CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1   Background

The European Union is a widely known supranational institution that places an emphasis in a unique economic and political union through the institution's formation, the institution itself has been a role model for countries and regions seeking regional integrations. Spearheaded by 6 countries: Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Germany, France, and Italy after the end of the second World War, the European Union was originally created in 1958 and named as European Economic Community, this name reflected the original purpose of the union which was to foster the growing need of a trade union to boost the post-war economic within the European region, this would become the seed that started the notion of free flow trade and also the widely known 'Single Market' in the European Union today.[1] Over the years, the European Economic Community would began to expand following the dynamic development of the worldwide trend while also keeping the organization relevant to the needs of its member states, up until the creation of the European Union in 1993, the community has shifted from being a purely economic union to an institution that spans to many areas including climate, security, environment, justice and migration.[2] Following the creation of the European Union, the member states saw a lot of new opportunities that can help

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[1] The European Commission, "The European Union: What It Is and What It Does," europa.eu, https://op.europa.eu/webpub/com/eu-what-it-is/en/#.
[2] *Ibid*

them promote growth and stability within the region, the abolition of state borders came into effect in 26 March 1995 following the effect of the Schengen Agreement that was signed in 1985 which aimed to create a better Europe without borders, the adoption of Euro as a single currency within the European Union also started to be enjoyed by the citizens of the European Union state members in 1999 and by 2002 the majority of the members have replaced their national currencies with Euro, marking the growing union between the European Union member states that would strengthen the foundation of the development of the European Union and how it came to be in the present time.[3]

Despite the outstanding achievement that the European Union managed to snatch as the world's first functioning supranational institution, it was not without a long process of struggle to overcome obstacles that can pose a threat to their union. Potential threats can come from different sectors, following the Global Economic Crisis in 2008, the European Union found themselves suffering a hard hit from the crisis, resulting in a regionwide economic crisis and yet they emerged victorious from the ordeal. However, little did they know, a looming crisis would soon hit them once more and its bigger than they could have imagined that would strain the relationship between member states. As 2015 rolled in, civil unrest and wars prompted millions of refugees, mainly from war torn countries like Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq, flood into European Union through the Mediterranean seas

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[3] The European Commission, "The History of the European Union," europa.eu, https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/history_en.

and land, sometimes they would go through months of rough journey just to reach Europe.[4]

Based from the data provided by Eurostat, Syrians remain to have the highest number of asylum seekers, this is possibly due to the fact that their country has been engaged in a civil war ever since Arab Spring began in 2011, the conflict was sparked by the dissatisfaction towards the Syrian government led by Bashar al-Assad, the civil war would be fought between the government of al-Assad and its allies as well as opposers of the Syrian government and their allies, increasing participants and growing support on both sides domestically and internationally means that the fire never runs out even until the present day, due to the ongoing conflict, it was estimated by the United Nations that around five million Syrians have fled the country and seek asylum in other countries in search of a better life.[5] For the Afghans and Iraqis, life isn't any better compared to the Syrians, with the Afghanistan army as well as the United States' army intensifying their crackdown on the Taliban and Al Qaeda, hundreds of thousands of people were forced to move out from their home due to airstrikes and bomb threats, in 2014 alone it was estimated that around 3,565 civilians became the casualties of combat and the number remained constant throughout the next few years, this of course prompted a lot of Afghans to seek a better life abroad, fearing for the safety of themselves and their families.[6] Iraqis were faced with the same situation, the conflict in the country

[4] BBC News. "Migrant crisis: Migration to Europe explained in seven charts," bbc.com, March 4, 2016, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34131911.

[5] Al Jazeera, "Syria's War Explained from the Beginning," aljazeera.com, April 14, 2018, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/4/14/syrias-war-explained-from-the-beginning.

[6] Human Rights Watch, "Afghanistan," hrw.org, October 13, 2020, https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2021/country-chapters/afghanistan.

itself started in December 2013 caused by the spillover effect of the Syrian civil war, at the peak of the conflict, airstrikes and shootouts were a daily bread for the civilians in the country. It was estimated that in 2015, the sea arrivals of the refugees increased dramatically compared to the previous years, in 2014 the European Union saw 219,000 persons coming into their borders, whereas in 2015 there are 1,015,078 persons.[7]

As this event unfolded, the world watched and waited for the European Union's response. The sudden influx of refugees entering the European Union in 2015 surely created a staggering response from various elements of the member states of the European Union. The situation at hand was proven to have a rather big impact on the state members, governments were presented with a daunting task to protect their domestic security while also juggling the responsibility to take in refugees and being bombarded by moral questions about the crisis.[8] Throughout the crisis, the public also saw and experienced moral contradictions and instability of political moods, which are still happening in the present, 2021.[9]

Among the European Union member states, there are a few states that were impacted the most by the crisis at the time, they are Italy, Greece as well as Hungary.[10] The reason why Greece and Italy received an immense pressure is

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[7] Eugene Quinn, "The Refugee and Migrant Crisis: Europe's Challenge," *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 105, no. 419 (Autumn 2016)

[8] Kamran Abbasi, Kiran Patel, and Fiona Godlee, "Europe's Refugee Crisis: An Urgent Call for Moral Leadership," *BMJ: British Medical Journal* 351 (9 September 2015) https://www.jstor.org/stable/26521785.

[9] *Ibid*

[10] Directorate-General For Internal Policies, *Integration of Refugees in Greece, Hungary and Italy Comparative Analysis* (Brussels: European Parliament, 2017) https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2017/614194/IPOL_STU(2017)614194_EN.pdf.

because of their geographic location as they are located on the southern part of Europe where the Mediterranean Sea lies. As we know the sea itself was used by the refugees as the main entry point to reach Europe, hence Italy and Greece became two of the first countries that they could reach.[11] And as for Hungary, one of the reasons it received a large amount of refugees according to the European Union is because it is the most 'Western' country of the region, therefore it is suitable for refugees travelling by land from neighboring countries such as Serbia and Romania to enter European Union through Hungary first, using the country as a springboard in order for them to navigate deeper into the region.[12]

After the first few influx of refugees, throughout 2015 until 2016, Italy and Greece also started to be overwhelmed in facilitating incoming refugees and plead more for the help of other European Union member states to help them out as financial constraints were imminent on both states. [13] In the European Parliament, tension started to rise as European leaders were not able to reach some common grounds on the matter. As I have stated in the beginning, this crisis marked the beginning of a bigger turmoil for the European Union, uncovering rough political moods and indifferences among members states as it tests the foremost value of the European Union, Open Borders.[14] It was not without struggle and many

[11] Directorate-General For Internal Policies, *Integration of Refugees in Greece, Hungary and Italy Comparative Analysis* (Brussels: European Parliament, 2017) https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2017/614194/IPOL_STU(2017)614194_EN.pdf.

[12] *Ibid*

[13] Phillip Connor, "Italy On Track to Surpass Greece in Refugee Arrivals for 2016," pewresearch.org, November 2, 2016, https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/11/02/italy-on-track-to-surpass-greece-in-refugee-arrivals-for-2016/.

[14] Alison Smale and Melissa Eddy, "Migrant Crisis Tests Core European Value: Open Borders," nytimes.com, August 31, 2015, https://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/01/world/europe/austria-migrant-crisis-truck.html

negotiations that in mid-2015 the plans were finally launched into action by the European Union after a resolution was passed in 29 April 2015 that calls on European Union member states to address the ongoing migration via the Mediterranean sea and to fulfill their responsibility and solidarity towards the most impacted member states (Italy, Greece, and Hungary).[15]

Despite the European Union's effort in stemming the flow of the refugees, it cannot be denied that the large influx of refugees that have entered the region could pose a threat to the national security of the member states and even the *Schengen Agreement*. If the European Union were about to keep the policy of free movement and open borders as one of their core values as well as protecting their member states, they would have to be one step ahead in preventing threats towards their sovereignty and national security.

It is important for the European Union to address the situation right away and respond to it accordingly since a lot of state members have seen an increase in crime rate numbers after they opened their doors for refugees during the crisis, take Germany for example, the nation had been reporting a decrease of crime rate since early 1990s however, in 2015 just after hundreds of thousands of refugees entered the country, Germany saw a significant rise in the overall crime rate, in 2014 there were around 6.1 million crimes recorded by the police and in 2016 the police noticed a significant increase of 300.000 crimes, totaling to the amount of 6.4 million, included in the recorded crimes, there was an increase of 13.000 violent

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[15] Senada Šelo Šabić, *The Relocation of Refugees in the European Union: Implementation of Solidarity and Fear* (Zagreb: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2017) https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/kroatien/13787.pdf.

crimes within the described timespan, and on the same period, murder cases and rapes saw an increase of 14.6% and 8% respectively.[16] How does these numbers correlate to the large amount of refugee influx? According to a data compiled by AfD (Alternative fur Deutschland) one of Germany's political party, there is a clear link between the increase of refugee numbers and the rise of crime rate, where since 2014 there has been a large increase of non-German suspects of crime who were responsible to the 6% of increase, and the fact that worsened the situation is that when it's broken down we can actually find that the total of 8.5% of the suspects come from people who holds the status of asylum applicants.[17] Another government backed data also supports AfD's statement that attributes the rise of crimes as a cause of the large influx of refugees, data taken from a study done in Lower Saxony, a region in Germany that has taken in the fourth highest number of refugees, saw an increase of serious crimes that amounts to 10.4% in the span of two years between 2015 and 2016, they have been analyzed by the authorities and was concluded that the reason was mostly due to the overwhelming surge of asylum seekers between that time, another report done by the Germany's interior ministry would also back up this statement, suggesting a staggering 92.1% of the increase can be traced back to refugees seeking asylum in the country.[18]

The refugee crisis that started in 2015 gave the European Union a big challenge that they are still trying to overcome in the midst of the turmoil of the

[16] BBC News, "Reality Check: Are Migrants Driving Crime in Germany?," BBC.com, September 13, 2018, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-45419466.
[17] *Ibid*
[18] BBC News, "Germany: Migrants 'may Have Fueled Violent Crime Rise'," BBC.com, January 3, 2018, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-42557828.

world. Although different states might have a different approach when it comes to this matter, I believe that through thorough planning, communication and by upholding the European Union core values, the member states of the European Union can find the common ground to keep working together in tackling the ongoing crisis.

1.2   Research Questions

Based on the discussion above, I would like to propose the following research questions:

1. What social processes or mechanisms conducted by the European Union based on their political identities through their policies related to the refugee crisis?

2. How does Germany develop its refugee policies as social practices which reflects its identity as a member of the European Union?

1.3   Research Objective

The objective of this research is for the purposes stated below:

First, this research aims to delve into the European Union's migration and security policies during the peak of the refugee crisis during the year 2015-2016. What are they and how does the policies enacted by the European Union can contribute in affecting the course of the refugee crisis in Germany as the largest refugee receiver in the European Union.

The second objective is to find out the impact of the migration and security policies that the European Union has enacted towards the refugees staying in the European Union, how are they affected by the imposed policies and does the

existence of such policies in the end helped them to be able to benefit from the system or does it eventually alienate them.

1.4   Research Relevance

As conflicts and prosecutions continue to ravage the world while the powerful world actors try to wrestle for power, we sometimes forget that there are human lives trapped in the midst of it all, unable to do anything else, they have no other choice but to flee in search for peace, ironically after experiencing hardships on their homeland, they continue to receive more even after they have relocated. At the same time, the host countries who takes in refugees are now quite wary of newcomers since they are not sure of the backgrounds of these people, of course this could pose a threat towards the national security, and it is understandably important to take more measures in preventing unwanted things that might threaten the security of the state. From the two sides, it is clear that there are some dilemmas regarding this situation, and this does not only come from the experience of Europe's refugee crisis but also from the ongoing refugee problems spread across Asia and America. Thus, I believe that the essence of this research is important to assess the policies that have been enacted during Europe's refugee crisis from 2015 to 2016 and use it as feedback when planning for policies that involves the security of the state as well as the incoming refugees, noting down the failures and successes of the already enacted policies.