how many child casualties there were. It is a common knowledge that stories with headlines regarding minors’ death will gain more attention. That is why media prefers to report on children rather than adolescents, because a picture of a young man changes the sentiment. Besides the tragic news, most common is to depict minors as criminals which revives fear and resentment. “What makes a news is the underage drug dealer”.<sup>123</sup>

Sometimes visual representation on news relating to children can lead to positive changes in the policy designs. For example, the death of a three-year-old Alan Kurdi, whose body was washed up the shores of Turkey, was a major turning point for European politicians and citizens. Refugee crisis was not seen only as a migration of adults whose intentions can be disputed, but it was also about little kids who were dying at a dangerous rate. Shortly after the media had spread Alan’s picture all around the world, many western European countries agreed relocation systems proposed by Jean-Claude Juncker. Notably, they had declined his proposals

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<sup>121</sup> Boros Tomas, “Hungary: A No-Go Zone for Migrants” in *European Public Opinion and Migration: Achieving Common Progressive Narratives*, eds. Funk M., Giusto Hedwig., Rinke T., and Bruns O., (Brussels: FEPS, 2019), 27.

<sup>122</sup> “Hungary Launches Media Campaign Attacking EU Migrant Quotas.” *Al Arabiya English*, May 20, 2020. <https://english.alarabiya.net/Hungary-launches-media-campaign-attacking-EU-migrant-quotas->

<sup>123</sup> Valentina Baú, “Re-Thinking the Representation of Refugee Children and Adolescents in the Media. Views from Italy's Frontline / Open Migration,” *Open Migration* (Open Migration, March 9, 2021), <https://openmigration.org/en/analyses/re-thinking-the-representation-of-refugee-children-and-adolescents-in-the-media-views-from-italys-frontline/>

few weeks prior to this news.<sup>124</sup> In France, resistance against relocation scheme dropped from 64 percent to 51 percent after Alan's death was heavily publicized.<sup>125</sup>

Unaccompanied migrant children are depicted in the media as innocent, vulnerable group and also as a threat to local societies. There is a fine line between presenting UAMs as “at risk” and “a risk” and media has played both sides. In Germany and the Netherlands, the tone of articles alone influenced public sentiment and led to people supporting for anti-immigration parties. According to Caviedes (2015):

“The more often the press mentions a particular issue and links it to a social ill, the more likely that issue is to be considered a ‘crisis’ meriting political action and resolution.”<sup>126</sup>

Rosen and Crafter (2018) studied media coverage of UAMs in the UK based on three most read national printed papers: The Sun (readership of 4,188,000); The Daily Mail (3,354,000) and The Daily Mirror (2,283,000). Between March 2015 and October 2016, there were total of 120 articles on UAMs in these tabloids. Authors stress that migrant children are either forgotten as a “luggage” coming along with their parents or guardians or are discussed with another vulnerable group: such is women. Unlike migrant men, who is “a faceless mass”, whenever an article was published on UAMs, it was always in singular form. The emphasis was on “separated” and “alone” to dramatize the extent of their travels. The articles between March and October, 2016 focus on the vulnerability of a lost child whose only dream can be getting an asylum and moving to the UK. And the latter was depicted as a land for children to have a life. There were number of articles on the fear of “gang culture” and criminal rate among young children. The Sun even suggested strengthening of the borders, but the argument was not against UAMs specifically, it was against the circumstances these children blame. The rhetoric experienced drastic change at the end of 2016. In these months the tabloids challenged authenticity of UAMs' age. They depicted their appearance, and The Sun went as far as to quote: “Some of the alleged under-18 migrants looked so old it was suggested a new charity be set up, called Shave The Children”.<sup>127</sup> Suddenly sympathy towards the horrific journeys

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<sup>124</sup> De Wenden Catherine Winhtol, “Actual Patterns of Migration Flows: The Challenge of Migration and Asylum in Contemporary Europe” in *Solidarity in the European Union: A Fundamental Value in Crisis*, eds. Grimmel A. and Giang S., (Cham: Springer, 2017), 73

<sup>125</sup> Le Bras Herve, “Attitudes in France Towards Migration” in *European Public Opinion and Migration: Achieving Common Progressive Narratives*, eds. Funk M., Giusto Hedwig., Rinke T., and Bruns O., (Brussels: FEPS, 2019), 112-13

<sup>126</sup> Rosen Rachel and Crafter Sarah, “Media Representations of Separated Child Migrants”, *Migration and Society* 1, no. 1 (December, 2018): 69, doi: 10.3167/arms.2018.010107

<sup>127</sup> Rosen Rachel and Crafter Sarah, “Media Representations of Separated Child Migrants”, *Migration and Society* 1, no. 1 (December, 2018): 73, doi: 10.3167/arms.2018.010107

turned into suspicion of “prematurely aged children” and their motivations to come to the UK. By the end of 2016, UAMs were portrayed in the media as adult males “scamming” British systems. Besides this, some of the articles also suggested the dangers to the UK from these separated children. The Mail ran a headline claiming that one of the alleged 12-year-old was found to be 21-year-old Jihadi. So, from “a risk”, UAMs were quickly depicted as “the risk”.<sup>128</sup>

As seen in the chapters above, refugee crisis was heavily reported by the press all the way until 2020, when the pandemic started. Up until year and a half ago, European citizens were concerned about immigration from outside the EU and it was one of the top topics on the daily agenda. However, since the beginning of 2020, social, political, and economic life slowly shifted towards the healthcare crisis, until it completely dominated the narrative in spring of last year. Consequently, the author selected this period (January 2020-June 2021) to look at online press and determine how much immigration was reported in Europe. The media outlet chosen is Euronews. This news channel was the top international news network in the Continental Europe in 2020. It gathered almost 150 million monthly reach, out of 268 million European homes. Besides high readership, Euronews was also determined to be the most trustworthy and accurate source of information, leaving BBC and CNN behind. Due to expectation for the articles to be informative and bias-free, the following paragraphs will analyse common trends observed in the past year and a half.

For methodology, author looked at every single article published by Euronews.com English website. In every publication, only those were selected that included one or more of these words: “migrant”; “immigrant”; “refugee”; “asylum” and were strictly related to refugees in European Union or those coming to the EU. It excluded publications about UK, other non-EU member European countries and the rest of the world. Euronews published at least 30 articles a day this past year. This means, between January 1, 2020 and June 17, 2021, there are at least 15,000 editorials. Out of this, only 273 publications (less than 1.8%) fit the selection.

In January 2020, only 9 articles had headlines concerning migration in the EU. Among them, four recorded deaths in the Mediterranean and one stressed the situation of children in Greek camps. Conditions of some 1,000 unaccompanied migrant children were described as “inhuman and degrading”. Notably, Prince Harry and Megan Markle’s decision to retire as senior Royals gathered more articles than refugees did. February experienced a spike of 24 articles, with majority of the news (10) regarding tensions between the EU and Turkey. It

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<sup>128</sup> Ibid, 69-75

followed the events of Turkey opening its borders with Greece after the death of 12 soldiers in Syria. It led to thousands of refugees arriving on Greek soil and local police unable to control the flow. This month Hungary was also criticized for its “starvation” of refugees as the official Budapest reports “no free lunch for illegal immigrants” (Feb 6). Out of 29 articles in March, 23 were related to Turkey-Greece clashes with refugees. Six additional articles stressed the importance of relocation amid coronavirus outbreaks. The number dropped to 12 reports in April. Most of which (11), described unhygienic and undesirable conditions in the camps across Europe, which violated WHO recommendations and put refugees under health risks. Out of five articles in May, three related covid-19 with living conditions at Greek camps. And one was an opinion paper specifically on unaccompanied migrant children and their vulnerability against the pandemic (May 4). The author placed hope in European states as they had agreed to relocate some of the UAMs away from Greek overcrowded camps. The article aimed to revive sympathy among the readers and was based on the interview fragments of a Syrian UAM. June saw a slow rise, as Euronews posted 8 articles. Two were about EU’s voluntary return initiative; And two covered rescue operations in the Mediterranean. 13 articles were published in July. Three were related to coronavirus, one of them specifically expressed the fear of covid-infected refugees crossing the borders illegally. Another three overviewed French, German and North Macedonian authorities intercepting smuggling across EU. Three additional articles covered Ocean Viking, which was unable to disembark for 5 days and stayed on the sea full of rescued refugees. Majority of 13 articles in August (6) provided information on two migrant ships disembarking on EU shores (one of the ships being donated by artist Banksy). 17 out of staggering 36 articles in September, however, focused on fire at Moria camp and relocation possibilities in the aftermath. Two reports from October (out of 7) report the death of 144 migrants and one article reported the beheading of French teacher. He allegedly discussed the Mohammad caricatures with his students and was killed by Islamic terrorist. Majority of 17 publications in November recounted the rise of refugees in Spain compared to 2019 and demolishing of migrants from Paris camps. Almost half of 13 articles in December 2020 were related to fire at the Bosnian-Croatian border. 2021 started with 16 publications, out of which seven described the harsh conditions in Bosnia in aftermath of the fire. February can be characterized with visual storytelling. Videos showing rescue ships are most common here. 15 articles in April report EU recovering the bodies of 151 deceased refugees and rescuing 203. Most publications in May explained the rising number of migrants arriving in Italy and Spain. 4 out of 14 articles posted so far in June, 2021, describe Denmark’s new law that enables its

officials to send refugees outside the EU to their origin countries. One of the articles in June discussed the burnt down Moria camp and emphasizes that its reconstruction has yet to begin.

The analysis showed that alongside global pandemic, uncertainties after Brexit and political turmoil in the US, immigration in the EU suffered drastic fall. High numbers of articles were present in February, March, and September 2020 (see Figure 14). The first two months are explained by challenges to EU-Turkey relations after the latter opened the door to Greece for refugee seekers. This event almost caused a humanitarian crisis; therefore, it was reported heavier than other topics. September 2020 is characterized with three important events that contributed to the highest number of press. First being the fire at large Greek refugee camp of Moria; second-covid-19 in relation with the displacement caused by the fire and third one being the “anniversary” of Alan Kurdi’s death five years prior. Indeed, September was one of only three occasions when an article was published with the headline concerning migrant children (the other two being January and May 2020). Out of these three, only one publication in May, 2020 was specifically titled with unaccompanied migrant children.

## 7 EMERGENCE OF ANTI-IMMIGRATION PARTIES

### 7.1 POPULIST SUPPORT IN EUROPE SINCE 2015

Anti-immigration parties, specifically right-wing populists experienced rapid rise since 2015 migration crisis. Besides obvious rhetoric, xenophobia and nationalism is often observed. Populist leaders do not differentiate between migrant children or adults, their sole goal is to advance their agenda, which is to keep outsiders away and stay homogenous. No one will willingly put a child’s life in danger, however these parties argue for stricter policies and focus on risks associating with refugees rather than opportunities.

Especially vocal countries have been Visegrad four. They actively opposed any quota systems that have been proposed or adopted by the EU. They have emphasized the importance of sovereignty and their decision not to accept any migrants into the country. Le Pen in France and AfD (Alternative für Deutschland) party in Germany represent western bloc of the union. This only showcases that the migration crisis not only effected the East but took down strong democracies as well. At one point Viktor Orbán of Hungary stated:

“As a result of the modern-day population movement, terrorism and violence have become part of life in western Europe.”<sup>129</sup>

... directly linking migration and crime with each other, strengthening xenophobia among the country’s population. He on numerous occasions has linked terrorism and illegal activities with refugees. His rhetoric has gotten especially radical after Paris, Brussels attacks. The same narrative is observed in the Czech Republic, where President Milos Zeman referred to Muslim refugees as “practically impossible” to integrate.<sup>130</sup> On the other hand Italian party League leader Salvini compared European populations with American indigenous people and said that because the latter allowed migration, now they reside only on reservations. Similarly, Mark Rutte of Netherlands accused refugees of attacking European values and called on them to either go home or “behave”.<sup>131</sup> Slovakian PM back in 2016 rallied that he would only accept Christian migrants in the country, since Muslims “could not be integrated and needed to be monitored.”<sup>132</sup> Discourse of these insurgent parties is to strengthen negative social constructions against migrants. While Le Pen called immigrants “invaders”, Salvini preferred the term “misfits”. Geert Wilders refers to immigrants as “scums” and Orban considers “Trojan wooden horse of terrorism”:

“The words chosen by these leaders all have one purpose: to dehumanize and demonize the migrants. For instance, Jussi Halla-aho, leader of True Finns, argues that “society begins to play by the rules of the Muslim minority, rather than expecting the minority to play by the rules of the society.”<sup>133</sup>

These examples do not represent all active right-wing populist parties in Europe. There are many more and they all share the fundamentals, which is an attempt to preserve Christian religion, European values, and way of life. To extend their opinions nation-wide, they often focus on security and safety as these topics tend to gain more attention and support. Existential survival and fear of cultural extinction leads to mobilization of voters, since culture, values and history were main topics that create a feeling of community among European societies (as seen in previous chapter). Even if they do not win highest positions, they manage to gather enough power to effect political agenda within and beyond their borders.

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<sup>129</sup> “The Migrant Crisis and the Rise of Populism in Europe,” Arcgis, accessed July 10, 2020, <https://www.arcgis.com/apps/Cascade/index.html?appid=d63ba0dce8c346bab133ca055180e455>.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> Sertan Akbaba, “Re-Narrating Europe in the Face of Populism: An Analysis of the Anti-Immigration Discourse of Populist Party Leaders,” *Insight Turkey* 20, no. 3 (July 17, 2018): pp. 199-218, <https://doi.org/10.25253/99.2018203.14>.

<sup>132</sup> Desmond Dinan et al., “Central and Eastern Europe: The Sacrifices of Solidarity, the Discomforts of Diversity and the Vexations of Vulnerabilities,” *The European Union in Crisis*, January 2017, pp. 264-264, [https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-60427-9\\_13](https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-60427-9_13).

<sup>133</sup> Ibid, 210-11

According to Vorländer and Angeli (2018) the average share of votes for populist parties in Europe has more than tripled since 2000 (See Figure 15).<sup>134</sup> The support also increased in national elections where votes exceeded 50 percent in Italy in 2018, while it was only 8.3 percent in 2008 (see Figure 16). Four other countries (Hungary, Greece, Czechia, and Poland) have also surpassed the 50 percent mark.<sup>135</sup> One of the main characteristics of right-wing populists is the support that lies among less educated voters with lower income. Statista research on the example of Germany shows that those who qualify for higher education entrance exams were least in favour of Populist parties in 2018 (See Figure 17). More specifically, those who have left school after 9<sup>th</sup> grade are 2.5 times more likely to vote right-wing than those with higher education entrance qualifications<sup>136</sup>. The study also found that people with economic difficulties, aged 55 and higher, in white collar or manual jobs, unemployed and belonging to right and even centre of political scale tend to think that immigrants do not contribute to their countries (see Figure 18).<sup>137</sup> And those with lower income (1 500 Euros) are likely to vote for PPs twice as much compared to citizens with higher income (over 4 000 Euros) (See Figure 19).<sup>138</sup>

In discussing rise of populism in EU in the recent years, Visegrad countries tend to gather most attention. They have lowest percentages of foreigners in the EU (with exception of Czechia-4.1%). They also are very homogenous, and most migrants are culturally and historically similar to local populations. Among the four, Hungary and Poland have been most vocal. Back in summer, 2017 newly elected French President Macron travelled to CEE and met with Czechia and Slovakia but avoided Hungary and Poland. It was to reaffirm the French position on the latter states' anti-immigration narrative.<sup>139</sup> Representation of such parties in CEE has increased since 2000 (see Figure 20). With it, media freedom has suffered greatly among

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<sup>134</sup> Hans Vorländer and Oliviero Angeli, eds., "Migration and Populism," *Midem Annual Report* (Midem, 2018), [https://forum-midem.de/cms/data/fm/download/TUD\\_MIDEM\\_Jahresbericht2018\\_Excerpt\\_FINAL.pdf](https://forum-midem.de/cms/data/fm/download/TUD_MIDEM_Jahresbericht2018_Excerpt_FINAL.pdf).

<sup>135</sup> Daniel Clark, "Populist Vote Share in Europe 2018," Statista (Statista Research Department, February 24, 2020), <https://www.statista.com/statistics/883893/populism-in-europe/>.

<sup>136</sup> Evgenia Koptuyug, "Populism by School Leaving Examination amongst Eligible Voters Germany 2018," Statista (Statista Research Department, May 27, 2020), <https://www.statista.com/statistics/958658/populism-amongst-eligible-voters-in-germany-by-school-leaving-examination/>.

<sup>137</sup> "Standard Eurobarometer 84 - Field Work Winter 2015," data.europa.eu (Standard Eurobarometer, November 19, 2015), [https://data.europa.eu/euodp/en/data/dataset/S2098\\_84\\_3\\_STD84\\_ENG](https://data.europa.eu/euodp/en/data/dataset/S2098_84_3_STD84_ENG).

<sup>138</sup> Evgenia Koptuyug, "Populism by Income amongst Eligible Voters in Germany 2018," Statista (Statista Research Department, May 27, 2020), <http://www.statista.com/statistics/958691/populism-amongst-eligible-voters-in-germany-by-income/>.

<sup>139</sup> Ladislav Cabada, "The Visegrad Cooperation in the Context of Other Central European Cooperation Formats," *Politics in Central Europe* 14, no. 2 (September 14, 2018): pp. 174-175, <https://doi.org/10.2478/pce-2018-0014>.

Visegrad countries. If Czechia was criticized for major concentrated ownership, Poland is under high risk of losing its status as free. Hungary on the other hand, was among 20 countries who experienced the biggest decline in 2015. Online and print media, as well as TV actively showed radical views of anti-immigration party leaders. In doing so, they contributed to islamophobia and anti-EU sentiment.<sup>140</sup>

Very shortly after first waves of migrants entered EU shores, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán announced plans to build a wall at the border with Serbia. They also closed their borders to immigrants on multiple occasions and actively rallied against quota system. Back in 2016, the country held a referendum on EU's possible mandatory relocation schemes. Around 97% of all who voted were against, which gave Hungarian government further legitimacy to push their agenda. Despite quite a few right-wing parties in Budapest, beyond any differences they all are united with strong anti-immigration sentiment and the belief "Hungary for Hungarians".<sup>141</sup> Dutch Party for Freedom in 2017 proposed closing all mosques and banning Muslim headscarves. Its leader Geert Wilder adopted Trump's rhetoric and called for "make the Netherlands ours again". Besides Hungarian and Dutch insurgent parties, Danish People's Party, UKIP in UK and French Le Pen also challenged EU integration four years ago. They too proposed referendums on possible changes to their status within the EU, from exiting to introducing border checks. Le Pen even suggested closing free schooling from children whose parents are undocumented.<sup>142</sup> These Eurosceptic views reinforces anti-immigration narrative and interferes with the EU in its attempts to adopt common policies.

According to Vorländer and Angeli (2018), Populism is associated with an impact chain of migration (See Figure 21). It starts with the high influx of immigrants entering the country (the EU in our case). With the inability to control the migration wave, the media intensively covers the topic and puts more attention. The media introduces the debate on the subject matter and on national levels, it engages politicians into discussions as well. This is where right-wing populist groups emerge and gain recognition. Their anti-refugee sentiment causes anxiety and fear among the voter population of the country and mobilizes them to vote. On the next step of

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<sup>140</sup> Věra Stojarová, "Populist, Radical and Extremist Political Parties in Visegrad Countries Vis à Vis the Migration Crisis. In the Name of the People and the Nation in Central Europe," *Open Political Science* 1, no. 1 (September 14, 2018): pp. 37-41, <https://doi.org/10.1515/openps-2018-0001>.

<sup>141</sup> Lilia Ilikova, "Right-Wing Populism in Central Europe: Hungarian Case (Fidesz, Jobbik).," *Utopia y Praxis Latinoamericana*, 25, no. 12 (November 19, 2020): pp. 325-329, <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.4280161>.

<sup>142</sup> Norris Pippa and Inglehart Ronald, "Authoritarian and Populist Values" in *Cultural Backlash: Trump, Brexit, and Authoritarian Populism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 182-87. doi: 10.1017/9781108595841

the chain, right-wing populist parties gain popular votes and are elected for different levels of governmental offices. This leads to these groups proposing and pushing for stricter migration policies.<sup>143</sup> This model resembles Cultural Backlash Theory discussed in the theoretical part of the paper. It also is motivated by social topics as migration and socio-economic division creates generational clash. It gives anti-immigration parties a platform to mobilize voters. After entering office they defend their radical views domestically and internationally.

If we were to adjust this chain to unaccompanied children, we would get the following model, which creates more like a never-ending circle than a chain. It starts with the EU being a threat for UAMs due to its inability to adopt protective measures. It causes chaos and disorder within the countries, creating more social, economic, and political dilemmas. The dissatisfaction of the societies causes the strengthening of populist parties who focus on more aggressive and assertive actions towards migration. Such positions by member states, be it many or few, creates an unfavourable environment for decision making as the member states are unable to come to a consensus, therefore whatever is being adopted is voluntary and has a form of recommendation which is not being implemented on national levels. This leaves the subject of unaccompanied migrant children hidden, and despite having empathy, nothing significant is being done for it, and it makes the EU an unsafe place for these UAMs. From here, it goes in a circle again and creates a dilemma out of which there is only one way - to combat populism, raise awareness, adopt relevant, binding documents, and actively work for the protection of the rights of children.

Most populist leaders have especially negative social constructions against young male migrants. There are lot more male migrants travelling to EU than there are women and as the latter is considered as a vulnerable group, the backlash mainly goes towards men. This is an interesting aspect because vast majority of UAMs in the EU are also males<sup>144</sup>. And as it has been discussed before, many of them are close to the age of maturity, which makes them prime victims of populist extreme narratives.

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<sup>143</sup> Hans Vorländer and Oliviero Angeli, eds., "Migration and Populism," Midem Annual Report (Midem, 2018), [https://forum-midem.de/cms/data/fm/download/TUD\\_MIDEM\\_Jahresbericht2018\\_Excerpt\\_FINAL.pdf](https://forum-midem.de/cms/data/fm/download/TUD_MIDEM_Jahresbericht2018_Excerpt_FINAL.pdf).

<sup>144</sup> Eurostat Database, "Asylum Applicants Considered to be Unaccompanied Minors by Citizenship, Age and Sex - Annual Data (rounded)", Last updated June 3rd, 2021, accessed June 17, 2021, [https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=migr\\_asyunaa&lang=en](https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=migr_asyunaa&lang=en)

## 7.2 LACK OF COOPERATION AMONG EU MEMBER STATES

Usually, decisions are made by a qualified majority, but on sensitive topics such as refugee relocation, the organization usually refers to consensus. During the crisis of 2015, the Council of the EU used a qualified majority way of voting to determine that refugees would be relocated among the EU member states. Despite Eastern and Central European countries opposing the quota system, a qualified majority still enabled the Council to adopt the document. However, Slovak Prime Minister (among Hungarian and Czech officials) has expressed his disagreement towards the policy and stated that this would not be implemented in Slovakia<sup>145</sup>.

Even though not all EU countries are governed by anti-immigration parties, they are definitely present in all levels of governments (see Figure 22). Therefore, whenever negotiations approach, leaders are tasked to broker a deal that will meet expectations domestically. If Italian people feel that they have been abandoned during refugee crisis, the Netherlands observes rise of Euroscepticism. Both affiliated with anti-establishment political forces in their respective countries.<sup>146</sup> European public opinion surveys from 2015 to 2021 shows, that 65 to 85 percent of the Italian population feels that there is a need for more political and economic integration within Europe. In comparison, only 30 to 45 percent of Dutch people share the same opinion<sup>147</sup>.

According to former President of Malta, Marie Louise Coleiro Preca, the main challenge European Union faced during 2015 crisis and onwards, was the lack of solidarity<sup>148</sup> and cooperation. She noted that as UAMs fall under exploitation, violence, and trafficking it is essential that EU members manage to adopt common policies and join forces. The former President also stated that due to political attitudes in individual countries, domestic policies are not effective either. Additionally, she emphasized on the need to support frontline members of the EU, so that the registration, assessments, and relocations can take a positive turn.<sup>149</sup> Despite

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<sup>145</sup> Jacopo Barigazzi and Maïa de La Baume, "EU Forces through Refugee Deal," POLITICO (POLITICO, September 23, 2015), <http://www.politico.eu/article/eu-tries-to-unblock-refugee-migrants-relocation-deal-crisis/>.

<sup>146</sup> Catherine E. De Vries, "Why the EU Struggles to Agree on Anything," POLITICO (POLITICO, July 20, 2020), <https://www.politico.eu/article/why-the-eu-cant-agree-on-anything-coronavirus-budget-mff-recovery-fund/>.

<sup>147</sup> Isabell Hoffmann and Catherine E. de Vries, "Opinions, Moods and Preferences of European Citizens," European public opinion (eupinions, 2020), <https://eupinions.eu/de/trends>.

<sup>148</sup> Term Solidarity refers to sense of unity and loyalty. It eradicates "their" and implements "our". Cooperation and common policies are pre-requisites. For more please refer to: Grimmel Andreas and Giang Susanne (2017:40-43)

<sup>149</sup> Sarah Carabott, "Lack of Solidarity among EU States Exposes Migrant Children to Abuse," Times of Malta (Times of Malta, February 20, 2019), <https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/lack-of-solidarity-among-eu-states-exposes-migrant-children-to-abuse.702518>.

numerous attempts back in 2015 and after, the solidarity among the European countries still is under scrutiny. Back in 2019, Greece requested that other member states take in its unaccompanied minor refugees, however, most countries rejected the plea. Relocation from Italy has also been unsuccessful. As Eliassen (2020) stated, there is no gesture of “European Togetherness,” as call for help has been ignored. In response to why they had declined Greece, Denmark, which was asked to take in as little as 40 UAMs, said that taking refugees from Greece would only cause more people to come to Europe. Central and Eastern European countries such as Hungary, Czechia, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Poland replied that the issue was for Greece to solve as the latter is receiving money and resources from the EU. However, they expressed readiness to help keep external borders secure and migrants out. It was also repeated that they were against any quota and relocation schemes.<sup>150</sup> Among all the member states, only Finland and France agreed to help Greece in their appeal. In 2018, only five member states had taken 75 percent of all asylum seekers on the continent, trying to deal with a 300 times heavier burden than rest. Countries marching against quota systems of the EU have voiced their concern towards the organization trying to interfere with domestic politics. Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and Czechia especially stated that European Union had no right to demand relocation of immigrants to their territories, as their governments were against it. Solidarity was nowhere to be seen even after EU-Turkey deal was struck which reduced the number of incomers in Greece but increased in Italy.<sup>151</sup>

The 2015 deal, on the relocation of 160,000 asylum seekers also failed, and only one-third was transferred. According to Eliassen and Malichudis (2020), the only difference between 2016 and 2020 is that Greece is taking the entire heat, while other countries fail to support it<sup>152</sup>. Consequently, in March, 2020, 65 human rights, humanitarian and civil society organizations urged member states to take in unaccompanied children from Greece in their official statement. They talked about inhumane and dangerous conditions that these children are forced to live on Greek islands, without having access to fundamental human rights. The Call for Action also specified that it would take each member state to relocate as few as 70 unaccompanied children

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<sup>150</sup>Juliet Ferguson Ingeborg Eliassen, “Keeping Them out: Europe's Governments Ignore Minor Migrants,” Investigate Europe (Investigate Europe, March 10, 2020), <http://www.investigate-europe.eu/en/2020/keeping-them-out-how-european-governments-ignored-minor-migrants-for-months/>.

<sup>151</sup> Pp 72-73 solidarity book

<sup>152</sup> Ingeborg Eliassen and Stavros Malichudis, “Europe's Refugee Regime Pushes External Borders to the Limit,” Investigate Europe, February 19, 2020, <http://www.investigate-europe.eu/en/2020/europes-new-refugee-regime-pushing-external-borders-to-the-limit/>.

to their territory, and the problem would be solved<sup>153</sup>. In the summer 2020, according to M. Molander (2020), only 11 countries had agreed to the plea. Luxembourg was the first member state to welcome these minors already in April. While Portugal has pledged to receive 500 UAMs, Sweden has refused to take in any<sup>154</sup>.

Strong anti-immigration parties across European Union does not only result in a lack of cooperation, but it also drastically decreases solidarity among member states. Right-wing populist led governments, as well countries with powerful insurgent parties, had left Greece and Italy especially alone. Since 2015 crisis, each of these countries were forced to receive tens of thousands of immigrants weekly. There was no time and little resources to register, keep track and monitor every refugee. Despite the struggles, many central and eastern bloc states considered financial help to be sufficient. They had declined pleas for help and refused relocations. This has created additional confrontation and paralyzed decision-making process even further.

### 7.3 SCHENGEN AREA – ASSET OR LIABILITY

The Schengen Area (SA) that guarantees the free movement of persons and goods, not only makes it easier for people to travel, but it also creates opportunities for traffickers to move victims from a country to another.

One of the reasons why THB organizations have it relatively easy, is because the border controls across SA is loose.<sup>155</sup> Many trafficked children, or those who are being smuggled, use fake passports or documentation, or use someone else's authentic documents. It is common to present UAMs as adults and avoid extensive checks all together.

Most smuggling groups that have participated in children's arrival to the EU have stronger influence over the minors. They manage to convince the refugees that they can get them tickets or take them anywhere. Many promises are made about employment. It is also common to

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<sup>153</sup> "Urgent Call to Action: EU Member States Should Commit to the Emergency Relocation of Unaccompanied Children from the Greek Islands" (Official Statement by 65 organizations, March 4, 2020), <https://oi-files-d8-prod.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2020-03/Joint%20Call%20to%20Action%20-%20European%20Relocation%20of%20Unaccompanied%20Children.pdf> .

<sup>154</sup> Måns Molander, "EU Solidarity on Migrant Children in Greece Could Change Lives," Human Rights Watch (Expressen, July 7, 2020), <http://www.hrw.org/news/2020/07/07/eu-solidarity-migrant-children-greece-could-change-lives>.

<sup>155</sup> Interpol, "Trafficking in Human Beings in the EU", *Situation Report* Document Ref No: 765175, (February, 2016): 28

spread rumours around a refugee camp to either mobilize a certain group to travel elsewhere or encourage separation. These rumours can be very dangerous not only because they are used as money pits, but also because it can put children under risk. Some camps have reported that the rumours suggested to hide religion and present as a representative of a different ethnicity, because they are treated better. Some refugees have even heard that arriving in damaged boats leads to less likelihood to be sent back.

Schengen Area has no effective and common tools to combat such disinformation or to provide accurate intelligence to refugees. That role is mainly taken by NGOs<sup>156</sup> working at camps. After the failure of the EU to adopt common policies while frontline member states were struggling to accept tens of thousands of migrants, many civil and voluntary organizations emerged. They not only provided essential resources to newcomers, but also aimed to protect the rights of the vulnerable. Such intermediary groups have been major help to Greece and Italy as well as to refugees in Hungary. These are the groups that have battled misinformation and aided UAMs in their legal affairs.

Schengen Area makes crossing the borders easier also for those unaccompanied children who travel by bus, train, or car. One of the big reasons is family reunification or friendships. There are rising number of cases where unaccompanied migrant children travel to the EU in a group.<sup>157</sup> Sometimes they know each other from before, but sometimes those are new connections. Making a dangerous journey and facing challenges together creates trust and relationships that are as important and as strong as those that siblings share. However, most of the times after arriving to the Union, these informal networks are not respected, unless children's rights organizations and social workers get involved and make a case for joint settlement.

On the cross-border information sharing, Parliamentary Assembly (2020)<sup>158</sup> recommended the Committee of Ministers to try to implement Interpol Yellow and Black alert systems on SIS. This way the member states can have a relatively accurate data on who is still missing, who

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<sup>156</sup> Uifalean Gabriel, "European NGO' and the Refugee Crisis: Case studies of Serbia and Hungary" in *The Refugee Crisis in the European Union*, ed. Alexandrescu Mihai, (Cluj-Napoca: CA Publishing, 2016), 183-84

<sup>157</sup> Sue Clayton, "Narrating the Young Migrant Journey: Themes of Self-Representation," *Unaccompanied Young Migrants*, January 30, 2019, pp. 115-134, <https://doi.org/10.1332/policypress/9781447331865.003.0006>.

<sup>158</sup> Serap Yaşar, "Parliamentary Assembly," PACE Missing refugee and migrant children in Europe (Parliamentary Assembly, January 30, 2020), <http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-EN.asp?fileid=28308&lang=en>.

has been found (re-registered) and who has passed away, so that all available time and resources are diverted to ongoing cases.

To conclude, the Schengen Area, the basis of the EU's free movement of people, is one of the main principles of the Union. It creates land of opportunity for all refugee children who have the freedom to move around after their asylum is approved. However, SA also carries risks to the safety of these UAMs. As argued above, the smuggling and THB organizations exploit vulnerable UAMs at higher rates. They use disinformation and loneliness of the child to convince them to leave. Rising number of voluntary organizations in the region has been a relief to local governments and refugees alike. Despite the efforts, data collection and sharing into one common system remains the main challenge, thus making SA a liability.

## 8 CONCLUSION

The paper aimed to study the reasons behind European Union's inability to adopt common policies on unaccompanied migrant children. It was also suggested that the organization contributes to the disappearance of the UAMs, thus it threatens their safety.

To answer the research questions, three level analysis was conducted. One studied the current system of the Union that dangers the migrant children and ultimately acts as a push factor in their disappearance. The second analysis was constructed over the idea that social perceptions of migrants, especially those from Muslim countries and close to the age of maturity, are especially negative. These social constructions are reinforced in the society and by the policymakers, while the media plays an important role. To identify the latter phenomena, British; Hungarian; French and Austrian experiences are closely monitored. Furthermore, a comprehensive analysis of Euronews English language website is also offered. The media analysis focuses solely on the portrayal of unaccompanied migrant children and possible social and political influence it may care. The third analysis offers a more understanding into the emergence of anti-migration parties and their role in the European Union's decision making. Connecting populist parties' national attitudes with the parties' leaders gives a perspective to observe European solidarity. Lastly, Schengen Area, one of the most beneficial attributes of the EU is viewed as an asset and a liability. The study of the topic led to some interesting outcomes.

It was determined that unaccompanied migrant children are dependent deviants of the society, due to the power and social perceptions they hold. If children under the age of 15 are vulnerable and deserving, 15–17-year-old males are radicalized. The support for UAMs lies in international conventions and regulations, thus universalistic policies are the foundation. On the other hand, sick or infants gain more public sentiment and revive the responsibility to protect, while group of Muslim boys is often treated with suspicion and fear. This gives the legitimacy to particularistic policies. Such as, removing UAMs from shelters immediately after they turn 18 and deny access to social workers or guardians. The media analysis of British tabloids illustrated how young migrant boys from Middle East are depicted in the press. They are associated with petty crimes and their disappearance is considered to be voluntary. Immigration from within the EU or other pre-dominantly Christian countries is welcome among European states, while Islam is brushed aside and commonly connected to terrorism among EU citizens' perceptions. The policy change towards the UAMs has been possible either through high political pressure or social mobilization via media. The latter proved to be an important tool when the press reported the death of 3-year-old Syrian refugee in Turkey. The picture of the boy alone was enough to turn refugee into humanitarian crisis and view high influx of immigrants as movements of people escaping from great horrors than the Mediterranean Sea. Following high media coverage in September 2015 led to social perceptions leaning more towards the refugees rather than against. Consequently, European countries that previously rejected the plea for UAM relocations, now had been widely approved. Additionally, besides ethnic majorities of EU populations and politicians, 2015 crisis observed a rapid spike in the number of civil and humanitarian organizations. These intermediary groups emerged shortly after it was clear that no one EU country had the capabilities to stand alone. These NGOs managed to gather necessary resources and help to local governments and refugees alike. They have always been most positively charged groups towards the migrants, always advocating for their rights and freedoms. The last proposition of Social Construction of Target Populations suggest that certain policy changes will not be adopted if the advantaged groups do not support them. And on the contrary, if policy in question is for the benefit of the majority, it will gain support. As it has been seen in the Central and Easter European countries, their resistance towards the quota system had disrupted European Union's effective decision making.

As the number of refugees entering EU borders increased, so did the support for anti-immigration (mainly right-wing populist) parties. Europe experience sudden changes in local,

national, and regional offices with more populists gaining the platform. Especially vocal group, CEE is characterised as homogenous, Christian society, whose leaders used the common culture and values of the EU to draw contrast between the continent and radical Islam. The Cultural Backlash Theory suggested that populists mostly mobilize older, more nostalgic part of the society, with lower income and education. This is because these groups face more social dilemmas and these parties feed off social problems. The analysis showed that on average, over 55 years old, 9 grade graduates with white collar; manual jobs or unemployment, vote populist in much larger margins than the rest. The paper also looked at the rhetoric of major populist leaders in the EU, including Le Pen; Kurz; Orban; Salvini and some more. It was found that these leaders often focus on European identity and culture to reach masses and depict refugees as “the threat”. They also to appeal to the voters by distinguishing “us” and the “other”, where the other is not as worthy as European communities. It was also determined that due to the rise of xenophobic attitudes in the EU, the solidarity among the member states has suffered. Most of the countries left Greece and Italy in their plea for help and requests on relocation. Italy has supported the idea of increased integration in the organization, but northern states such as the Netherlands, oppose it. Even when discussing the resettlements of UAMs, most countries do not follow. And when Greece needed help at the shores, most EU states stated that financial help was enough as it was a Greek problem and it had to deal with it. Despite differences and lack of solidarity, most anti-immigration party countries considered strengthening the external borders as a priority.

Coronavirus pandemic has affected all levels of social, political and economic lives. Healthcare dominated the agenda and the press in the past year and a half. On the content analysis of Euronews, it was found that refugee crisis in Europe, though still growing and urgent, did not attract as much attention as it did in the previous years. Of all the articles published on the website, less than 1.8 percent provided information and issue development.

The main challenges of the EU that contributes to the disappearance of the UAMs include information gathering and sharing. Individual member states’ various experiences also make it harder to put all data in one compatible system. The nature of EU policies is also a major problem. They are voluntary and give recommendations which decreases the feeling of urgency and need for unity. On the other hand, loose border controls at the Schengen Area and active coordination between smuggling and trafficking organizations pave the way for the disappearance of UAMs. Along this, family reunifications, interpersonal links to other children in migration and the fear of uncertain future are the main derivatives for UAMs to go missing.

It is noted that if not all, most of these can be resolved if the European Union manages to bring together all member states and adopt strong common policy.

Imprisonment, deprivation of liberty, and detention for more than 100 days is a practice on European soil, and that affects the psychology and well-being of the children who would rather get involved illegal labour market than wait to turn 18 and be kicked out.

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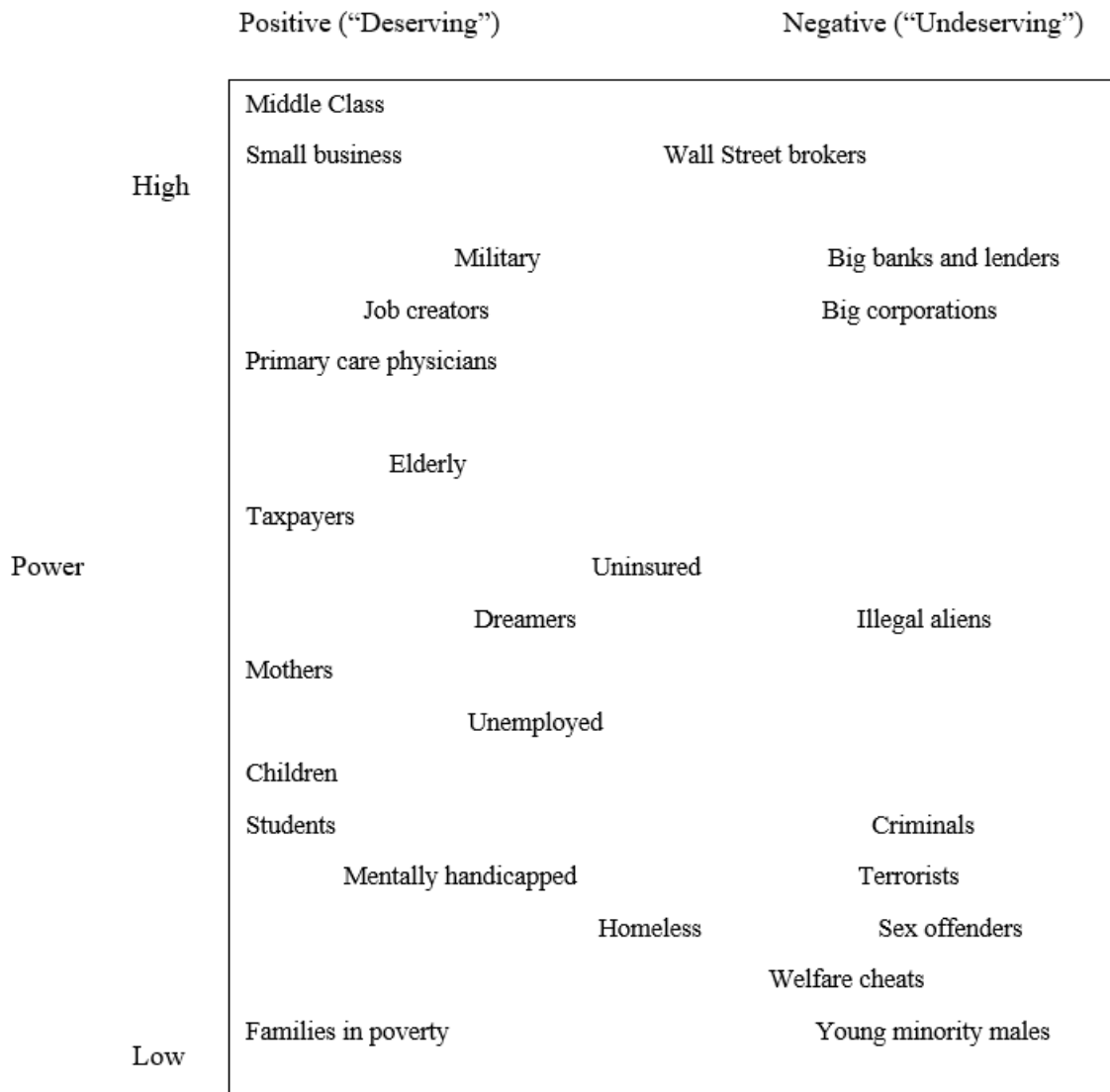
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129. Věra Stojarová, "Populist, Radical and Extremist Political Parties in Visegrad Countries Vis à Vis the Migration Crisis. In the Name of the People and the Nation in Central Europe," *Open Political Science* 1, no. 1 (September 14, 2018), doi:10.1515/openps-2018-0001.

130. Yaşar, Serap, “Missing Refugee and Migrant Children in Europe”, *Council of Europe, Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons*, doc. 15026, (2017), Accessed June 17, 2021, <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/missing-refugee-and-migrant-children-europe>
131. Zuzana Obertová and Cristina Cattaneo, “Child Trafficking and the European Migration Crisis: The Role of Forensic Practitioners,” *Forensic Science International* 282 (2018), doi:10.1016/j.forsciint.2017.10.036.

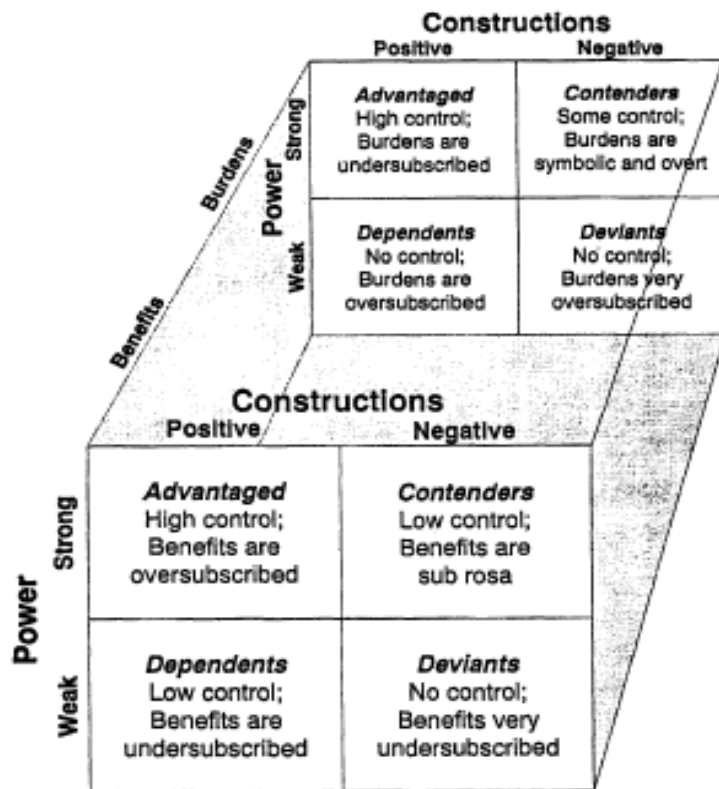
## 10 FIGURES

Figure 1 – Social Construction and Power Typology



Source: Ingram Helen, Schneider Anne and deLeon Peter “Social Construction and Policy Design” in *Theories of the Policy Process*, ed. Sabatier Paul A. and Weible Christopher M., 3rd ed. (London: Routledge, 2014), 111.

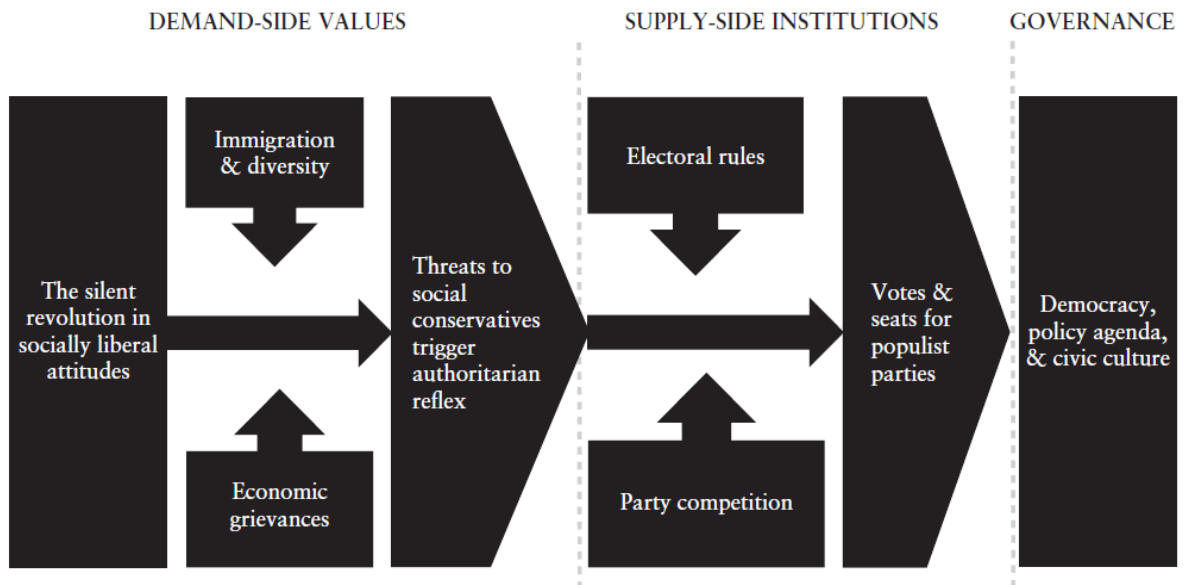
Figure 2 – Variations in How Policy Treats Target Populations: Allocation of Benefits and Burdens



Note: Benefits are shown on the front part of the box to each type of target; burdens are shown at the back of the box.

Source: Schneider, Anne, and Helen Ingram. "Social Construction of Target Populations: Implications for Politics and Policy." *The American Political Science Review* 87, no. 2 (June, 1993): 337. Accessed June 8, 2021. doi:10.2307/2939044.

Figure 3 – Cultural Backlash Theory Framework



Source: Norris Pippa and Inglehart Ronald, "Cultural Backlash Theory" in *Cultural Backlash: Trump, Brexit, and Authoritarian Populism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 33. doi: 10.1017/9781108595841

Figure 4 - Asylum Applicants Considered to be Unaccompanied Minors by Citizenship, Age and Sex - Annual Data (rounded)

CITIZEN: Extra-EU27 (from 2020) SEX: Total AGE: Total UNIT: Person

TIME	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
GEO											
European Union - 27 countries (from 2020)	8,895	10,290	11,420	11,460	21,205	91,955	60,075	29,195	16,785	14,115	13,550
European Union - 28 countries (2013-2020)	10,610	11,690	12,540	12,725	23,150	95,205	63,250	31,400	19,845	:	:
Belgium	860	1,385	975	415	470	2,545	1,020	735	750	1,220	1,210
Bulgaria	20	25	60	185	940	1,815	2,750	440	480	525	800
Czechia	5	10	5	0	5	15	5	5	10	10	0
Denmark	410	270	355	350	815	2,125	1,185	460	240	195	145
Germany (until 1990 former territory of the FRG)	1,950	2,125	2,095	2,485	4,400	22,255	35,935	9,085	4,085	2,690	2,230
Estonia	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ireland	35	25	25	20	30	35	35	30	15	50	30
Greece	145	60	75	325	440	420	2,350	2,455	2,640	3,330	2,800
Spain	15	10	15	10	15	25	30	20	75	100	45
France	610	595	490	365	270	320	475	590	740	755	650
Croatia	:	:	70	55	10	5	170	40	25	35	115
Italy	305	825	970	805	2,505	4,070	6,020	10,005	3,885	660	520
Cyprus	35	15	25	55	50	105	215	225	260	565	190
Latvia	5	0	0	5	0	10	5	10	5	5	0
Lithuania	10	10	5	0	5	5	0	0	0	0	0
Luxembourg	20	20	15	45	30	105	50	50	35	35	50
Hungary	150	60	185	380	605	8,805	1,220	230	40	10	0
Malta	5	25	105	335	55	35	15	5	5	20	10
Netherlands	700	485	380	310	960	3,855	1,705	1,180	1,225	1,045	985
Austria	600	1,005	1,375	935	1,975	8,275	3,900	1,350	390	860	1,370
Poland	230	405	245	255	185	150	140	115	125	105	115
Portugal	5	5	10	55	15	50	25	40	40	45	95
Romania	35	55	135	15	95	55	45	265	135	185	980
Slovenia	25	60	50	30	65	40	245	390	555	670	550
Slovakia	5	20	5	5	10	5	0	10	10	30	10
Finland	315	150	165	160	195	2,535	370	175	105	95	145
Sweden	2,395	2,655	3,575	3,850	7,045	34,295	2,160	1,285	900	875	500
Iceland	0	0	5	0	0	5	20	10	5	5	5
Liechtenstein	0	0	0	0	0	5	5	0	0	0	0
Norway	630	635	705	670	940	4,790	270	175	145	125	75
Switzerland	220	310	495	355	775	2,670	1,985	765	435	490	600
United Kingdom	1,715	1,395	1,125	1,265	1,945	3,255	3,175	2,205	3,060	3,775	:
Total	10,610	11,690	12,540	12,725	23,150	95,205	65,525	32,355	20,430	18,505	14,235 <sup>(d)</sup>

Available flags:

**b** break in time series

**e** estimated

**p** provisional

**u** low reliability

**c** confidential

**f** forecast

**r** revised

**z** not applicable

**d** definition differs, see metadata

**n** not significant

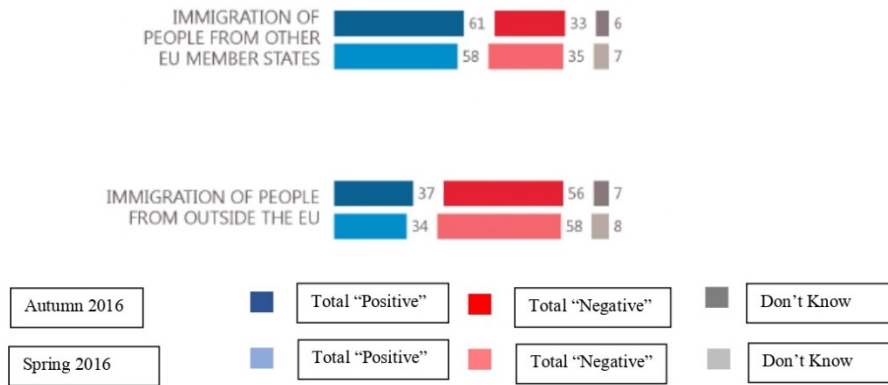
**s** Eurostat estimate

Special value:

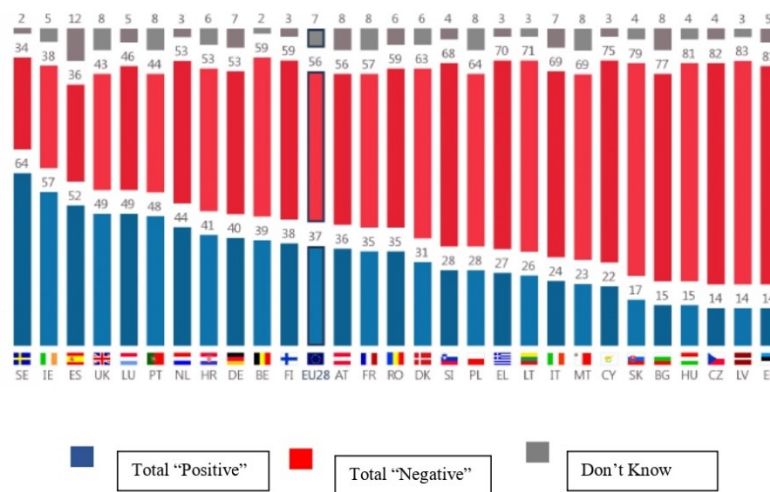
: not available

Source: Eurostat Database, "Asylum Applicants Considered to be Unaccompanied Minors by Citizenship, Age and Sex - Annual Data (rounded)", Last updated June 3rd, 2021, accessed June 17, 2021, [https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=migr\\_asyunaa&lang=en](https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=migr_asyunaa&lang=en)

Figure 5 – Immigration of people from other EU Member States and from Outside the EU



Autumn 2016 – Immigration of People from Outside the EU



Source: Standard Eurobarometer, Field Period May 2016-November 2016, Report 85 & 86

Figure 6 – EU28: Majority believe that Foreigners are a Burden on the Welfare System

## EU28: Majority believe that foreigners are a burden on the welfare system

Foreigners are a burden on my country's system.



December 2015

[Get the data](#)

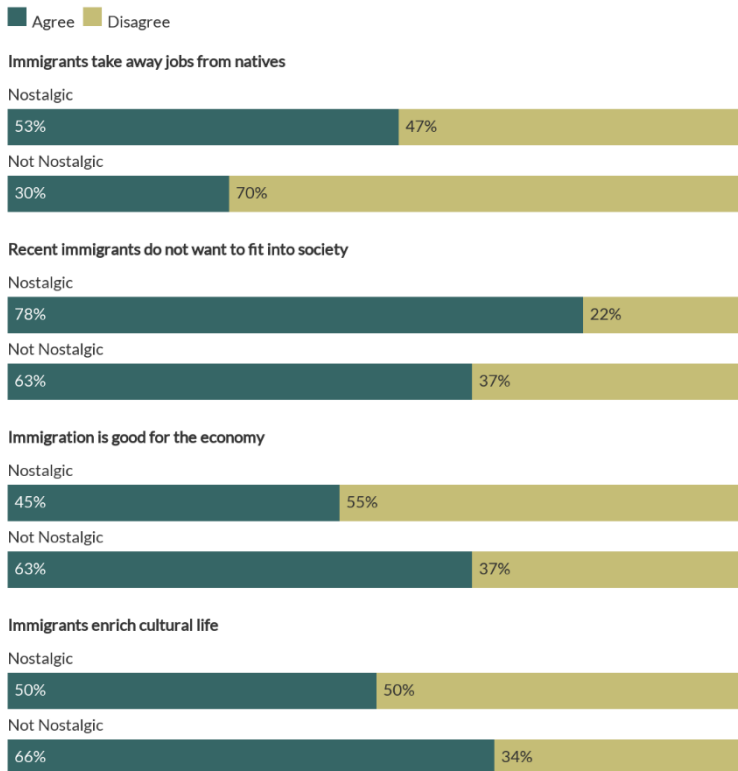
eupinions | what do you think?

Source: Eupinions, “Border Protection and Freedom of Movement”, Survey Period December, 2015. Accessed June 17, 2021, <https://eupinions.eu/foreigners/are/a/burden/on/the/welfare/system>

Figure 7 – EU28: Views on Immigration

## EU28: Views on Immigration

Percentage of respondents agree or disagree with the following statements.



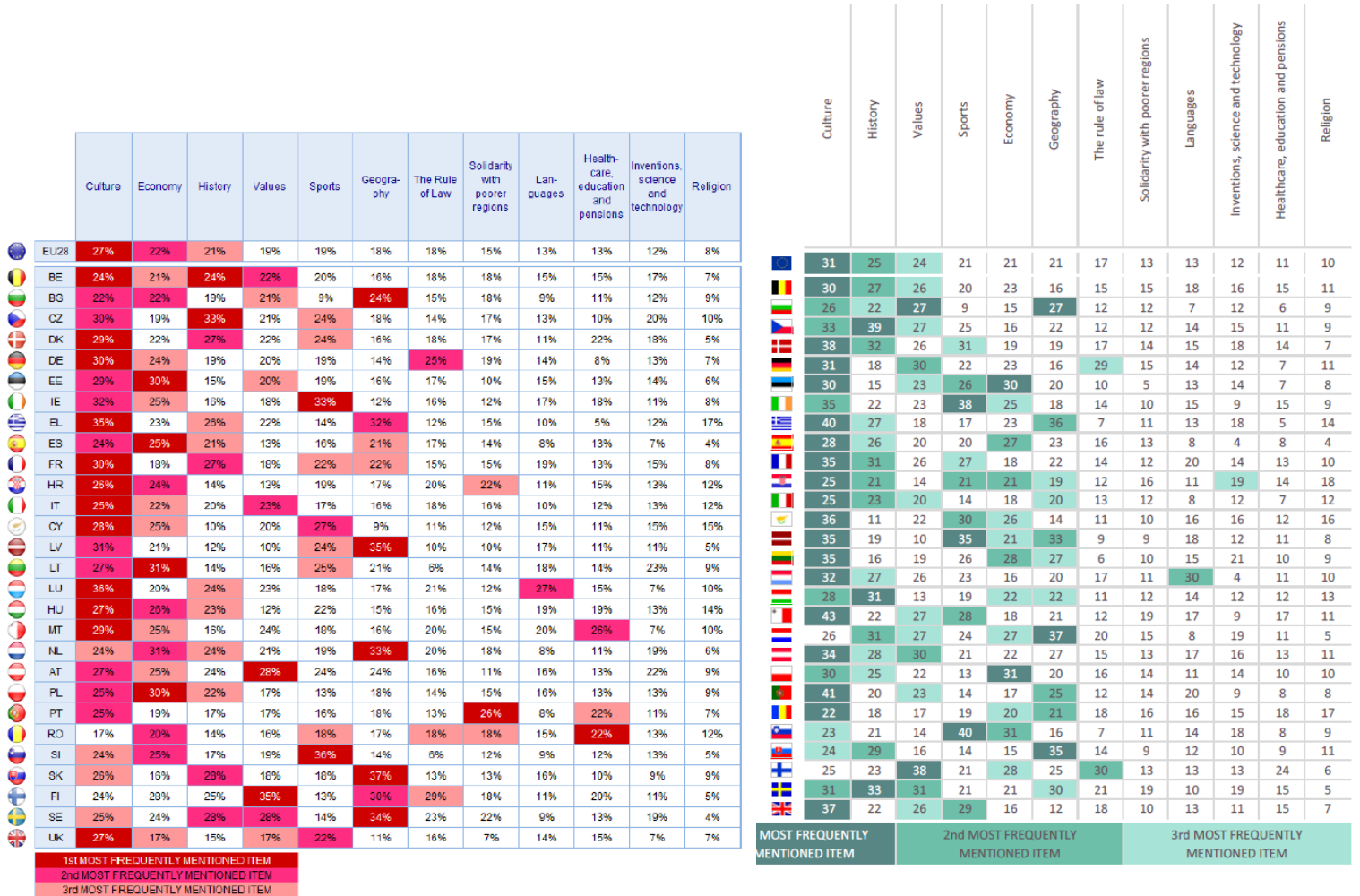
July 2018

[Get the data](#)

eupinions | what do you think?

Source: Eupinions, “The Power of the Past”, Survey Period July 2018. Accessed June 17, 2021, <https://eupinions.eu/views/on/immigration>

Figures 8 and 9 – In Your Opinion, Among the Following Issues, Which are those that Most Create a Feeling of Community Among EU Citizens?

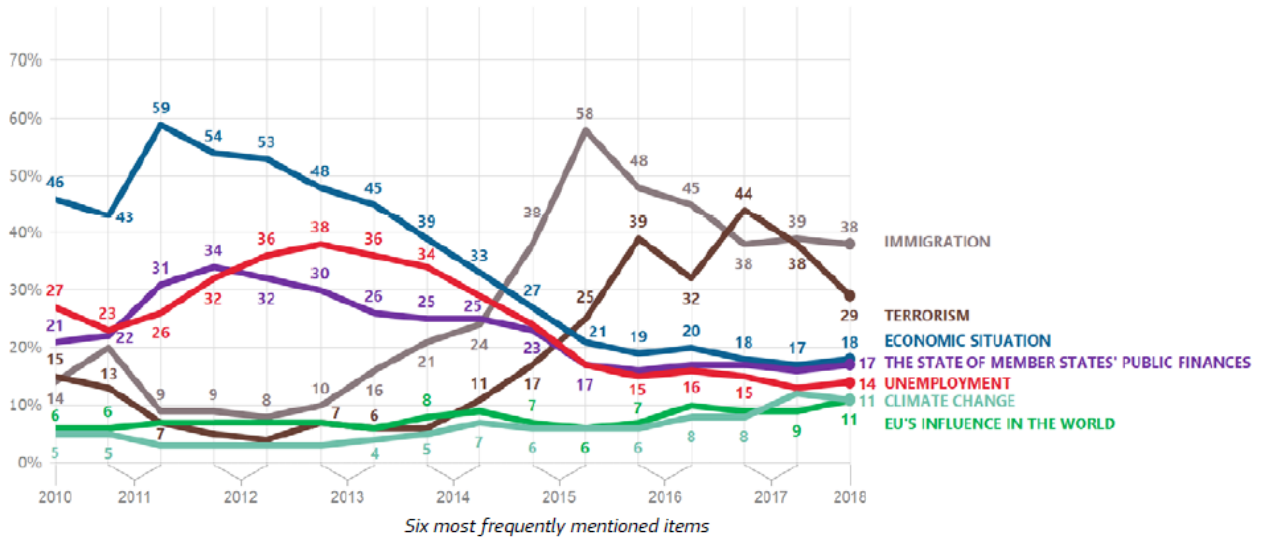


May 2015

May 2017

Source: Standard Eurobarometer, Field Period May 2015 & May 2017. Accessed June 17, 2021.  
<https://data.europa.eu/83> <https://data.europa.eu/87>

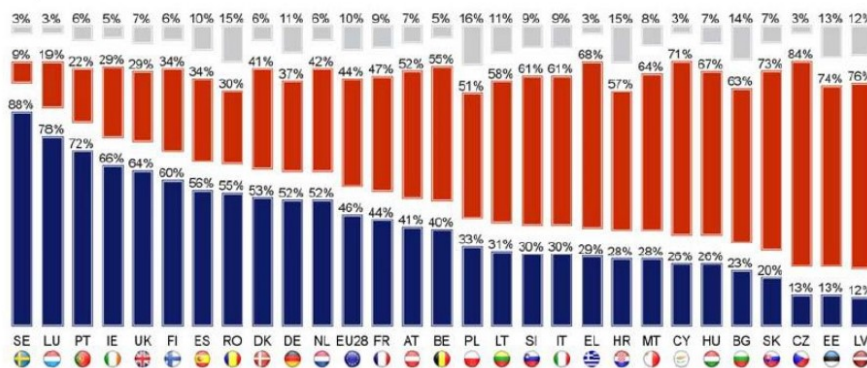
Figure 10 – What Do you Think are the Two Most Important Issues Facing the EU at the Moment?



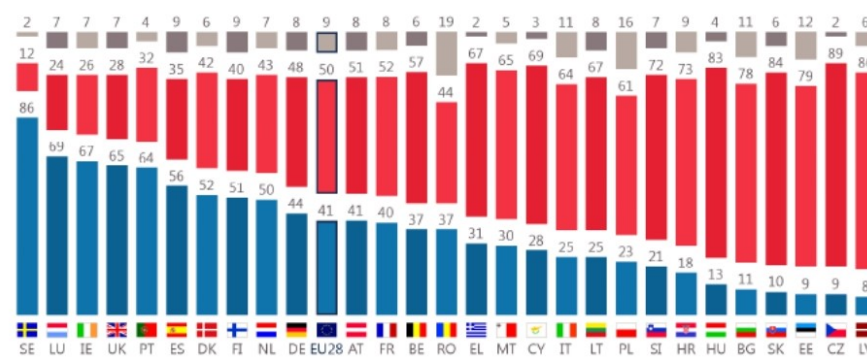
Source: Standard Eurobarometer, Field Period March 2010-March 2018. Accessed June 17, 2021.  
<https://data.europa.eu/most/important/issues>

Figure 11 - To What Extent Do You Agree or Disagree with Each of the Following Statements? Immigrants contribute a lot to (OUR COUNTRY) (%)

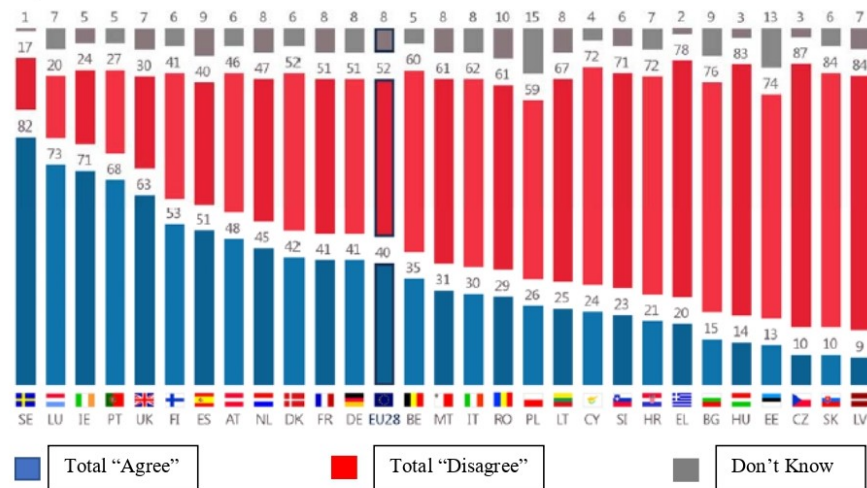
May 2015



November 2015



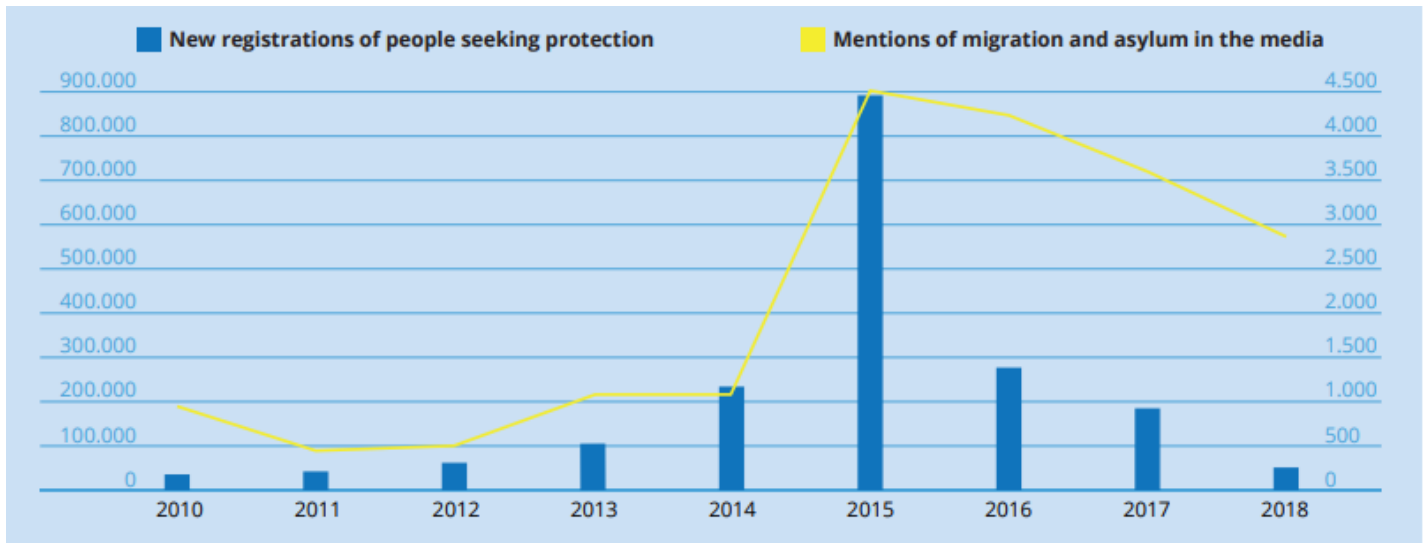
May 2016



■ Total "Agree"
 ■ Total "Disagree"
 ■ Don't Know

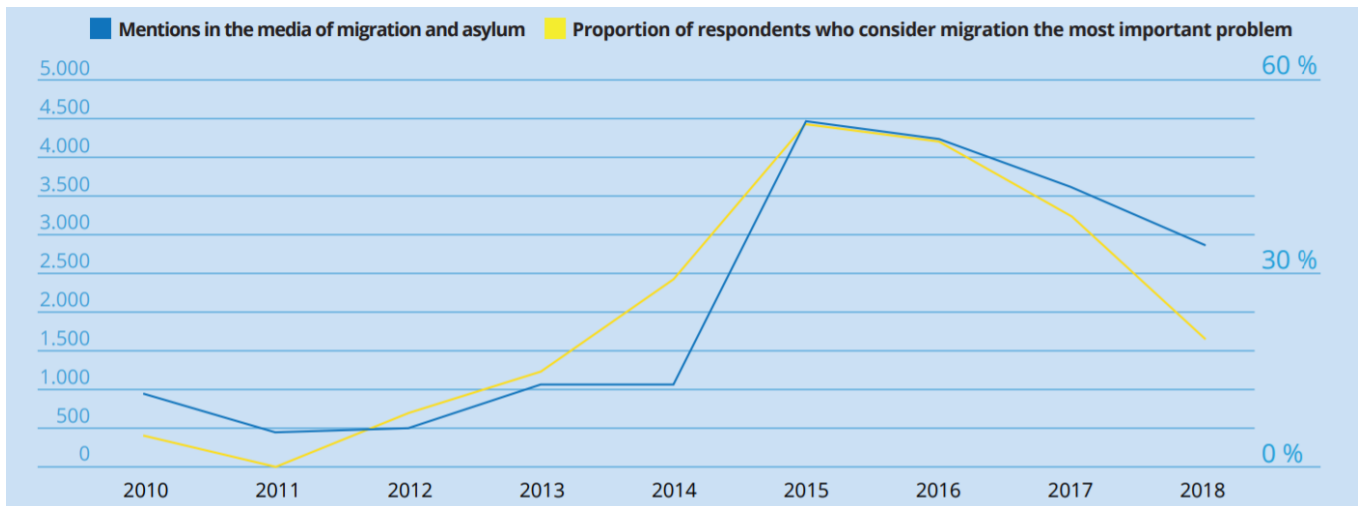
Source: Standard Eurobarometer, Field Period May 2015-May 2016. Reports: 83; 84 & 85

Figure 12 – Relationships Between Number of New Registrations of Asylum Seekers and Mentions of Migration and Asylum in the Media



Source: Eds. Vorländer Hans and Angeli Oliviero, “Migration und Populism”, *Mercator Forum for Migration and Democracy*, (Dresden: Jahresbericht, 2018): 11. <https://forum-midem.de/annual/report/2018>

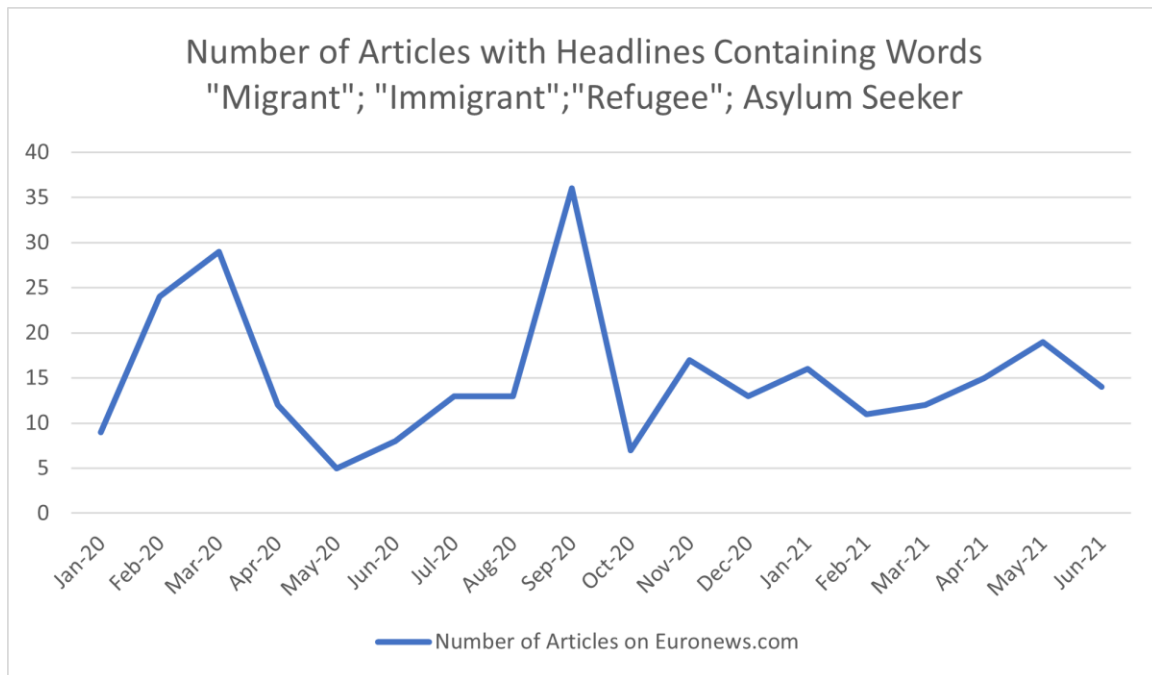
Figure 13 – Relationships Between Media Mentions and Salience of the Topic of Migration



Note: Mentions are based on the use of words “migration” and “asylum” by Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung; Süddeutsche Zeitung and Spiegel Online

Source: Eds. Vorländer Hans and Angeli Oliviero, “Migration und Populism”, *Mercator Forum for Migration and Democracy*, (Dresden: Jahresbericht, 2018): 12. <https://forum-midem.de/annual/report/2018>

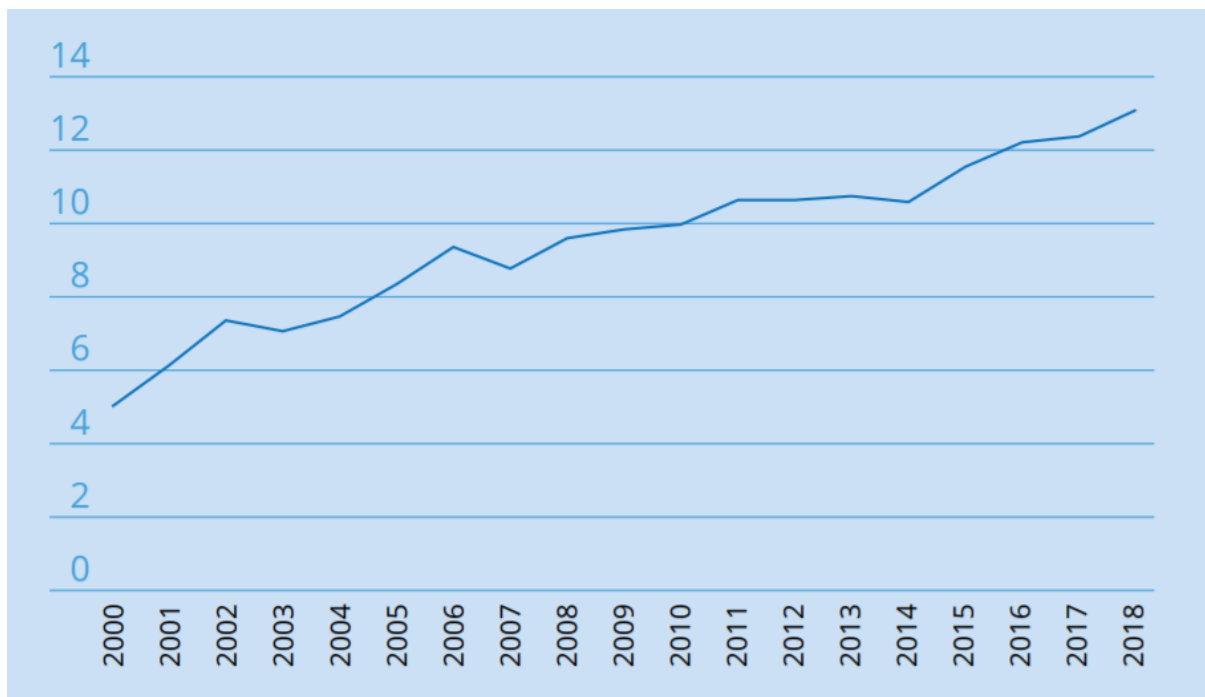
Figure 14 – Number of Articles with Headlines Containing Words “Migrant”; “Immigrant”; “Refugee”; “Asylum Seeker”



Note: Figure made by the author of this paper based on over 15,000 articles from Euronews English webpage, from January 1, 2020 to (including) June 17, 2021

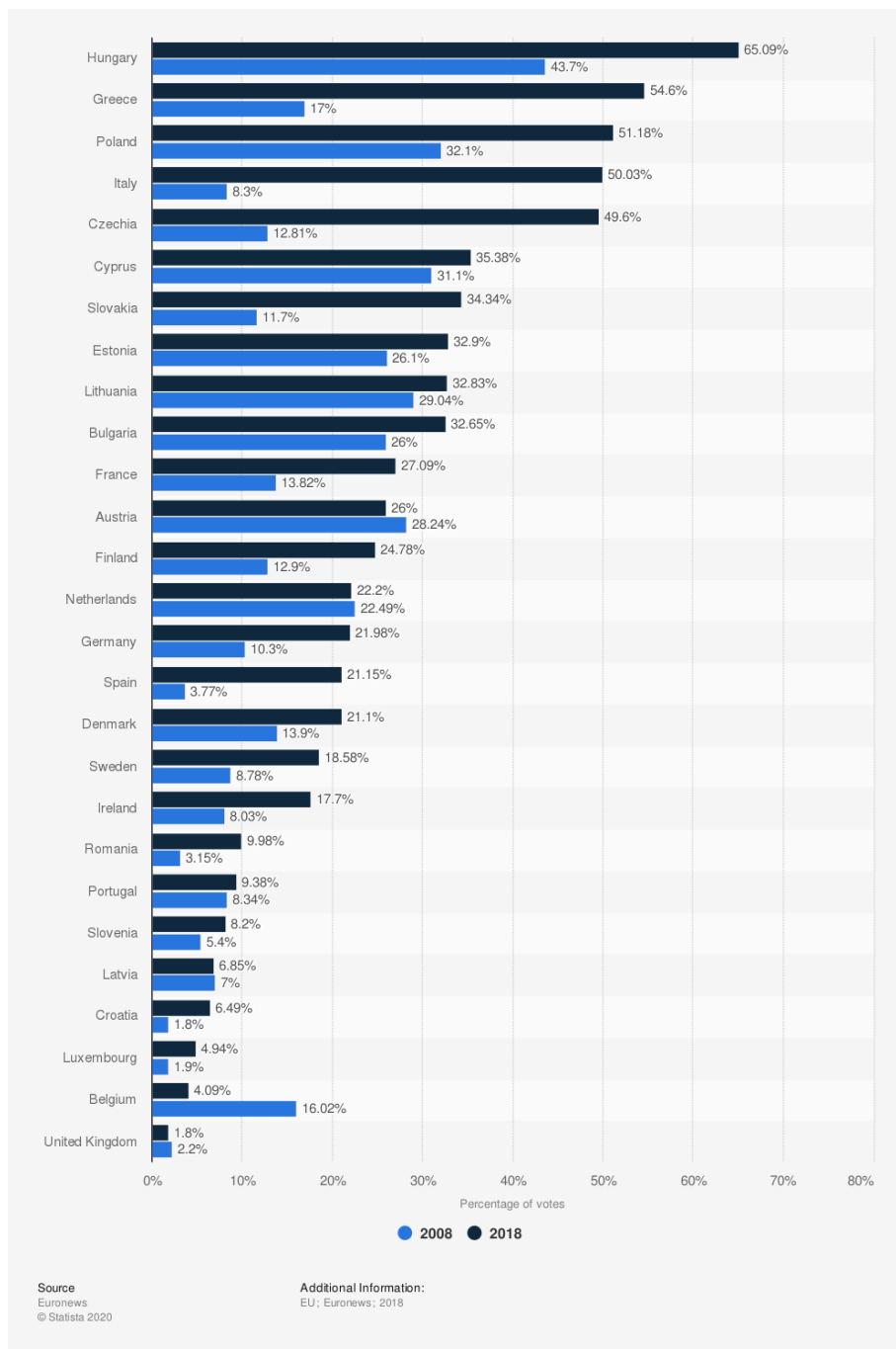
Source: <https://www.euronews.com/>

Figure 15 – Average Share of the Vote for Populist Parties in Europe in %



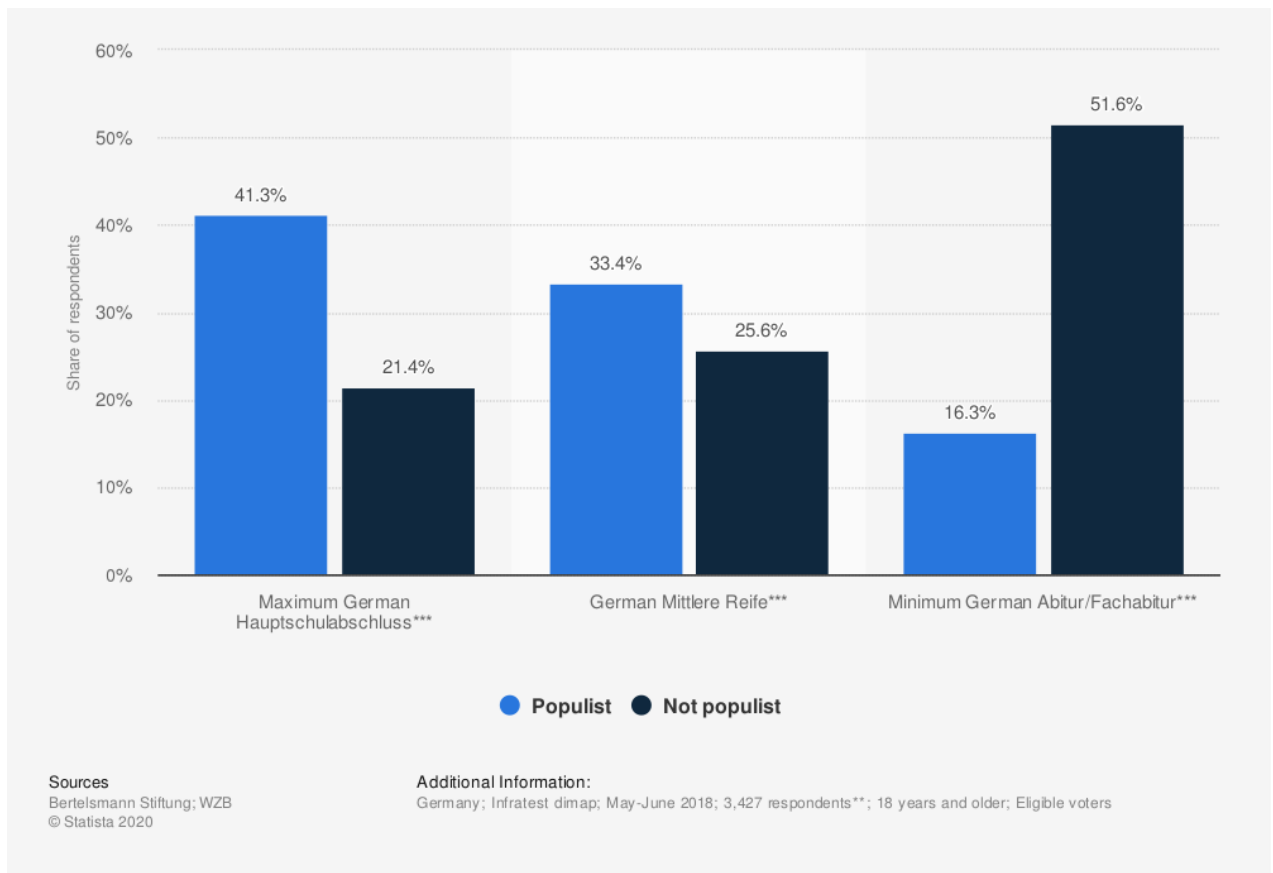
Source: Hans Vorländer and Oliviero Angeli, eds., “Migration and Populism,” Midem Annual Report (Midem, 2018), [https://forum-midem.de/cms/data/fm/download/TUD\\_MIDEM\\_Jahresbericht2018\\_Excerpt\\_FINAL.pdf](https://forum-midem.de/cms/data/fm/download/TUD_MIDEM_Jahresbericht2018_Excerpt_FINAL.pdf).

Figure 16 – Populist Vote Share in the National Elections of Selected European Union (EU) Countries as of March 2018



Source: Clark, Daniel, “Populist Vote Share in the National Elections of Selected EU Countries as of March 2018”, *Statista Research Department*, 24 Feb. 2020. Retrieved July 10, 2020 from [www.statista.com/statistics/883893/populism-in-europe/](http://www.statista.com/statistics/883893/populism-in-europe/)

Figure 17 – Populism Amongst Eligible Voters in Germany in 2018, by School Leaving Examination



Note: \*\*\*Hauptschulabschluss (general education school leaving certificate after grade 9); Mittlere Reife (general education school leaving certificate after grade 10); Abitur/Fachabitur (higher education entrance qualification).

Source: Koptuyug Evgeniya, “Populism by School Leaving Examination amongst Eligible Voters Germany 2018”, *Statista Research Department*, 27 May 2020. Retrieved July 10, 2020 from [www.statista.com/statistics/958658/populism-amongst-eligible-voters-in-germany-by-school-leaving-leaving-examination/](https://www.statista.com/statistics/958658/populism-amongst-eligible-voters-in-germany-by-school-leaving-leaving-examination/)

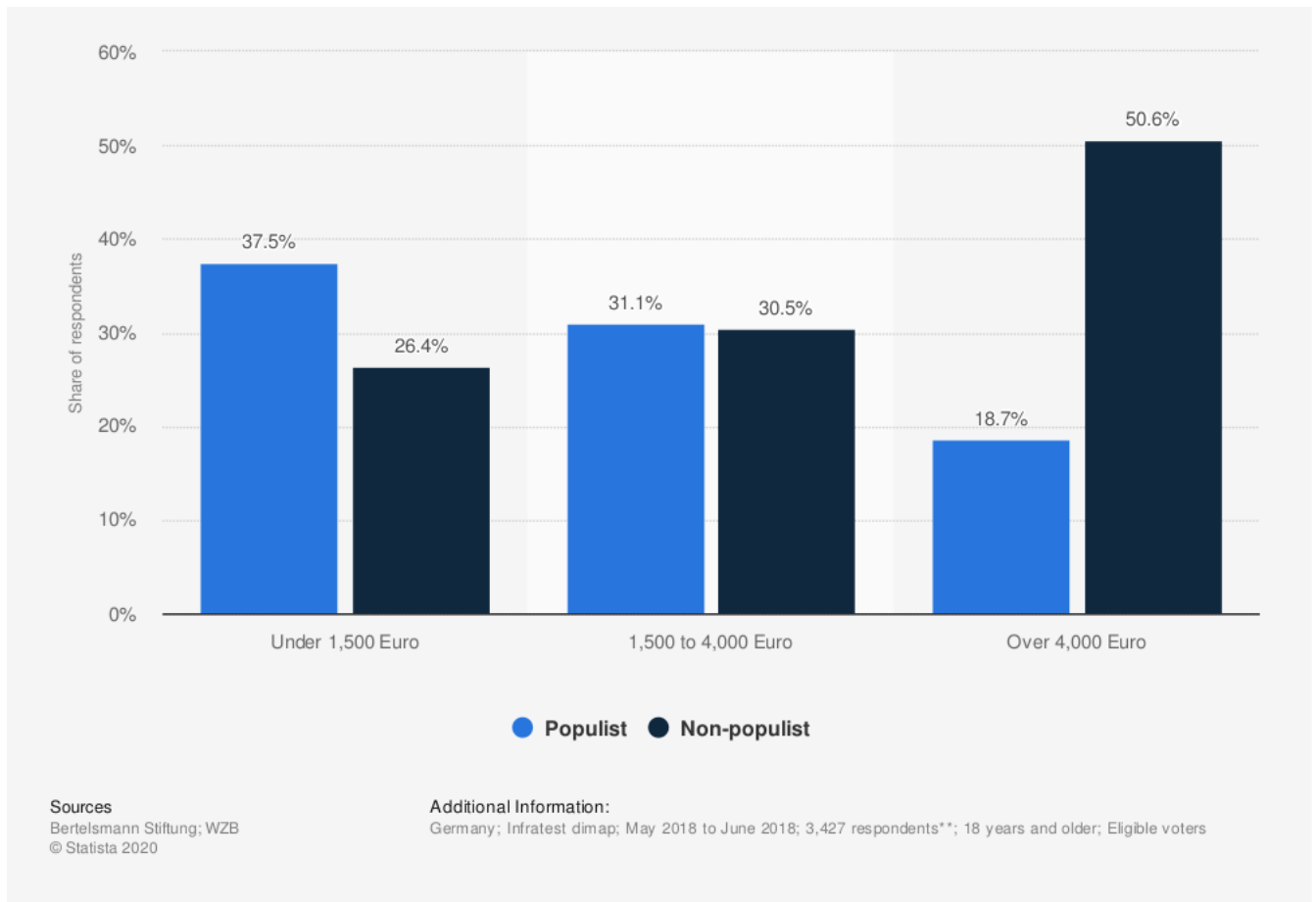
Figure 18 – To What Extent Do You Agree or Disagree with Each of the Following Statements? Immigrants Contribute a lot to (OUR COUNTRY) (%)

	Immigrants contribute a lot to (OUR COUNTRY)	
	Total 'Agree'	Total 'Disagree'
EU28	41	50
<b>Gender</b>		
Man	44	49
Woman	39	51
<b>Age</b>		
15-24	45	45
25-39	44	48
40-54	44	48
55 +	37	54
<b>Education (End of)</b>		
15-	35	56
16-19	36	56
20+	52	40
Still studying	51	40
<b>Socio-professional category</b>		
Self-employed	43	50
Managers	57	35
Other white collars	38	53
Manual workers	41	52
House persons	33	54
Unemployed	39	53
Retired	35	56
Students	51	40
<b>Difficulties paying bills</b>		
Most of the time	30	61
From time to time	36	56
Almost never/ Never	46	45
<b>Consider belonging to</b>		
The working class	39	52
The lower middle class	42	50
The middle class	41	51
The upper middle class	54	38
The upper class	42	52
<b>Left-right political scale</b>		
Left	55	39
Centre	44	49
Right	31	61

Source: Standard Eurobarometer, field work Winter 2015, published Spring 2015.

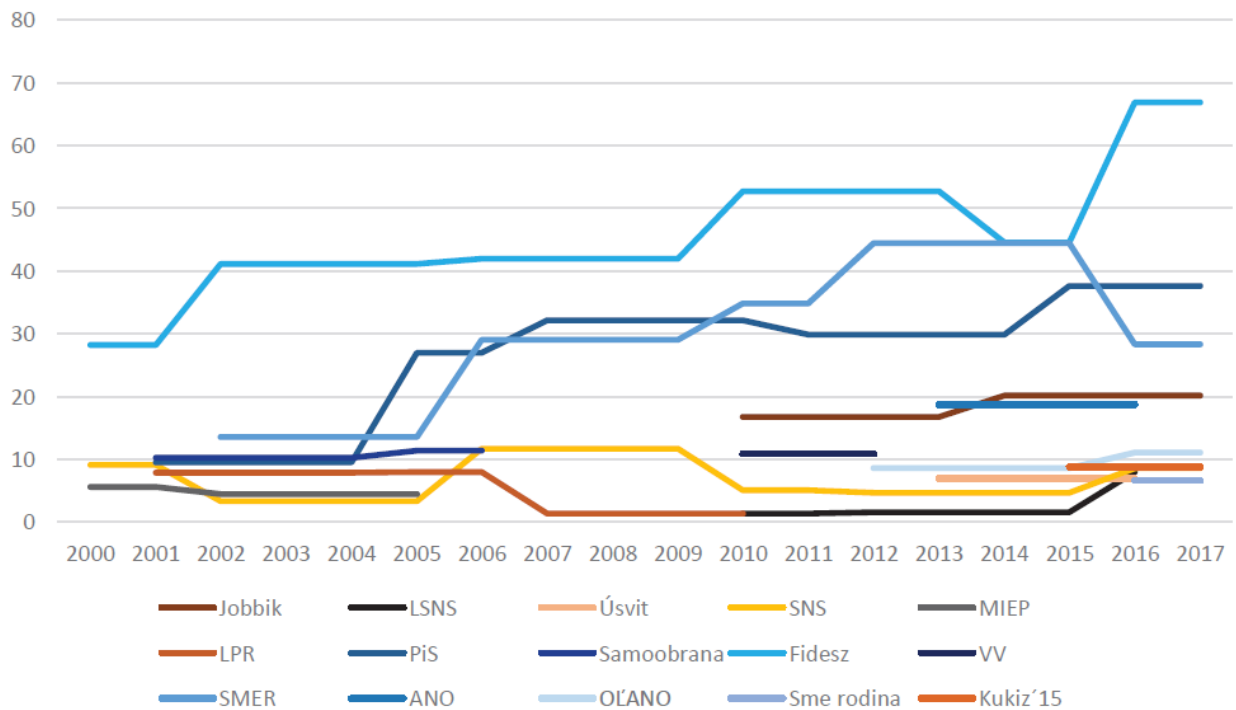
[https://data.europa.eu/data/datasets/s2098\\_84\\_3\\_std84\\_eng?locale=en](https://data.europa.eu/data/datasets/s2098_84_3_std84_eng?locale=en)

Figure 19 – Share of Eligible Voters with Populist Attitudes in Germany in 2018, by Income



Source: Koptuyug Evgeniya, “Populism by Income amongst Eligible Voters in Germany 2018“, *Statista Research Department*, 27 May 2020. Retrieved July 10, 2020 from [www.statista.com/statistics/958691/populism-amongst-eligible-voters-in-germany-by-income/](http://www.statista.com/statistics/958691/populism-amongst-eligible-voters-in-germany-by-income/).

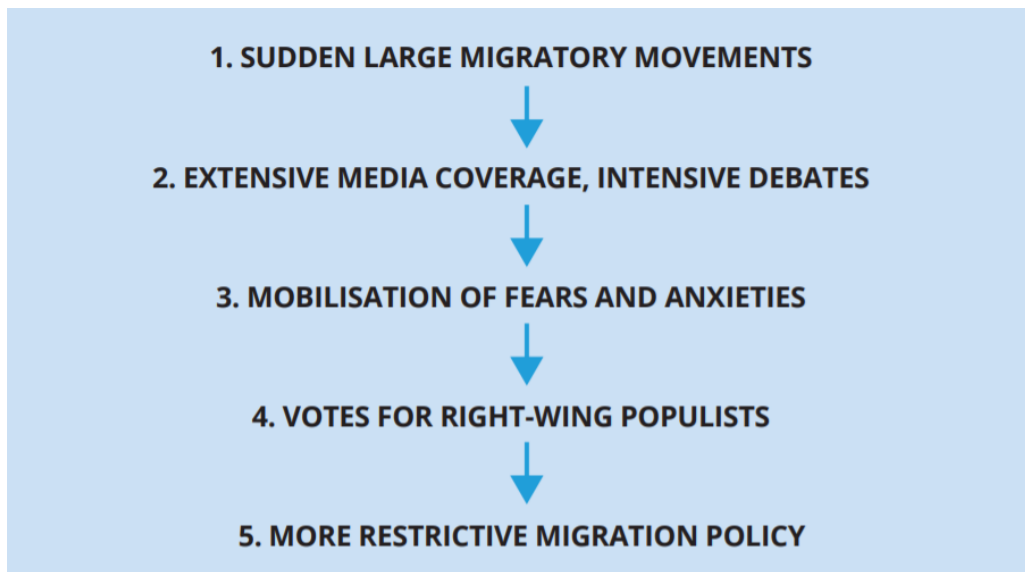
Figure 20 – Percentage Vote Share of Populist, Radical and Extremist Political Parties in CEE since 2000



Note: Parties by Country are as follows. Hungary: Jobbik; Fidesz; MIEP. Poland: LPR; PiS; Samoobrana; Kukiz'15. Slovakia: SMER; LSNS; Úsvit; OĽANO; SNS; Sme Rodina. Czechia: ANO; VV.

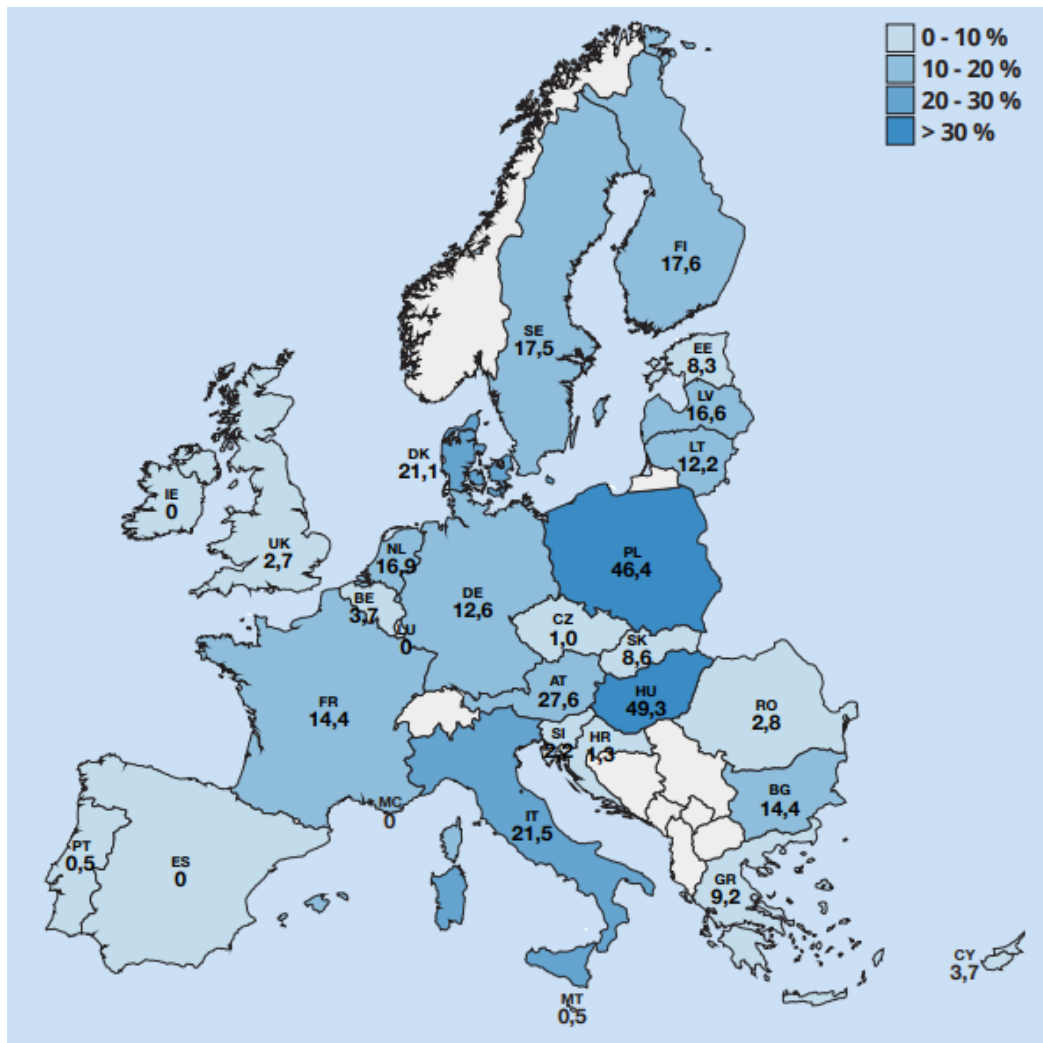
Source: Stojarová Věra, “Populist, Radical and Extremist Political Parties in Visegrad countries vis à vis the migration crisis. In the name of the people and the nation in Central Europe”, Open Political Science 1, no. 1 (July, 2018): 35 doi: 10.1515/openps-2018-0001

Figure 21 – The Impact Chain of Migration and Right-Wing Populism



Source: Hans Vorländer and Oliviero Angeli, eds., “Migration and Populism,” Midem Annual Report (Midem, 2018), [https://forum-midem.de/cms/data/fm/download/TUD\\_MIDEM\\_Jahresbericht2018\\_Excerpt\\_FINAL.pdf](https://forum-midem.de/cms/data/fm/download/TUD_MIDEM_Jahresbericht2018_Excerpt_FINAL.pdf).

Figure 22 – Map of Right-Wing Parties in Europe



Source: Hans Vorländer and Oliviero Angeli, eds., “Migration and Populism,” Midem Annual Report (Midem, 2018):8, <https://forum-midem.de/map/of/right/wing/parties/in/europe>