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Department of History

Central European Studies

THE IMPACT OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM ON IMMIGRATION POLICIES OF NATION STATES; A CASE STUDY OF THE CENTRAL EUROPEAN STATES.

Master's Thesis

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This study seeks to establish the impact of violent extremism on the immigration policies of nation states in Central Europe (CE) particularly, Czech Republic, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Slovakia. It sets out the following questions; to what extent does violent extremism impact on the immigration sector among nation states? How has violent extremism impacted the immigration sector of states in CE? What mitigation measures have been taken to contain violent extremism in CE? Study's objectives; to determine how violent extremism has impacted on the immigration sectors of these states. To establish the mitigation measures which have been taken to contain violent extremism in CE. Study's value is justified at academic and policy value levels. Hypothesis include; violent extremism has negatively impacted immigration policies of these CE States, and mitigation measures to violent extremism taken by CE states are in adequate. Study will be anchored on the theory of Liberal Institutionalism and adopt both primary (questionnaires and interviews) and secondary sources (books, publications journal articles and documentaries) of data collection. Target population are immigration officials, academicians, lawyers, citizens of these states, and cross-border traders. Study will adopt purposive sampling techniques and analysis done using content analysis and descriptive statistics.

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Declaration:

I hereby declare that I have completed the thesis independently, under the guidance of Dr. Stanislav Myšička, Ph.D., M.A., and have duly acknowledged all the sources and literature utilized throughout the research process.

In Hradec Králové , 11th July 2023   Magak Judith Amondi

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List of Abbreviation

COE　　　　　　　　**-** Council of Europe

CTED　　　　　　　- Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate

CVE　　　　　　　　-Countering Violent Extremism

EU　　　　　　　　-European Union

FDI　　　　　　　　**-** Foreign Direct Investments

HIA　　　　　　　　-Humanity in Action

IBS　　　　　　　　**-** Institute of Social Safety

ISHR　　　　　　　-International Service for Human Rights

NATO　　　　　　　-North Atlantic Treaty

NGO　　　　　　　-Non-Governmental Organization

OECD　　　　　　　-Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

OSCE　　　　　　　-Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

UN　　　　　　　　-United Nations

UNDP　　　　　　　- United Nations Development Programme

UNESCO　　　　　　- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNHCR   -United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Abstract

This study aims to establish the impact of violent extremism on the immigration policies of nation-states in Central Europe (CE), specifically in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia. It seeks to answer the following questions: To what extent does violent extremism impact the immigration sector among nation-states? How has violent extremism impacted the immigration sector of states in CE? What mitigation measures have been taken to contain violent extremism in CE? The study's objectives are to identify how violent extremism has impacted the immigration sectors of these states and to establish the mitigation measures that have been taken to contain violent extremism in CE. The study's value is justified at academic and policy levels. This study hypothesizes that violent extremism has negatively impacted the immigration policies of these CE states, and the mitigation measures taken by CE states are inadequate. The study will be anchored on the theory of Liberal Institutionalism and will adopt both primary (questionnaires and interviews) and secondary sources (books, publications, journal articles, and documentaries) for data collection. The target population includes academicians, lawyers, citizens of these states, and cross-border traders. The study will adopt purposive sampling techniques, and the analysis will be done using content analysis and descriptive statistics.

Keywords: *Violence, Extremism, Migrant, Central Europe, Immigration*

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Chapter 1

This chapter introduces key theoretical concepts as well as the methodology employed in this research study. This section discusses the conceptual framework employed, discusses the data collection methods, highlights data limitations, and outlines the steps taken to ensure data validity and reliability. By conveying the approach to conceptualizing the data, the research provides transparency to the research methodology, strengthening the foundation for future investigation and discovery.

1 Introduction

According to Bak, Tarp, and Liang (2019), the United Nations report of 2015 describes violent extremism as the use of war, violence, and intimidation to create fear among both state and non-state actors, intending to attain a particular political, social, economic, or cultural agenda. Akahomen (2021) posits that the issue of immigration has been present in inter-state relations since the signing of the Westphalia Treaty in 1648. Consequently, various policies on immigration have been implemented by states to regulate the immigration sector, thereby promoting global interactions, and interstate relations on trade, investments, tourism, and cultural and social services (Akahomen, 2021). This trend persisted until the signing of the 1933 Montevideo Convention, which emphasized the importance of immigration as a fundamental component of the sovereignty of any nation-state.

The emergence of globalization has brought about a range of modern challenges in the international system that pose a threat to global peace and security. One such challenge is the problem of violent extremism. The UNDP report (2017) states that violent extremism has led many countries to adopt stricter immigration policies, which are seen to protect national interests. These interests include ensuring the survival of the country, the safety of citizens, and promoting their prosperity.

The UNDP report (2017) on "The Journey to Extremism in Africa" noted that in West African states such as Nigeria, Ghana, and Cameroon, they were forced to close their border points and tighten their immigration rules, which denied most immigrants entry into those countries. As a result, this slowed down the level of interaction between these states and other West African states. It also discouraged investors and barred the constant flow of Foreign Direct Investments (FDI). These were partly influenced by acts of violent extremism conducted by Boko Haram, an Islamist militant organization, operating within the West African region. The report observed that East African countries have also been forced to tighten their

immigration rules as a response to the rise and spread of violent extremism which is propagated by various terrorist groups believed to be linked to the dangerous AL-Qaeda groups, among them Al-Shabaab, Al-Hijra, and the ISIS groups. Commercial actors have reported that tightening immigration rules affect cross-border trade.

According to a report by the European Commission on January 2021, of the 447.2 million inhabitants living in the European Union, 23.7 million of them were non-EU citizens (Ekhtiari, Cangönül, Hall, Nicolle, Thenot, Adhanom & Fallon 2023.) Following Russia's military aggression in Ukraine in early 2022, Europe received a huge number of people running away from the war. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), a United Nations agency mandated to aid and protect refugees, reported that by the end of 2021, there were 27.1 million refugees and up to 52 million internally displaced persons (Street, Ng, and Al-Dajani, 2022). Most asylum seekers applicants entering the EU lawfully were largely from Georgia, Venezuela, Albania, and Moldova.

Novotný (2019) states that different from Bulgaria and Romania, which are handling the influx of refugees and immigrants more subtly, Central European countries like Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia have put in place strict measures to contain the problem. The UNHCR deplores a recent decision by Hungary to push back refugees. In 2016, Hungary forcibly removed over 70,000 people from its territory. After 2016, there has been a decrease in the number of arrivals in both Hungary and the rest of the EU (UNHCR, August 28, 2018). The UNHCR suggests that rather than having such legislative provisions that bar the entry of people fleeing war or violence, the Hungarian government and other states need to unite in solidarity with other countries in offering international protection. The Hungarian government, headed by the far-right Fidesz party leader, Viktor Orbán, has long campaigned against migration, which they see as a threat to Christian Europe.

According to Midde's (2008) publication on *Racism in Central and Eastern Europe*, since the terror attacks of September 11, immigration enforcement is considered one way to attain national security. According to this author, states in Central Europe tighten their immigration rules as a response to the ever-rising spread of terrorism or the use of violent extremism across the world. Consequently, these states while trying to find a link between violent extremism and immigrants entering their countries, have put various measures in place in an attempt to control immigration. Midde (2008) also points out that violent extremism is not only limited to terrorism and terrorist groups but also extended to areas such as racist extremist groups who still believe in pursuing their interests through violence.

Gulshan and Brown (2019) report that most states decide to tighten their immigration policies in response to the rising cases of insecurity, and even worse, terrorism. As the subject of global immigration continues to grow in terms of size, impact, and complexity, so does the migration issue continue to be a cause as well as an effect of global development or underdevelopment. Several scholars argue that, although immigration cannot substitute development, if the right policies are put in place to guide and govern the conduct of immigration, it can act as a major tool for enhancing global development.

Therefore, violent extremism in Central Europe and the national security threat posed by the influx of migrants have contributed significantly to the growing divide among these countries, aided by immigration policies. Eliminating the risk of violent extremism requires upholding the rule of law, fostering partnerships, and respecting international law rather than implementing extreme immigration policies. The refugee crisis has bolstered the support of far-right parties both within Central European countries and their neighboring nations. Instances of violent extremism often increase support for far-right parties, as evidenced by their strong electoral backing. These parties often stoke anti-refugee sentiments that can influence the immigration policies of their respective countries.

International migration has become a matter of great concern for the global community due to ever-increasing mobility. This thesis aims to investigate the relationship between violent extremism and immigration, specifically the impact of irregular migration on any given country. The study seeks to demonstrate the extent to which violent extremism has impacted the immigration sector in nation-states and suggests alternative policy measures to respond to violent extremism rather than simply tightening immigration policies. The main research question is: To what extent does violent extremism affect the immigration sector among nation-states? This main question is further divided into two specific sub-questions:

- How has violent extremism impacted the immigration sector in Central European countries?
- What measures have been taken in Central Europe to address violent extremism in the context of immigration?

To explore the influence of violent extremism on the immigration sector and establish its impact on Central European countries, this research will be guided by the Liberal Institutionalism theory. This theory posits that international cooperation between states can reduce conflict and competition. It argues that the problem of violent extremism can be effectively addressed if Central European states work together to combat this threat. The theory

further suggests that in order to successfully tackle the problem of violent extremism, international institutions that transcend national borders must be established. These institutions would help create common goals among states and uniform policies that would not interfere with immigration issues. The same institutions would also encourage nation-states to adopt common behaviors through what Ernest Haas refers to as spillover effects. According to Rosamond (2008), these spillover effects would involve the adoption of common norms, principles, practices, and values.

The thesis will be structured as follows: firstly, an investigation into the impact of violent extremism on the immigration policies of Central European nations will be conducted. This will be followed by an examination of the measures taken to mitigate violent extremism in the region. Next, the theory of Liberal Institutionalism will be discussed and its relevance in determining the relationship between violent extremism and immigration will be examined. To support the analysis, data will be utilized. Finally, the conclusion will identify the limitations of the research and the implications of the findings for both the national and EU levels.

This research is divided into four main parts. Part one introduces the study, discusses the basis of the study, and states the objectives of the study, its justification, the scope and limitations, and the operationalization of key terms. Part two deals with the literature review; literature will be reviewed according to scholars who have written landmark ideas on violent extremism and its impact on various issues such as immigration. Also in this part is the definition of key concepts, the theoretical framework, research methodology, data analysis methods, and ethical considerations. Part three presents and summarizes the study findings. Lastly, part four will summarize the study's findings, draw conclusions, and provide recommendations.

1.1 Research Questions

This research aims to understand the extent to which violent extremism affects the immigration sector in nation-states and offers alternative policy measures to respond to violent extremism as opposed to tightening immigration policies. From this background then arises the primary research question, that is:

To what extent does violent extremism affect the immigration sector among nation-states?

From this primary question arises the two specific sub-questions:

- *How has violent extremism impacted the immigration sector in Central European countries?*
- *What measures have been taken in Central Europe to address violent extremism in the context of immigration?*

Based on this research, it is imperative to define violent extremism and immigration policies in Central European countries like Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia, while employing primary and secondary data sources.

1.2 Research Hypotheses

This study aims to test the hypothesis that the immigration policies of Central European states have been affected by violent extremism and secondly that the measures taken by Central European states to mitigate violent extremism are insufficient.

1.3 Justification of the Study

The researcher justifies the significance of this study on the academic and the policy level. At an academic level, this study has revealed a knowledge gap in the understanding of how violent extremism affects the immigration policies of Central European countries. Existing literature may not sufficiently explain the contexts of these countries. Hence by investigating the relationship between violent extremism and immigration in the Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, and Slovakia, which have had unique experiences in terms of violent extremism, this study will fill the knowledge gap and give new insights into this study area. The academic contribution will be beneficial to students, scholars, researchers, and those interested in the areas of immigration policies and how they are enacted in Central Europe.

Also, this study serves as the basis for further research on the impact of violent extremism on Central European immigration policies. This study offers a starting point for future researchers to delve deeper into how inclusive immigration policies could lead to more inclusive societies. The study sees the need for researchers to look more into ways that states integrate migrants into the society and how multiculturalism is essential for the growth of a society. Conducting a comprehensive study on this area and presenting findings, and recommendations for the same will aid in filling the knowledge in study fields of political science, immigration, and even history. The study will assist students and researchers draw

insights into these areas. The research methodology and analytical framework employed here can inform future research work.

Consequently, the results and the recommendations of this study give a basis for future academic debates and discussions. The extensive analysis of violent extremism effects on immigration policies of Central European countries provides a wide range of perspectives on the factors promoting violent extremism and the methods of dealing with the threat. Researchers and students can look into the implications of the study's findings and share how they understand the study findings. As a result, new frameworks, suggestions, and approaches for the field under study can be realized. This study also contributes to the present literature on violent extremism and immigration and related policies for immigration. The study, therefore, contributes to the amount of existing knowledge on this research area and spurs new insights for the same. With the help of this study, students and researchers can examine the complexities of violent extremism and how this affects the immigration policies of the Central European countries under study. Finally, this study's interdisciplinary approach which ranges from history, political science, law, and economics encourages collaborations among scholars to gain an in-depth understanding of matters of violent extremism and its relation to immigration policies.

At Policy Level, this study has also identified loopholes in existing policies and policy decisions. Therefore, the findings and recommendations of this study will have practical implications for policymakers and government officials in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, and Hungary. These findings will add value to policymakers in the immigration, security, and legislative sectors and inform the structuring of immigration policies to address the threat of violent extremism. The study's recommendation will also aid in crafting non-discriminatory immigration policies hence drawing a balance between national security and fair immigration policies. These recommendations will not only benefit regional entities but also the judiciary of these Central European countries.

First, this study identifies the shortcomings of the existing immigration policies of Central European countries with regard to the impact of violent extremism. This study highlights the implications of violent extreme activities to the immigration sector. After identifying these areas of weakness, it offers suggestions to policymakers on how to make informed immigration policy decisions. The study findings and recommendations will stand a chance as an appropriate source for legislative bodies, the judicial arms, and the immigration sector to devise new policies or improve existing ones. Policymakers would therefore be able to identify these loopholes in the existing immigration policies and deduce mechanisms for

ensuring they are fair, inclusive, and aware of the evolving issues surrounding Central Europe's immigration policies.

Policymakers often rely on up-to-date research work hence this study's comprehensive analysis of the impact of violent extremism on Central European state's immigration will fill a significant gap. The insights drawn from this study will enable policymakers to traverse through the issues related to national security, and non-discriminatory immigration policies. Finally, the study's findings will ensure a lasting implication for policymaking in the areas of immigration, legislation, and human rights. As new challenges arise each day affecting the national security as a result of violent extremism, the findings from this study will inform policymakers on how to ensure checks and balances exist for purposes of ensuring accountability.

1.4 Scope and Limitations of Study

The focus of this study is primarily on Central European nation-states, with a specific emphasis on Hungary and Poland. This is in light of Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban's statement that immigration leads to the "virus of terrorism," which he made during his campaign for the May 2019 European Parliament elections (Newton, 2019). However, the study may face challenges due to the lack of consensus within the European Union on how to handle refugee policy. The European Parliament triggered Article 7 of the EU's governing treaty, which is designed to protect core principles such as human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law, and respect for human rights, including minority rights. The Hungarian government, in particular, was accused of violating these values by passing anti-refugee laws, manipulating the media, ignoring government corruption, and removing independent judges.

This study aims to investigate the impact of violent extremism on the immigration sectors of Central European states. It will explore the changes in immigration policies and shifts that have occurred in these states due to violent extremism. The study will examine the issue of violent extremism from racial, political, and terrorism angles, focusing on the period between 2001 and 2019. This time frame is relevant because it coincides with the September 11, 2001, terrorist attack in the US, which had a significant impact on global immigration (Koser, 2007).

One limitation of this study is the challenge of confidentiality between the researcher and the respondents. Immigration issues are sensitive, and employees in the immigration department may be hesitant to discuss official government positions with outsiders.

Additionally, the researcher is not a citizen of the Central European states being studied, which may pose a challenge since she does not have the same rights as citizens. Finally, the costs associated with conducting this research are relatively high, which may present a challenge. However, to address these limitations, the researcher will obtain the necessary research permits from relevant institutions and carry her university identification card for identification purposes. She will also be resourceful and use available resources to conduct the study successfully.

Chapter 2

This chapter delves into the theoretical and conceptual basis for this research study, which is crucial when comprehending or drawing insights and conclusions. Employing relevant frameworks, theories, and significant approaches aids in the transformation of the raw data. This chapter, therefore, presents the theoretical approach, discusses the terms relevant to this study, discusses the research methodology, methods of data analysis that will be employed in this research study, and the ethical considerations. Expounding this information ensures transparency and precision in this research's methodology while laying a good basis for subsequent analysis and findings. The basis of this chapter is to, therefore, lay a theoretical basis and illustrate how these concepts relate to the research questions and goal.

2 Literature Review

Extremism, as defined by Berger (2018), becomes apparent from the perception of "us versus them," where the success of "us" is believed to be inseparable from hostile acts against "them." Berger, an expert on extremist movements and terrorism, argues that extremism differs from run-of-the-mill hatred and racism by its sweeping rationalization of and insistence on violence. He supports his argument with case studies and examples from around the world and throughout history, including the destruction of Carthage by the Romans, and the apocalyptic jihadism of Al Qaeda. His book recounts the evolution of identity movements and the radicalization of people and groups.

Berger's insights into the causes and characteristics of extremist movements can help counteract the problem of extremism. Although his research did not specifically focus on violent extremism in Central Europe, his findings and conclusions can assist in conceptualizing the term "violent extremism." While comparing extremism, terrorism, propaganda, and social media analytical techniques, Berger carried out research and training on matters related to homegrown terrorism, online extremism, and Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) (Berger, 2018).

Schmidt (2014) examined the relationship between terrorism and migration in his book "Violent and Non-Violent Extremism: Two Sides of the Same Coin?" He questioned the roles that both state and non-state terrorism play in causing migration and analyzed how refugee camps and diaspora communities are susceptible to radicalization. The author found that controlling migration to control terrorism is a commonly used tool, but it may result in

legitimate migrants and legal foreign residents becoming victims of difficult policies. Schmidt offered recommendations that could help disentangle the issues surrounding terrorism and migration. Although this study agrees with the author's findings and recommendations, it acknowledges that Schmidt conducted his research in other jurisdictions and that Central Europe has its unique characteristics. Glazzard and Zeuthen (2016) pointed out that there is no official definition for "violent extremism," as neither the United Nations nor the European Union has provided one. However, according to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), violent extremism is defined as "advocating, engaging in, preparing, or otherwise supporting ideologically motivated or justified violence to further social, economic, or political objectives" (USAID, 2011).

Schomerus, Taraboulsi-McCarthy, and Sandhar (2017) argued that violent extremism is often distinguished as 'push' and 'pull' factors, which overlook the connections between them and can lead to overgeneralization. The authors suggested that 'individual' and 'community' factors are more useful categories, as they are coordinated and provide a better understanding of why people engage in certain acts of violent extremism. This viewpoint contrasts with the OECD/ILO report of 2018, which examined how immigrants affect the labor market and economic growth. The report analyzed the political and historical context of immigration in each country and provided recommendations for enhancing the contribution of immigrants through relevant policy responses. The report emphasized that the impact of migration is not straightforward and relies on various elements such as country context, economic conditions, and immigrant characteristics. Therefore, coherent policies that facilitate the management and integration of immigrants can maximize their positive impacts on the economy. Although these studies did not specifically focus on extremism in Central Europe, their ideas still inform this study.

According to Rowthorn (2004), immigration is multifaceted and involves challenging moral decisions concerning admission policies, duration of stay, and regulation of entry by states. Although Rowthorn acknowledged that states have a moral obligation to regulate entry, he did not account for the complexities that arise in the modern world, where regulating entry may involve the exclusion or deportation of individuals seeking employment. Such measures could potentially undermine the legitimate interests of the concerned state citizens.

The OECD report of 2014 highlighted that several other European countries, including France, Sweden, and Finland, experienced a significant increase in migration flows in 2012 compared with 2011, with some even reaching historical highs. Conversely, three of the main European destination countries saw a considerable reduction in their permanent inflows, with

Spain experiencing a 22% decline in 2012, after a rebound in 2011. Although Maunganidze (2017) argued that migration and violent extremism have been central themes in global security debates in recent years, these findings do not provide specific insights into the relationship between immigration and violent extremism in Central Europe, which is the focus of this study.

Nyambura (2018), the Executive Director of the Intergovernmental Agency on Development's Center of Excellence for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism, stated that there is currently no empirical evidence confirming a direct link between migration and violent extremism, particularly in the context of East Africa. The author argues that, when comparing the total number of migrants to those with violent extremist motives, the latter group is statistically insignificant. However, Nyambura's arguments do not focus on the specific circumstances of Central European states, where violent extremism takes a different form and poses a more significant threat. Although Nyambura's arguments are valid, they may not be directly applicable to the Central European context, which warrants further investigation.

2.1 Definition of Key Concepts

This section discusses some of the key terms that the researcher identified as crucial for this study. Defining these terms provides one clear conceptualization of the variables being used and limits ambiguity. In addition, it also helps avoid misinterpreting information, ensuring consistency, hence showing the way in which the research contributes to existing knowledge. Therefore, the researcher identified violent extremism, immigration policy, immigration, and migrants as terms that would help form the basis of the discussion on the effect of violent extremism on the immigration policies of Central European countries.

2.1.1 Violent Extremism:

The United Nations (2021) describes violent extremism as a complex phenomenon that entails the use of violence and is characterized by extreme and radical beliefs, often used as a justification for violence against perceived enemies and innocent civilians. The causes of violent extremism vary and may include political, economic, social, and religious injustices. As per the 2011 USAID Policy report, violent extremism is the act of individuals endorsing, rationalizing, or advocating for the use of violence in the pursuit of political, economic, ideological, religious, or social objectives (USAID, 2011.)

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) describes violent extremism as the utilization of violence to inflict harm and spread hatred in society in pursuit of a narrow agenda, leading to potential intercommunal conflicts. According to the Development Assistance Committee (2016), terrorism and violent extremism are interchangeable terms, raising concerns about radicalization and the organization of violent extremist groups. There is no consensus on the definition of violent extremism; hence, many people have used it interchangeably with radicalization. Despite its somewhat extensive similarity to terrorism, the phenomenon of violent extremism is more comprehensive than that of terrorism. For instance, violent extremism considers a range of ideological motivations for violence, some of which are not part of terrorism.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) suggests that the most prevalent understanding of violent extremism is the beliefs and actions of people who resort to using violence for the sake of achieving ideological and political objectives. These forms of violent extremism could include, though not limited to, terrorism,

political, religious, and ethno-nationalist extremism. In this study, violent extremism encompassed terrorism, moral intolerance, and political warmongering.

Some notable cases of violent extremism in Central Europe include the murder of journalist Jan Kuciak and his fiancée at their home in Slovakia in 2018. In Budapest was the case of a 21-year-old man, a right-wing extremist who planted a homemade bomb at the Budapest Frenecz Listzt Airport in Poland. A 27-year-old man stabbed the then-mayor, Pawel Adamowicz, in an event. It was reported that the attacker had extremist beliefs following their previous involvement in far-right groups. Similarly, in Ostrava, Czech Republic, in 2009, a 29-year-old man planted a bomb near a casino, causing injury to several people. The attacker was later linked to extremist groups that could have led him to conduct such an act. In 2015, in the Czech Republic, a man who had ties to a far-right extremist group attacked the headquarters of the Unipetrol refinery in Litvinov, injuring two people before he was later arrested.

Image 1: Deaths from terrorism, 1990 to 2017.
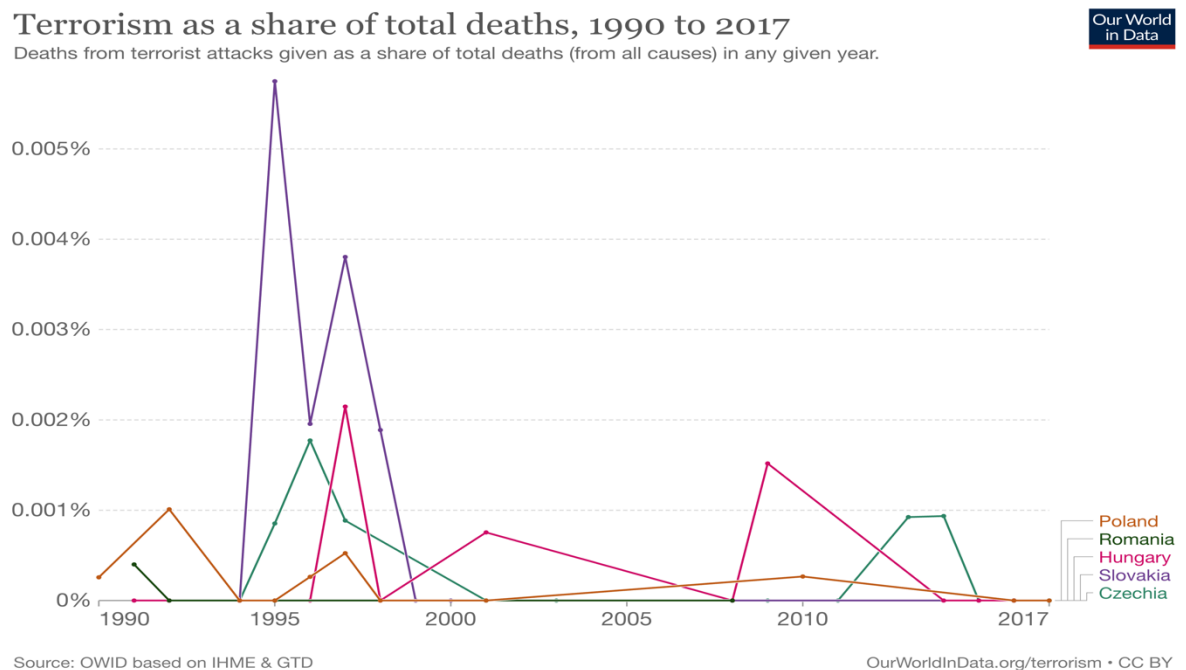
The Czech Republic, for instance, embarked on ways of motoring potential threats to security. Soon after the murder of the journalist in Slovakia, there were protests across the country and the resignation of the country's then Prime Minister Robert Fico. The country started meaningful discussions on how to ensure press freedom and transparency in government proceedings. In Poland, there has been a surge in sentiments against Muslims and immigrants, which resulted in attacks on mosques, destruction of refugee centers, or gruesome confrontations during national demonstrations. These are some of the incidents that led to the

start of discussions on the existence of extremist ideologies within these countries and how to strengthen their security.

While discussing the impact of violent extremism on the immigration policies of Central European countries, it is needful to understand the precise meaning of violent extremism and its implications for national security. When discussing Central European immigration policies, it is necessary to understand the implications of violent extremism. This is because violent extremist ideologies can have a gruesome effect on immigration policies, shaping migration-related matters. Such cases range from heightened security concerns, stricter border checks, or even a surge in the scrutiny applied to asylum seekers entering a country. Comprehending violent extremist events could help raise questions about the range of the risks of immigration. The concept of violent extremism causes us to know the effect these acts have on the public's perception of matters related to immigration. The discussion on immigration policies in Central Europe should go simultaneously with that on violent extremism.

Another approach to consider while discussing violent extremism and immigration policies in Central Europe is balancing our perception of each of these terms. While it is important to address the security concerns in Central Europe, it is also important to keep away from the stigmatization and discrimination of communities or populations by virtue of the fact that there are individuals and groups engaging in violent extreme activities. By the end of this study, we will determine how we can foster dialogue and the significance of immigration in Central European Communities in order to attain more informed immigration policies. Therefore, it is necessary to use the term violent extremism more explicitly to achieve more inclusive immigration policies.

In this study, the researcher asked the participants to define violent extremism in their own words in order to know if they understood the topic of study at hand. From terrorism, anger, harassing others, the use of violence, and suppressing others, participants gave a wide range of factors that are often linked to violent extremism. It was evident from the survey that a majority of these people knew what violent extremism was and how it played out in countries' immigration policies.

2.1.2 Immigration Policy:

According to Gibney (2016), immigration policies refer to all the rules and regulations that a state uses to manage the flow of people who wish to establish a residence within their borders. These policies govern various aspects such as granting permission for access to a given

territory, providing work permits, granting asylum rights, and allowing immigrants to bring their family members to their current country of residence.

Kalm and Lindvall (2019) suggest that immigration policies were rooted in the period following the French Revolution when modern states established guidelines for determining citizenship rights. Assessing the impact of immigration policies can be challenging, as similar regulations may lead to varying rates of immigration, depending on the push and pull factors affecting migration patterns in different countries. The United Nations Migration Agency report (2014) defines immigration policies as formal rules governing the movement of individuals, goods, and services from one country to another. For this study, immigration policies refer to all the rules and procedures related to immigration that have been revised by Central European states.

Defining immigration policy when conducting a study on the effect of violent extremism on Central European immigration policies is important for having a contextual perspective, policy evaluation, determining policy implications, and mostly giving a comparative analysis. Therefore, with the definition of immigration policy, the researcher obtains a clear framework and context within the scope of this study. Since the understanding of immigration varies from one country to another, defining it aids in the analysis of the various provisions and objectives of these policies in Central European countries. A good understanding of immigration policy enables the researcher to effectively analyze the term before analyzing it alongside violent extremism. For instance, what the policy landscape has got to do with the attention given to resolving violent extremism and the various negative implications of how a weakness in immigration policy can affect counterterrorism efforts.

Examining immigration policies also helps researchers to determine the probable implications of counterterrorism and how to manage violent extremism. Policies in Central Europe might prioritize security measures, some of which include strengthened border controls, visa restrictions, or integration of communities. Defining violent extremism also enabled us to perform a comparative analysis across Central European countries. Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia, and Hungary might have distinct immigration policies; therefore, understanding these differences enables the researcher to carry out a nuanced study on the effect of violent extremism on these policies. Later, the researcher will be able to offer evidence-based policy recommendations to effectively deal with the challenge of violent extremism. Such recommendations might include adjusting policies and developing new scales of balancing security issues with more non-discriminatory values for individuals in central European countries. In this study, the researcher seeks to define immigration policies in order to arrive at

detailed approaches for seeking asylum, settling refugees, dealing with terrorism, and integrating individuals and groups into Central Europe. In this way, the researcher can analyze how these policies interrelate and later provide remedies for violent extremism within the region.

2.1.3 Immigration:

According to Oxford Learner's Dictionary, immigration is defined as the process of permanently settling in a country that is different from one's place of birth. The term originated in the 17th century when people began to migrate from one state to another. It is important to note that migration, whether internal or foreign, has been a fundamental aspect of human history for centuries. People have always moved to search for better living conditions or suitable environments for agriculture and livestock rearing. Internal migration refers to a movement within a state or country, while foreign migration involves relocation to a different country or continent (Oxford Learner's Dictionary, n.d.).

Immigration refers to the relocation of individuals from their country of origin to a recipient country. This phenomenon is influenced by various economic factors, including, but not limited to, the desire for an improved standard of living and access to education. Non-economic factors such as genocide, natural disasters, and war also contribute to this movement. Advancements in infrastructure and technology have played a significant role in encouraging individuals to move to new regions. According to the United Nations, the number of immigration cases worldwide reached nearly 200 million by 2006, and this number has increased owing to factors such as living standards, immigration laws, and wage rates in different regions (United Nations, 2006).

Defining immigration is an integral step when studying the effect of extreme violence on the immigration policies of Central European countries. By establishing a clear perspective on what constitutes immigration, we can analyze the relationship between immigration policies and violent extremism. This definition of immigration provides a framework for understanding the area under study. The clarity and consistency established by this precise definition allow us to reach unambiguous conclusions. Understanding the dynamics and challenges of immigration enables us to investigate the social, economic, and political circumstances affecting immigration in Central Europe. This contextual understanding is also important for understanding the intersection of immigration and violent extremism in these countries.

The definition of immigration helps identify the different stakeholders involved in the formulation of immigration policies. These stakeholders may include law enforcement agencies, international bodies, civil society entities, and migrants. Understanding immigration from these stakeholders' perspectives can help mitigate the threat of violent extremism and explore ways to address this issue. When analyzing immigration, demographic characteristics such as age, gender, occupation, and cultural background play an important role. This study considers qualitative analysis, which examines people's experiences, motivations, and the direct or indirect effects of immigration policies, and quantitative analysis, which involves studying the number of immigrants entering a given country and other relevant aspects of immigration.

Finally, defining immigration in the context of Central Europe enables us to effectively evaluate immigration policies and investigate the challenges that violent extremism poses in Central European countries. Through this evaluation, we can determine whether these policies contribute to countering or exacerbating violent extremism. It also assists policymakers in making informed decisions to mitigate extreme violence. A clear definition of immigration facilitates the comparison of policies across Central Europe, including recurring patterns of violent extremism and best practices for ensuring the fair treatment of individuals and groups entering the region. In summary, this definition of immigration is crucial when studying the effects of extreme violence on the immigration policies of Central European countries. It provides a contextual analysis, identifies key stakeholders, and enables a comprehensive examination of the policies of Central European countries under study. The researcher can delve into the complexities of the study and generate meaningful insights to inform policymakers on how to foster inclusive societies.

2.1.4 Migrant:

There is no common agreement on the definition of migrants in the context of international migration. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), immigration is the movement of a person with a legally defined change of residence (Pécoud, 2022). Hence, the IOM considers any person crossing an international border or moving internally within a state as an immigrant. On the other hand, the University of Oxford adopts a categorization that considers an immigrant as an individual who is either foreign-born or has foreign citizenship. In the case of individuals with a foreign birth or foreign nationality, their entry into a host country results in regular immigration controls that differ from those applied to native

residents. According to Oxford University's definition, an immigrant can either move to a new country temporarily or permanently settle in a receiving country. This definition, as per the Oxford Dictionary, emphasizes the crossing of national borders as a characteristic of immigration.

Triandafyllidou (2022) identified push and pull factors to explain an individual's movement and the pattern of settlement, such as moving from densely to sparsely populated areas, from poorer to wealthier countries, or from a low-wage to higher-wage region. The study of immigration and refugees draws a conclusive finding that push factors such as political oppression or insufficient economic opportunities should be acknowledged as significant contributors to migrant movements and settlements (Triandafyllidou, 2022). In this research context, an immigrant is defined as a person subject to immigration control and, therefore, needs permission to enter Central European countries. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) distinguishes an immigrant as one who leaves their country of origin for another to flee from danger or to find better opportunities and can return to their country without necessarily being subjected to any danger. Defining migrants helps establish a better knowledge of the population of the case study. In addition, the researcher can promptly identify and analyze the categories of people affected by violent extremism in relation to immigration policies.

Consequently, the researcher can determine the scope and limitations of the research by pointing out the appropriate criteria for inclusion, the reasons for migration, and relating the findings to the Central European context. Understanding who a migrant is will aid in having an indebt knowledge of the challenges migrants face and their vulnerabilities due to the same. The categories of migrants, including refugees and asylum seekers, encounter unique challenges and experiences. As immigration policies are often designed for various groups of migrants, it is necessary to assess how these policies affect these groups of people, whether just refugees or economic migrants. This would also help in identifying how migrants' situations may influence violent extremism, giving room for a thorough investigation of how policies shape the experiences and perceptions of different migrant populations in the context of violent extremism. In addition, defining migrants and understanding their various categorizations could affect immigration policies and the steps taken to counter violent extremism. Therefore, understanding these different approaches would better make a researcher aware of inclusive policies that would deter migrants from conducting extremely violent activities.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The research will be guided by the Liberal Institutionalism theory, as outlined by Ernest Haas. According to this theory, the problem of violent extremism can be best addressed through the cooperation of states across the world, particularly in Central Europe. The theory proposes that states can effectively combat violent extremism by establishing international institutions that operate above the level of individual states, with all states submitting to their authority. These institutions can help create common goals, uniform policies, and a shared set of norms, principles, practices, and values that do not interfere with immigration issues. The theory also suggests that these institutions can promote a common behavior among nation-states through "spillover effects," as identified by Ernest Haas. (Rosamond 2008)

Liberal institutionalism has been revised to neo-liberal institutionalism since the 1970s, which aims to explain why states frequently choose to cooperate in the anarchic international system. The neo-liberal institutionalism shares similar views with classical liberalists regarding cooperation. They believe that institutions are crucial in creating security by providing a reliable framework for interactions and expected future interactions. These institutions represent the general framework of interactions, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures around which states converge while seeking to maximize their interests. The development of a European or African identity concerning refugees and immigrants can have a significant impact on their perceptions and interests. Therefore, granting autonomy to immigration organs and empowering them can lead to democratic spillover effects, creating a fertile ground for a uniform legal regime governing immigration issues to take hold.

The Liberal Institutionalism theory argues that domestic and international institutions are crucial in ensuring cooperation and concordance among states. States can avoid acute competition and wars by uniting through domestic and international institutes. First, states have to subscribe to a republican form of government where the legislature and the executive stand independently. These institutions make it difficult for states to wage war against each other since they need approval before engaging in the same. Consequently, when states unite in a given federation, they give up their rights to wage war with each other. The restraint posed on states at both international and domestic levels brings their citizens to respect the other states' citizens' rights. International institutions and regimes are of significant essence in ensuring cooperation among states. States are called upon to increase interactions and transparency at the international level through a well-monitored system. Liberal

Institutionalists posit that cooperation is mostly possible through more credible commitments, the establishment of focal points for coordination, and allowing interlinkages of matters.

Regimes' popularity dates to the 20ᵗʰ century when nations started signing treaties and getting into agreements. Globalization on the other hand enhanced interactions in the international domain. Liberalism's ideas of individual freedom, equal rights, and justice have presented governments with the best approach for reflecting the people's needs. Since states are rational actors in an anarchic system, liberal institutionalists agree that cooperation amongst these states would help reach absolute gains for each one of them. Since cooperation is unattainable in the presence of anarchy, states are required to establish self-help policies. According to Ernst Haas, collaboration at the international level is tied to strict norms and rules that will resolve challenges tied to immigration and immigration policies. Trust and cooperation in regimes coupled with adequate communication are of great essence in a highly globalized world. According to Liberal institutionalists, states are tasked with establishing and maintaining regimes. Therefore, with the help of international agreements and uniform immigration policies, Central European states can reach their goals.

Violent extremism remains to be one of the greatest challenges facing global security together with the national security of Central European countries. Utilizing Liberal Institutionalism theory in this study offers insights and mechanisms for dealing with this challenge in Central European countries. Liberal institutionalism fosters the belief that international institutions promote cooperation amongst nations, hence limiting any violent confrontations. Policymakers' strategies for promoting stability and dealing with the root causes of violent extremism in Central Europe. With the upsurge of violent extremism in the recent past in Central Europe, economic challenges and cultural tensions are prone to happen in Central Europe. Employing Liberal Institutionalism in this study will resolve the threat of violent extremism by strengthening democratic institutions in the countries under study. By upholding the rule of law and ensuring equal treatment of all parties, Central European countries can contain the atrocities of radicalization.

Following a study conducted by Ondre Ditrych (2020), strong democratic institutions offer countries alternative ways of ensuring political participation and social integration. These Central European countries only must advocate for inclusive policies and accountability in their governments. Consequently, being faced with similar security concerns, these countries' collaboration and collectiveness in combating violent extremism will go a long way in dealing with the threat of violent extremism. Liberal Institutionalism offers multilateral initiatives such

as joint counterterrorism operations amongst the Central European countries giving them a harmonized way of dealing with radicalization in their countries. Marko Milosevic and Marko Savkovic (2022) posit that regional organizations are important in ensuring cooperation and mutual trust amongst neighboring states, hence countering violent extremism. Liberal institutionalism is equally important when promoting human rights and the protection of minority rights. Since discrimination gives a good ground for radicalization to materialize, liberal institutionalism is great at addressing these challenges leading to stable and long-term tranquillity. Diversity and equal opportunities, as promoted by liberal institutionalism present us with the best approach of reducing extremist ideologies in Central European countries.

Though liberal institutionalism may not be directly dealing with the challenge of violent extremism, it gives us a framework of approaches to eradicate its upsurge. In the context of Poland and Hungary, the focus needs to be on ensuring strong democratic institutions, protection of human rights, and steady cooperation among the countries. Therefore, Liberal institutionalism would require Poland and Hungary to maintain transparency and ensure that the avenues of political participation are not suppressed. It, therefore, means that the country's policies will be focused on independent judiciaries, free and fair elections, and the eradication of corruption. For this study, liberal institutionalism suggests a great principle which is the protection of human rights. By upholding human rights principles, central European countries can have a more inclusive society making it impossible for violent extremism to thrive. In practice, this means that international organizations like the European Union (EU) and the Council of Europe observe human rights operations and help in ensuring the upholding of human rights standards.

With an emphasis on the need for cooperation between Central European states, and other regional organizations, there will be joint efforts to ensure border security and enforced counterterrorism laws. Since socioeconomic factors also affect the surge of violent extremism, as directed by Liberal Institutionalists, Central European countries need to have more inclusive economic laws that seek for limited socio-economic inequality. Possible ways of ensuring this would include creating job opportunities and educating people to limit their involvement in violent extremist activities. Social cohesion in these countries could also be a good strategy championed by liberal institutionalists, which when enacted in the countries under study, would address violent extremism. Hungary for instance has witnessed democratic backsliding following the influence of the right-wing populist and national-conservative political party. Victor Orban's leadership has been overtime criticized due to the deteriorating state of

democracy in the country. Liberal institutionalism, therefore, suggests that one way of restoring judicial independence and allowing for transparency in the general elections and other spheres of political participation is through establishing democratic institutions.

In the past, Hungary has been accused of infringing on human rights and sanctioning its media as well as civil society entities in the country. To counter terrorism, Hungary needs to start promoting human rights policies as per the standards set by the European Union and other regional organizations. Cooperation with these external forces gives room for checks and balances and close monitoring if the country is meeting these set standards. Cooperation with entities such as Eurojust could help strengthen Central Europeans' efforts in dealing with violent extremism. This section, therefore, concludes that though some of these Central European countries have witnessed a backslide in their democracy, liberal institutionalism suggests ways in which these countries can foster safe communities free from radicalization.

2.3 Research Methodology

This section gives an overview of the adopted research methodology in addressing the research questions. It also explains the rationale behind the adopted approach. The research will use a qualitative research design. This design is key in helping describe the depth of violent extremism and how it is impacting the immigration policies within the Central Europe nation-states (Creswell & Clark, 2017). The methods that will be used will be interviews and focused group discussions, and questionnaires. These methods will provide rich and contextual insights into the immigration experiences, perceptions, and attitudes of the immigrants and the natives on immigration policies and how they have been shaped by violent extremism (Taylor, Bogdan & DeVault, 2015).

The researcher used a mixed sampling method, combining probability and non-probability sampling techniques, to obtain the study sample. The study's probability sampling technique was random sampling, which meant that every member of the target population had the same chance for inclusion in the sample (Creswell & Clark, 2017). Purposive sampling and snowball sampling, on the other hand, were used as non-probability sampling approaches. Purposive sampling entailed identifying individuals with appropriate information and expertise about the influence of violent extremism on Central European immigration policies. Snowball sampling entailed selecting initial volunteers and then requesting them to suggest more possible participants who fulfilled the study's requirements to the researchers.

The study's target population was the native citizens in Central European nation-states and immigrants living in these countries. Also, among the target persons that were contacted for virtual interviews were academicians from across different divides within these countries. Examining a diverse target population aimed to gather insights from different perspectives and stakeholders having an interest in the immigration process. This research incorporated a combination of primary and secondary sources. Primary sources, such as questionnaires and interviews, were utilized, along with secondary sources, including documented reviews, academic journals, and books, to gather information for this study.

The study was conducted for a period of over 11 months starting from July 2022. The researcher sought to identify persons from all the states that were to be the focus of the study. By using google forms and online virtual meetings, the researcher was able to reach participants from different states, interview, and/or have the questionnaire filled out. The questionnaire was structured to collect relevant information that would help answer the research questions. The study participants were reached through community and campus social networks. The

participants were required to indicate the countries they have lived in and their current residence for purposes of giving relevant information resonating with the nation-state they belong to. This means that the participants' information filled in on the online questionnaire was not subject to the researcher's approval or disapproval.

In-depth interviews were conducted with 10 key stakeholders from the political, legal, and advocacy groups to help shed more light on immigration and the violent extremists against immigration to Central Europe. These participants were chosen based on their understanding and expertise of these matters under study. The interview aimed to get a deeper insight into the effects of violent extremism on the policies governing immigration in Central Europe. The study population constituted both natives and migrants though there were more migrant respondents than there were natives due to the following reasons: migrants have direct insights on violent extremism especially those from marginalized communities. Their experience with prejudice or discrimination would motivate them to take part in a study that would address the extremism on immigration sectors. Migrants would also inform the study following their diverse apprehension on violent extremism and immigration policies. Since the study would identify the impact of violent extremism on special groups of people, it was ideal to select more migrants for the study.

Structured questionnaires were administered on online platforms with the aim of getting responses from at least 20 persons from all the nation-states that are being focused on in this study. The researcher resorted to the number for feasibility purposes, meaning it is costly and resource intensive. Studying this sample size gives room for in-depth exploration of the research area and limits any room for resource constraints. The interview questions were both closed-ended and open-ended. Closed-ended questions were used to gather direct and exact responses data on the extent of the impact, while open-ended questions provide elaborate opinions on the theme of the study.

The collected data were thematically analyzed. This method involves identifying the common themes that are present in the responses given, patterns, and the main findings from the data (Braun & Clarke, 2019). Given the qualitative nature of this study, the responses obtained from the aforementioned participants were subjected to analysis using the SPSS data analysis application. The primary data collected was coded and organized before undergoing interpretation. The data derived from the diverse set of respondents were then summarized, compared, and contrasted, alongside the documented data obtained from secondary sources. These combined sources of information were subsequently utilized to draw comprehensive conclusions regarding the subject matter. To ensure accuracy and reliability in the analysis

process, appropriate statistical techniques were applied to examine the patterns, themes, and relationships inherent in the data. This approach enabled the researcher to gain meaningful insights and generate valid findings based on the information gathered from both primary and secondary sources.

The target population for this study comprised 100 respondents, focusing on a sample size of a minimum of 30 respondents to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the topic at hand. The decision to select this particular figure and percentage was influenced by the ideas of Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) where a small sample can effectively represent a larger population. It emanates from encompassing respondents from various categories and capturing the unique characteristics of the target population. To maintain consistency and structure during the interview process, the researcher distributed the guiding questions to all participants prior to conducting the interviews. This allowed respondents to familiarize themselves with the topics and provided a framework for discussion, ensuring that the collected data was relevant to the study's objectives.

2.3.1 Methods of Data Analysis

The primary data collected was coded and organized before interpretation. The data derived from the diverse set of respondents were then summarized, compared, and contrasted, alongside the documented data obtained from secondary sources. These combined sources of information were subsequently utilized to draw comprehensive conclusions regarding the subject matter. To strengthen the validity of the research instruments, the researcher utilized the split-half method as recommended by Coolican. To ensure the content and construct validity, the research instruments were reviewed by multiple experts, including the supervisor and colleagues experienced in research. The valuable feedback received from these experts was incorporated into the research instruments to enhance their quality. Also, the instruments underwent a pilot phase to identify and rectify any remaining errors or areas requiring improvement. This pilot testing phase allowed for final corrections and adjustments to be made before utilizing the instruments for data collection. By implementing these rigorous steps, the researcher aimed to ensure that the research instruments were valid, reliable, and capable of accurately capturing the desired information.

2.3.2 Ethical Considerations

The study was conducted per ethical research guidelines to ensure participant protection (Vogt, 2011). Informed consent was obtained from participants before interviews or filling out the Google forms. The researcher maintained anonymity by not collecting the residents' identities. Measures were taken during data collection to ensure credibility and address potential biases or conflicts of interest.

Securing the participation of all respondents posed ethical concerns due to the sensitive nature of the topic involving violent extremism as a security issue. Individuals might be hesitant to openly discuss such matters, fearing being quoted or lacking the authority to speak on behalf of the government. Additionally, the researcher faced challenges as a non-citizen in any of the central European states, including limitations on freedom of movement and language barriers.

To address these issues, the researcher implemented several measures. Permission was obtained from respondents, ensuring their willingness to participate. Research assistants were enlisted to navigate challenges, and an impartial interpreter was present to mitigate potential information distortion. Further, the researcher possessed additional credentials, including an introductory letter from the university, a research permit, and a university ID card for identification purposes.

Chapter 3

3 Findings from The Interviews and Questionnaires

This section presents the findings of the research on the impact of violent extremism on Central European countries. It holds an extensive amount of data that was collected from different categories of people, through channels of one-on-one interviews and distributed questionaries. This study whose focus was on Central European states also employed diverse sources to better understand the link between violent extremism and immigration policies. The participants' insights and suggestions shed light on this study's research questions and give us multifaceted dynamics, and inferences of what could ensue from the interaction of these two intricate phenomena. By analyzing empirical data, the researcher deduced the relationship between violent extremism, immigration policies and how these ultimately influenced national security. These findings are what informs policy discussions and contribute to the existing knowledge base in Central Europe.

Here is the evident proof of respondents' feedback, including direct quotations supporting the same. It is needful to note that the quotes were edited for grammatical errors though this did not lead to any distortion of respondents' data. Respondents constituted residents from Central Europe, immigrants living in these countries, and academicians from the related field under study. Each of the participants gave their consent to take part in the survey. 95 percent of them admitted being aware of the concept of violent extremism, while the rest of them mentioned that they were interacting with the term for the first time.

Chart 1: Participants' 100% consent to participate in this research.
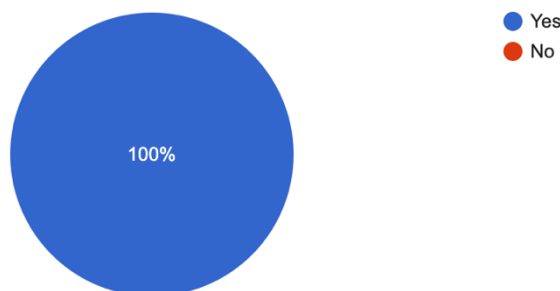
To determine that the respondents indeed understood what violent extremism was, they were asked to define it in their own words or just with a word. The interviews were conducted between March 2023 and May 2023 while the Google forms were distributed between April and May 2023.

The Google forms were structured as follows:

    i)   Demographic Information Section

    ii)   The impact of violent extremism on the immigration sector of states

    iii)   Mitigation measures for containing the problem of violent extremism in Central Europe.

3.1 Biographic Data

This section constituted the participants' age, sex, nationality, current country of residence, level of formal education attained, and major source of income. Though this was not the central focus of the study, the biographic data helped put into context the findings and propose ways in which Central European countries can attain a balance between human rights and non-discrimination in their immigration policies. The respondents' ages were based on their previous birthdays and were as follows:

*Table 1: Participants' ages at the time of conducting the research.*

Age	Prevalence	Percentage
18-29	19	63.00%
30-39	10	33.00%
40-49	1	3.00%
Total	30	100.00

The respondents' ages range from 18 to 49, with the majority being in the age bracket of 18 to 29. From this sample size, the majority were males at 63 % and females at 37 %. However, this did not have any influence on the study's findings.

The respondents' nationalities diversity was a great plus for this study as it ensured the diversity of thoughts and opinions which later influenced the great line of thought during the interview. The researcher was determined to examine the influence of violent extremism on immigration policies across various nationalities. The reason for this is that opinions, policies, and attitudes vary from country to country and from one person to another. Suggestions and recommendations would therefore be drawn from a point of broad contextualized information. Since one of this study's aims was to suggest informed policy recommendations, it was more

attainable from a point where there is knowledge coming from people with different social, cultural, and political experiences. The leading country in terms of the number of participants was the Czech Republic, and Kenya followed by Zambia and Ghana.
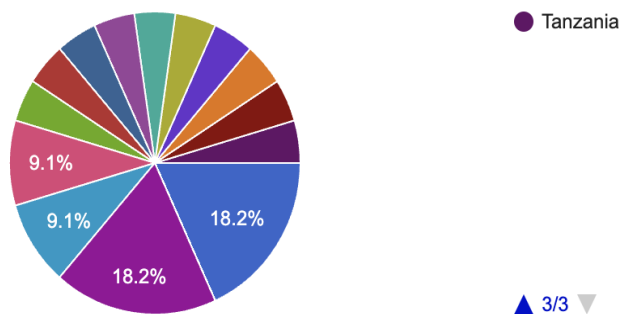
Chart 2.1: Participants' nationalities.
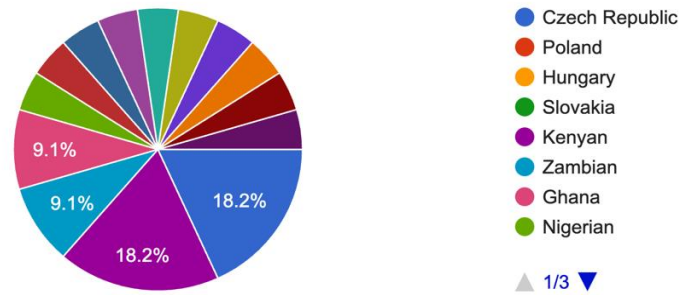

Chart 2.2: Participants' nationalities.
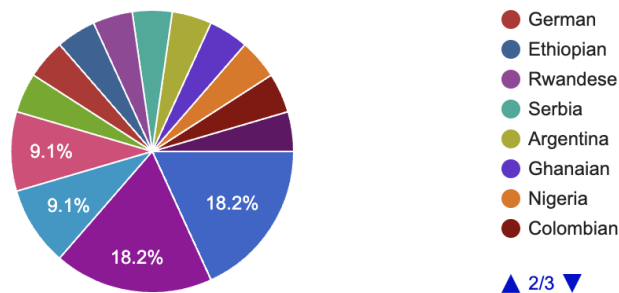
Chart 2.3: Participants' nationalities.

The respondents' level of formal education attained was 54.5 % for those who had attained their bachelor's degree, then 40.9 % for those who already had their master's degree, and the other 1% for those who had completed their secondary school education. Though this was not going to determine the output of the study, the researcher asked about the level of education attained to determine how well individuals might understand the subject of violent extremism. The researcher realized the relationship between one's educational background and the perception of violent extremism amongst individuals and groups of people. For instance, educated persons have a comprehensive understanding of political and social issues which could lead to violent extremism. Also, such people can think critically about issues and employ their analytical prowess to challenge and evaluate information on violent extremism. Engaging people with a certain level of understanding helps when assessing the connection between immigration, immigration policies, and the disparities in society which give room for radicalization.

Chart 3: Participants' level of formal education attained at the time of conducting the research.
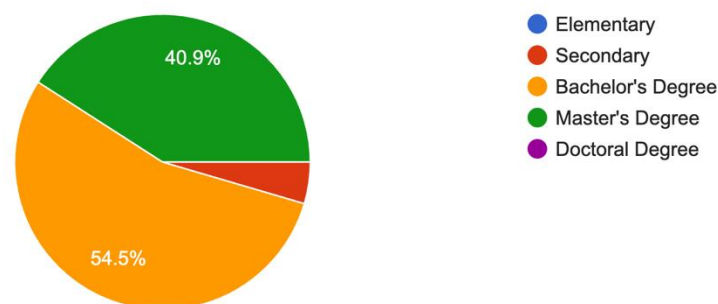
The participants were also asked to provide their current country of residence. This information was collected to analyze the composition and distribution of the participants. Understanding the current residence helps in subgroup analysis and provides insights into the diversity of nationalities represented in the study. It also enables the researcher to compare perspectives and conduct a comparative analysis of the study area. Considering the contextual understanding of immigration policies and violent extremism, knowing participants' current country of residence helps in assessing the impact on individuals and their perceptions of immigration policies in different countries. Additionally, the country of residence often plays a role in shaping socioeconomic conditions. Varying approaches to integration policies, and employment opportunities, amongst other factors, highlight the importance of collecting data on participants' current country of residence. From this survey, the majority of the participants

were currently in the Czech Republic, followed by other Central European countries including Poland.

Chart 4.1: Participants' current country of residence at the time of conducting the research.
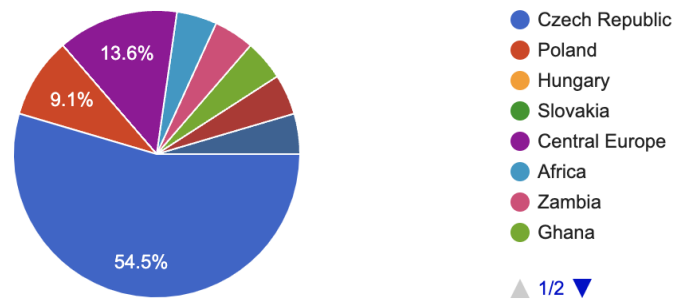
Chart 4.2: Participants' current country of residence at the time of conducting the research.
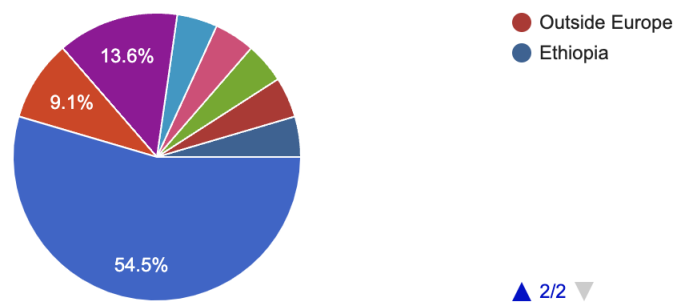
The respondents' primary source of income was as follows: the majority were employed in the private sector, followed by government workers and later the other slots were shared evenly amongst the other people. This demographic information allows the researcher to know the relationship between economic factors and violent extremism. There exists a correlation between immigrants and their boost or promotion of a country's economic growth. From their valuable skills to their entrepreneurial contribution, immigrants could promote or stagnate the economy. Socioeconomic factors and economic disparities often would result in individuals and groups of people being easy targets for extremist ideologies. Therefore, collecting participants' primary source of income would help us gather knowledge surrounding how economic factors could contribute to radicalization and how groups of people become susceptible to radical activities.

Chart 5: Participants' primary source of income at the time of conducting the research.
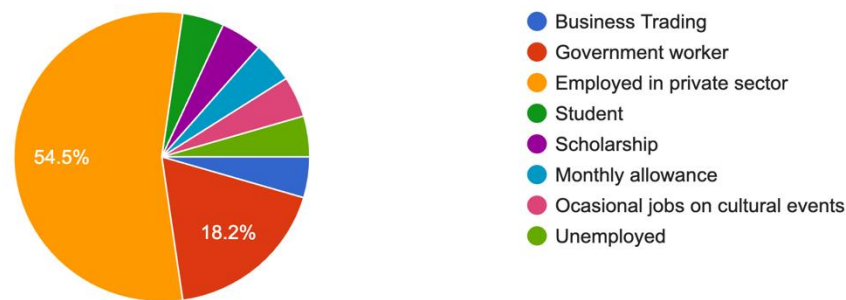
Government workers followed at 19%, while the other categories such as students, business traders, and those on scholarship were shared evenly since a large majority were mostly young people. Out of the entire sample, only 1 respondent mentioned being unemployed. In summary, the majority of respondents were in the category of age 18-29, the majority were males, the majority were from the Czech Republic, and at the time of the study, the majority resided in the Czech Republic. Most of the respondents had attained a University Degree and the majority of them were employed in the private sector.

During this qualitative data analysis, the researcher analyzed the data by identifying the key themes. This approach of analyzing data, often referred to as the *framework approach*, enables researchers to manage a large amount of data without losing focus on the subject under study. This study employed the framework approach by virtue that it ensures consistency and transparency during the research analysis hence making the analysis reliable and easy to replicate by other researchers. This framework approach aided in the sorting and organization of data more promptly giving room for ease during comparison. As a result, one can identify the patterns and relationships amongst various variables which then contributes to the knowledge in this field of study. This approach was also suitable for this study following the nature of research questions and this study's objectives. In a nutshell, framework analysis ensured constituency, transparency, and hence the rich insights drawn from this research.

The distinct *themes* that emerged from this research's data were:
1) The perception of violent extremism as *a threat to national security* and *societal stability*.
2) Multilateral *cooperation* and the regional dynamics among Central European countries, regional and international organizations.

3) Integration and *social cohesion* through the countries' immigration policies to avoid *discrimination* of immigrant communities.

4) *Education*, *sensitization*, and *creation of awareness* as the necessary methods of promoting counter-narratives.

5) The *protection of human rights and civil liberties* in the context of immigration policies.

3.2 Themes identified in the study

3.2.1 Perception of violent extremism as *a threat to national security* and *societal stability*

First, the researcher was determined to know if the respondents were familiar with the concept of Violent Extremism.

Chart 6: The degree of participants' conceptualization of violent extremism.
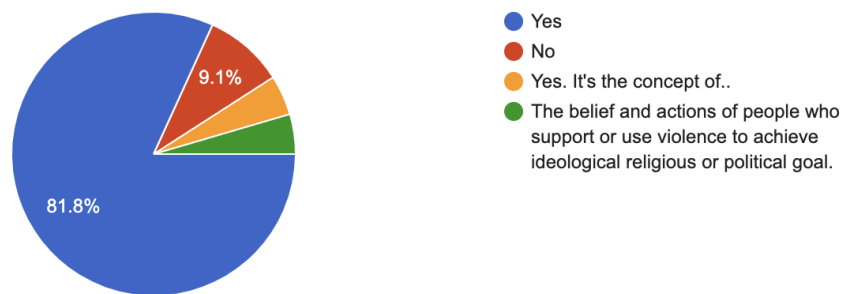
More than 90 % of the participants admitted that they were aware of the concept of violent extremism. Though the majority confirmed that they were aware of the concept, these participants conceptualized the impact of violent extremism on immigration policies quite differently. What stood out more, however, was how violent extremism is a threat to national security and societal stability. Aside from a few respondents who admitted not knowing how immigration policies influenced national security, most participants said there was a causal relationship between national security, and violent extremism as far as immigration policies are concerned.

Participant 5 reported:

> *Though we cannot say that violent extremism is not the only factor that causes strictness of immigration policies in other countries, it is one of the serious factors. The reports of violence from one country will outrightly influence how the other countries are going to treat the people coming from such countries.*

This participant went further to say that the influx of refugees would have an impact on any country's immigration policy since no country would wish to allow into the country groups of people who will compromise on the given country's national security. He added that it is due to this reason that certain countries ask immigrants and foreigners to produce their police clearance certificates proving that they have not engaged in any crimes in the past and are not prone to violence.

This participant added that:

> *Stricter policies limit the entry of anyone associated with or engaging in violent extremism. the downside of this is that the economy might suffer because these policies might deny entry to individuals who might help them continue building their economy. This is perhaps one of the challenges countries face when trying to safeguard their country's security; it is impossible to lock out everyone yet at the same time, difficult to regulate entry.*

When probed on any specific incident of violent extremism that they are aware of, the participant gave the analogy of what is currently the situation in South Africa. Here he said that South Africa has laid strict rules for Nigerians who wish to migrate to South Africa. He posited that:

> *The case of Nigerians in South Africa has led to stricter rules for Nigerians getting into South Africa. South Africa has tightened their immigration laws and made it quite difficult for any Nigerian wishing to visit South Africa because of the claims against Nigerians as people engaging in unlawful activities. Not welcoming Nigerians into South Africa is a way of keeping their country safe.*

Respondents mentioned the incidences of violent extreme activities in the UK, Germany, and France in the past. Most respondents reported that the limited immigration of people from Arabic countries is mostly due to the rise of terror incidences occurring in these countries. Most respondents were aware of the influx of refugees and migrants into Europe in the period of 2015 which brought about a range of immigration policy rectifications and amendments. Amongst the ones that were mentioned by Central European nationals was the 2016 Berlin Christmas market attack in Germany, which claimed the lives of twelve people among them Czech, Polish, and Hungarian. Also, the 2009 Vienna shooting in Austria targeted civilians. The respondents agreed that these events encouraged intelligence sharing amongst countries and as a result, extensive screening of individuals that had great potential for being violent.

Participant 7 also reported that the migration of people could lead to a revision of any country's immigration policies. That Central European countries like Hungary and Poland have revised their immigration laws, for instance, the construction of the fence that was meant to stop illegal immigrants from entering the country and only claiming asylum based on European law. Respondent 3 also stated that unlike before, these countries' strictness and taking caution have increased cases of visa denials and revoking during any suspicions concerns.

When asked how immigration contributes to national security, he posited that at the beginning of the European migrant crisis, Central European countries like Hungary tightened their borders as a way of checking those coming into their country. By conducting strict checks at their borders, they wished to attain national security. He said:

> *Countries enforce these policies as a way of checking security to know exactly the people migrating into the country. Therefore, there is a correlation between immigration policies and national security.*

Image 2: Syrian Refugee Populations in CE after 2015.

Legend:
- Schengen area countries
- To join Schengen
- Main migration routes
- Syrian displacement
- Main entry points
- Increased security borders

Poland

Ukraine

Russia

Czech Republic
Slovakia
Bratislava
Vienna
Budapest

Hungary
Hungary
2,000 daily arrivals in August

Hungarian fence

Croatia

Bosnia and Herzegovina
Belgrade
Serbia
Sarajevo

Serbia
2,000 -2,500 daily arrivals in August

Black Sea

Montenegro
Kosovo
Skopje
Macedonia
Albania

Sofia
Bulgaria
Macedonia
2,000 -2,500 daily arrivals in August

Istanbul

Ankara

Turkey
1,939,000 refugees

Lesvos
Chios
Samos
Athens
Kos

SYRIA

Iraq
248,503 refugees

Baghdad

Syracuse

Greece
3,000 daily arrivals in August

Malta

Lebanon
1,114,000 refugees
Beirut
Damascus

Mediterranean Sea

Jerusalem
Israel

Jordan
629,200 refugees

Benghazi

Alexandria

Cairo

Libya
24,055 refugees

Egypt
132,375 refugees

Syrian Refugees	Syrian Internally Displaced People
4,087,139 people	**7,632,500 people**

12.2 million people in need of humanitarian assistance inside Syria

SOURCE: European Commision, Reuters, BBC

Vox

Numbers in circles represent Syrian refugee populations. Numbers in squares represent all refugees, Syrian and non-Syrian. (Javier Zarracina/Vox)

The participant also responded to the question of whether immigration policies need to consider the risks of violent extremism by saying that it is needful since no country would wish to experience a threat to their national security. Respondent 6 when answering the question of how they perceive the relationship between violent extremism and the perception of immigrants in Central Europe, said the two were indeed related. She went further to say that the Central European States implemented these immigration policies because they believe the immigrants coming from war-torn regions such as the Middle East and North Africa are the main perpetrators of violent extremism.

Participant 9, a government worker, whose nationality is both Czech and Slovak maintained that every country's approach to dealing with violent extremism is unique. They further argued that what might be considered. A threat in one central European country might not be a threat in another. The participant mentioned that the government and the immigration department have often collaborated to deal with groups of people who come into the country with unclear motives. This participant linked violent extremism with the individuals often in the streets of Prague engaging in illicit drug selling. Hence the participant said:

These are the kind of people that the Czech government and Immigration people impose tough immigration policies to keep them from conducting such practices in the country.

Another participant, a Colombian, currently residing in the Czech Republic admitted that countries ought to take seriously matters of national security even if it means tightening immigration policies. This participant began by narrating the situation between her country's immigration policies towards Venezuela. She reported that there have been extreme immigration policies channeled towards Venezuelans by the Colombian authorities. As a result, strict border checks are apparent for ensuring the security of Colombians.

When answering the question of whether changing immigration policies would help in dealing with violent extremism, the Respondent said:

Not every immigration law fulfills its objective of ensuring national security. Therefore, in certain cases, it is needful to revise these laws often. The immigration policies of certain countries have not been effective in fulfilling their goal hence the need to change them from time to time.

Also, during this study, some participants tried to explain why there was a correlation between immigration and the economy. They posited that an influx in the number of immigrants in a given country would ultimately have an impact on both the home and host country's economy. They argued if immigration is not handled well, things might get catastrophically, especially in the job of allocation and distribution. Participant 5 said:

Too many immigrants in a certain country might knock out a balance between the citizens of the given country and the foreigners also interested in securing job opportunities in that country. And should these foreigners leave at any point, then this might bring the economy yet again into shambles.

He continued that when immigrants, in this case, asylum seekers, entering a certain country have no skills that would help build that host country's economy, there is a tendency that they would be deemed as a liability. This is because receiving countries want to improve various sectors of their economy as opposed to engaging in anything that would limit the same.

He also added that the strictness of immigration rules is likely to affect business trading between these countries and terror-related states. Respondent 10, a Czech national, added here that their countries have strengthened customs controls against illegal immigrants increasing amount of police in problematic areas, and reducing the amount of people they let into their country.

Participant 22 posited that Central European states would tighten their immigration policies to ensure the safety of their citizens and the wellness of the security sector. When asked if there have been serious changes in the immigration policies of their host country, participant 26 reported that the strictness in Central Europe's Immigration Policies is due to the same reason of ensuring national security.

He posited:

One of the reasons behind the Central European States' strict immigration policies towards immigrants and specific groups of people is that they are trying to protect their citizens from loss of life attributed to violent extremism.

Respondent 28 and 20 also argued that over the past years, the European Union have put in place laws that would help them counter violent extremism or related factors. They posited that the strict policies in central Europe were a result of the risen attacks in neighboring countries which causes them to guard their borders. Respondent 30 mentioned that since more immigrants are entering Central Europe now than before due to the Russian-Ukrainian war, these countries are trying to regulate any occurrence that would interfere with the country's stability.

The majority of the respondents admitted that instances of violent extremism could undoubtedly influence immigration policies for the safety of those living in those countries. Most respondents maintained that every state has to protect its citizens from any potential harm or danger. Whether internal or external threats, states often look out for their people especially when dealing receiving foreigners and immigrants. Besides strict policies and border checks, there have been more rigorous vetting procedures for both immigrants and refugees, with increased surveillance.

3.2.2 Multilateral *cooperation* and the regional dynamics among Central European countries, regional and international organizations.

Participant 9 reported that closing a country's border when these countries depend so much on each other might not be the ultimate solution for dealing with violent extremism. The participant maintained that the countries in central Europe have unique immigration policies as she had witnessed in both Slovakia and Czech Republic. The participant suggested that these differences should be set aside especially when dealing with a threat to national security such as violent extremism. Here she reported:

> *If we had immigration policies that are somewhat similar among these countries, then we would have a situation of checks and balances making every country accountable for their actions towards anything that would jeopardize the country's national security. Universal laws would help the countries realize the loopholes in their country's immigration.*

When probed to mention these notable differences in the immigration policies, the participant gave the example of when one was seeking to obtain a Schengen Visa. Here she argued that though foreigners' rights and duties in every country are not that distinct, an applicant is likely to obtain their visa sooner in one country as opposed to another. The participant reported that:

> *It is quite easy to obtain a Schengen Visa for one living in Germany, France, or Sweden compared to one looking for the same type of Visa but in the Czech Republic or Slovakia.*

They added that:

> *I also noticed a difference in the immigration policies of the Czech Republic and Slovakia. For instance, a foreigner in Slovakia applying for a residence permit will require a Medical Examination before their visa approval as opposed to in the Czech Republic. This examination is conducted only by an approved physician and the fees are paid by the applicant. Such kind of immigration laws are somewhat extreme if you ask me.*

This participant who has in the past been assisting foreign students with their visa prolongation at the Czech immigration offices said that she noticed some discrepancies in the Czech law regarding some of the requirements for visa extension. She reported:

All foreigners in the entire country are required to have no other Health Insurance other than PZVP Comprehensive Health Insurance at a time when we should have plenty of options to choose from. This monopoly in the health sector that mostly affects foreigners is already a problem by itself.

Respondent 25, a Czech national, mentioned that though he did not witness any obvious cases of violence in the country for the last ten or so years, he noticed from the news from Germany that immigrants were engaging in such extreme activities. The Respondent further said that since their countries cooperate on a wide scale, the policies and enforcements placed by Germany towards such acts would influence Czechs' decision on the same. He said that countries often look up to each other hence the reason they would unite to fight threats to regional stability.

Another respondent argued that the refugee crisis of 2015 was the culmination of years that countries in the European Union had no clear agreement on immigration policies, mostly during the era of globalization. The war in Ukraine has also led to a revisit of the stricter immigration policies that followed after 2015. Respondent 19 stated that the war between Russia and Ukraine made countries realize they need to revise their policies around matters of immigration and unite to keep their countries safe from external aggressors. Respondent 27, a Tanzanian national in Poland, in reaction to the alleged threat of violent extremism, Central European nations have put in place stronger border control procedures with the hope to improve security. Their collaboration is seen in the stringent measures for entry, visa or residency permit applications and renewal, and screening processes. These countries have also heightened surveillance and intelligence cooperation. Here Respondent 14 reported added that these countries should ensure national welfare with general policies that would guarantee human rights protection.

It is based on these grounds that participants highlighted that Central European countries should seek to cooperate through having uniform immigration policies because this way they will determine proper techniques to counter violent extremism.

3.2.3 Integration and *social cohesion* through the countries' immigration policies to avoid *discrimination* of immigrant communities.

This theme kept recurring amongst most participants with most of them agreeing that there was some level of unfairness with regards to the way certain individuals were treated. The first

participant started by pointing out the most recent catastrophe in Central Europe pertaining to the Russia-Ukrainian war comparing it to the 2015 European migrant crisis. He said:

> *When the 2015 migrant crisis arose, countries like Poland rejected the migrants but in 2022, welcomed lots of Ukrainians. This is not far from saying that there was an amount of discrimination towards Syrians, Balkans, and even Nigerians because of the perception held to be that they're extremists as was alleged by the governments of these Central European countries like Hungary and Poland.*

Participant 8 pointed out that fear and rejection were apparent for those individuals and groups of people who were subjected to tough immigration policies. He argued that it is true it might be cumbersome to deal with a large number of people entering a given country at a given time. She posited that instead of dismissing some of these people and laying allegations on them because of their status, countries should formulate better ways to integrate them into society. For instance, Respondent 20 mentioned that there is unequal and sometimes unfair treatment towards certain groups of people by immigration Policies of certain countries. She responded:

> *Persons identified as affiliates of a specific extreme group are handled with caution, unlike the rest of the population.*

Though she admitted that countries are only trying to keep their countries safe using these laws, they sometimes go beyond this to treat others much differently. Participant 15 also affirmed that Muslims and Africans often go through stricter border controls compared to others mostly because they are affiliated to warring states and people.

Participant 9 reported that rather than just changing laws now and then to counter violent extremism or security threats, Central European governments should work with civil organizations and other international bodies such as United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) or United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to integrate these immigrants into the society. The participant said:

> *Integrating immigrants into society will make them less prone to engage in violent extremist activities. There is a great chance that proper integration of people into Central Europe would help in a great way in dealing with the problem of violent extremism. Integration here entails learning the country's norms and practices as well as language. Immigrants face the challenge of language barriers even in important*

offices such as Immigration offices hence breaking these barriers would help a great deal.

On the issue of integration and how this is significant in solving the problem of violent extremism, she added:

From the time when the war broke out in Ukraine, the Czech government had policies for welcoming Ukrainians into the country and integrating them. However, it is over a year now and the same laws are still running as they were months ago. It is time that we revise these laws. I have a feeling that we are still steps behind in the proper inclusion and integration of immigrants or foreigners into our society. If we are still experiencing troubles with the inclusion of categories of immigrants like Ukrainians fleeing war, how then can we contain other groups coming from Africa, Latin America, etc?

She continued that since there is no proper inclusion of Ukrainians into Czech society, there is a growing resentment towards them because the support accorded to them seems not to help, instead they are seen more as a liability. Participant 15 mentioned that rather than causing a divide, countries' immigration policies should honor a country's humanitarian obligations. That these policies should promote integration and social cohesion and adopt a risk-based approach that focuses on individual assessment rather than broad generalizations.

Respondent 19 posited that there is a good chance that the perception of immigrants and violent extremism can be linked together. She pointed out that, though not on a huge scale in Central Europe, there is a different treatment accorded to Muslims and Islam communities compared to others. This happens because most people associate their religion with some degree of micro-aggressiveness. According to Respondent 26, while emphasizing the importance of prioritizing people's security, there exists an issue with the preferential perception of certain groups of people or their religion within the Western world. She pointed to the recent Ukrainian-Russian war where most Ukrainians were unanimously accepted without prejudice as opposed to the 2015 European immigration crisis.

Some respondents thought that there is often a misinformed perception of specific groups of people simply because they are affiliated with individuals or people from violent extreme groups. They argued that people need not be quick to judge others without proof that they are radical. Respondent 23 pointed out the need for good integration of immigrants which might breed room for engaging in violent extreme activities. She pointed out some Middle East

countries which have often been marked as red zones for fear that they are potential areas for hostility.

Participant 29, a Kenyan national who currently resides in Poland, categorized the immigration policies in his current country of residence as those policies around studying abroad, seeking asylum, family reunification, and tourism or travel laws. According to him, often the presence of people engaging or associated with violent extreme activities makes it difficult for states to know how to distinguish those genuinely seeking entry and those who will put a country's security at risk. He added that this could be one of the challenges states are facing when trying to integrate individuals and groups of people into their society. On this, he said:

> *These countries only need to know how to separate the wheat from the chuff. One way of doing so is by allowing thorough background checks of those entering the country. These checks should focus on what skills a person has, and how they can inculcate them into their society.*

When asked how Central European countries can ensure social cohesion of people more promptly, participant 5 suggested that governments should deduce ways of training non-skilled immigrants to make them less gullible to violent extremist activities. Vocational education and training will grant these individuals or groups more profitability in contributing to human capital development. Respondent 20 stated that the change in the Central European countries' immigration policies is not only due to the perceived threat of violent extremism but due to the failure of the concept of multiculturalism. This Respondent reported that there were shortcomings in the way these countries handled diverse groups and their integration into society resulting therefore in frequent changes in immigration policies.

A different viewpoint was expressed by Respondent 11, a Serbian individual with experience living in multiple countries within the Central and Eastern European region. The Respondent highlighted the potential for achieving better integration in these countries by ensuring that important information for immigrants is readily available in the widely used language, preferably English. He reckoned that this approach would simplify the integration process and ultimately help mitigate the risk of violent extremism.

Respondent 27 also emphasized the importance of immigration policies considering authenticity and risk assessments rather than relying on broad assumptions or prejudices towards specific populations. The suggestion put forth was to avoid disproportionate measures that could potentially destabilize individuals or certain communities. Instead, the respondent

proposed that immigration policies should be based on principles of non-discrimination and equal treatment. Other suggestions included the uniform application of laws and regulations to all individuals, regardless of their race, religion, or nationality.

3.2.4 *Education*, *sensitization*, and *creation of awareness* as the necessary methods of promoting counter-narratives.

Most participants gave suggestions that other than integration, there should be a sensitization of the impact of violent extremism and how to attain social cohesion despite the diversity of communities. Participant 8 suggested the education of the masses as one of the best approaches for countering the risks caused by violent extremism. She argued that:

> *This type of sensitization will help people better understand this phenomenon. It will also help them know how to filter the information they run into on social media platforms.*

According to her, there is a lot of false information, something she referred to as, *fake news*, around the subject of violent extremism. In most societies today, there is no vast knowledge of what violent extremism is, how to deal with immigrants, how to ensure fairness in the laws of immigration, and lastly, what roles individuals can engage in to aid the process. She added that the fake news circulating could cause fear among individuals. She admitted that people should be more factual and not base their opinions on the propaganda spreading around matters of immigration. She stated:

> *People should be taught how to make sound judgments by themselves as opposed to what the media is portraying on matters of immigration in various countries. This education should be offered to the citizens of the country and those visiting these countries.*

Evidently from her argument, she believed that the masses are guided by stereotypes about other individuals which could result in a lack of social cohesion in societies like Central Europe.

Most participants admitted that there is a way in which certain individuals or groups of people are perceived by their religion, culture, nationality, or race. Hence, when not investigated, these might escalate to cases of discrimination or sidelining of certain people. To avoid such happening, the public should be educated on how to think rationally and objectively

before associating one with violent extremism just because they are perhaps from a country prone to violence.

Respondent 18 added that the public should be taught out of the fear and suspicion they have towards certain individuals or people by knowing to not draw early conclusions without substantive reasons. And just like Respondent 20, a Kenyan currently living in Poland said:

> *The perception is often tied to certain religions as well as ethnic races. The connection is usually tied to isolated events like 9/11, the Manchester Arena, or the Paris bomb attack that was carried out by individuals who happen to be immigrants. These historical events in the past contribute to this perception.*

On this issue of generalizing, respondent 22 suggested that there is uniqueness in the relationship between violent extremism and the perception of immigrants in the whole of Central Europe. She added that people ought to avoid generalizing since these perceptions differ from society to society. Also, the fact that violent extreme activities are often committed by people or groups with immigrant roots has fueled misconceptions and preconceptions about immigrants in general or certain immigrant communities. Further, she argued that the tendency to see all immigrants as potential security concerns breed increased skepticism, distrust, and mostly stigma.

Participant 7 also maintained that there is a wrong perception of certain groups of people particularly in some Central European countries. He said:

> *In terms of religion, there is a perception in CE that those from the Muslim religion have a lot to do with radical practices hence violent extremism. This causes them to limit allowing these groups of people into Central Europe to avoid having the younger generation's minds corrupted by such.*

Respondent 14 talked about the role of the media in aggravating or alleviating the situation of immigrants' perception in society. He reported that following the major influence that the media has, their perception of immigrants could either raise fear amongst people towards immigrants. Media, therefore, plays a significant role in strengthening or weakening stereotypes. This respondent further gave an example of how the media shifted attention from the recent immigration crisis in Europe where by 2016, over 5 million Syrian, Iraquians and Afghanistan refugees in Europe n Muslims to now focusing on the Russian-Ukrainian war.

Most responses circulated the idea that immigrants are perceived as snatching job opportunities from locals. Some participants mentioned that this could be one of the reasons certain countries tighten their policies to limit the number of entrants whether skilled or not.

3.2.5 The *protection of human rights and civil liberties* in the context of immigration policies

Besides discussing the negative impact of violent extremism, most participants saw the need to address the discrepancies in the immigration policies which often include discrimination and ill-treatment of immigrants. The researcher, therefore, asked the participants about the possible ways of balancing national security concerns and human rights and non-discrimination. The purpose of this was to suggest proper techniques by which countries in Central Europe can ensure the respect of immigrants and their integration into society without putting their country's security in jeopardy.

For instance, participant 9 felt that some immigration laws often are inhuman, particularly to helpless groups of people. The participant added that while Central European countries are striving to protect the European borders, they end up unjustifiably closing out genuine people who direly need help. Having witnessed the repercussion of the extremely harsh immigration policies of Colombia against Venezuela, this participant stated that:

> *We share borders with Venezuela, and I have often witnessed extreme immigration laws channeled toward Venezuelans by Colombian authorities. Venezuela has been through tough times in the past, yet border checks between our countries are not so conducive for the vulnerable categories of people from Venezuela. Colombia however is only trying to ensure security for its populants.*

Another suggestion for respecting differences amongst various groups of people while keeping the country safe as suggested by one of the participants was to conduct thorough background checks on every individual and not just on certain groups of people. In her response, she said:

> *This fairness is to me one of the ways that we will deal with discrimination. While conducting these background checks, those in charge should determine genuine reasons for why these people are seeking entry and have proof for the same.*

Some of the participants believed that it is humane to accept people that have been afflicted either with war, diseases, famine, and related catastrophes rather than dismissing them. A non-governmental organization like the Human Rights Watch, responsible for investigating, exposing, and changing any form of human rights abuse would prohibit any form of discrimination towards immigrants, refugees, or individuals. Therefore participant 7 pointed out that Human Rights Watch would require receiving countries to extend their support to any

victims of violent extremism or those whose life is threatened by any related occurrence. He added:

> *Unfortunately, in certain Central European countries, there is a limitation on the number of immigrants from these warring countries. This compromises the immigrants' fundamental human rights.*

On answering how countries can balance national security concerns and human rights or policies of non-discrimination, participant 7 argued that it might take us a while to attain a balance between the two because countries are striving highly to keep their countries safe. To some extent, this involves having stringent laws that could sometimes seem biased toward immigrants. He believed that most immigration policies have a certain amount of unfairness mostly towards immigrants for reasons best known to the receiving countries themselves. This Nigerian national who has lived in the Czech Republic for a couple of years now argued that he had witnessed instances when there was no uniform treatment of individuals. He posited:

> *Immigrants from certain African countries like DRC Congo, Somalia, and sometimes Nigerians, are scrutinized a lot more than those coming from other African countries or neighboring European countries. Having lived in the Czech Republic for a while, I noticed there is some level of profiling of immigrants which also dictates how they are treated. However, since this is a way for countries to ensure national security, it will be quite difficult to strike a balance between maintaining national security and treating everyone fairly.*

The participant continued that this level of unfairness towards certain immigrants is by itself a denial of these individuals' fundamental human rights of moving to new countries and regions during war, conflict, or natural calamities. He reported that the country's immigration policies should be founded on human rights policies. These laws should propagate fairness, inclusivity as opposed to division and non-inclusion. He suggested that Central European countries should strive to attain fair immigration laws and those breaching fundamental human rights such as equality and non-discrimination should strictly be dealt with by organizations such as Humanity in Action (HIA) or the International Service for Human Rights (ISHR). Respondent 10, a Czech national, also admitted that it might be difficult to find a balance between national security concerns and human rights laws looking into discrimination in immigration policies. He further added that some people will always oppose everything about immigrants, whether positive or negative. This makes it backbreaking to deal with problems of discrimination.

Participants in this research mentioned other factors other than violent extremism that also contributed to frequent alterations of immigration policies. Among some of these include the requirements of industries for labor forces that might influence the policy, or when conducting maintenance during and after demographic enumeration. Another respondent added that countries will change their policies for better handling of the country's resources. Respondent 10 posited that countries' great concern lately besides violent extremism is how to create job opportunities for both civilians and immigrants and reduce the disparity between locals and foreigners. In some cases, concerns have shifted from violent extremism to actual war like the recent case in Ukraine. Generally, other concerns include economic and political factors, international obligations and humanitarian considerations, and demographic trends, such as aging populations and decreasing birth rates. Here, respondents pointed out that, increasingly declining populations or shortage of labor forces may cause countries to implement policies that would ensure demographic balance. Adding to these, social cohesion through a unifying language, religion, bilateral and multilateral relations, and humanitarian concerns are equally significant. Most participants reasoned that states' negotiations to investigate matters affecting regional immigration would also lead to adjustments in countries' immigration policies. The political climate of a country also causes readjustments in its immigration policies. Providing humanitarian assistance to refugees and asylum seekers also shape immigration policies.

The survey concluded with several recommendations from the participants on how Central European states can effectively combat violent extremism and promote fair immigration practices. To sum them up, Central European states should:

- Improve their intelligence sharing and cooperation at regional and inter through better diplomatic relations, particularly with those affected by violent extremism.
- Try and avoid generalization and stereotyping immigrants and ensure human policies that are non-discriminatory as opposed to hoarding inaccurate perceptions about non-European societies.
- Set aside more resources for research and improvement of the current framework.
- Despite the desirability of fewer border controls and free movement within the European Union, the participants recommended enacting border security measures specifically targeting violent extremism.

- Depoliticize immigration so that we see it from its actual impact instead of its perceived threats.
- Conduct proper scrutiny of the individual at entry points to realize any connection to extremist parties before being allowed entry.
- Constant checks and balances to ascertain effective immigration policies.
- Review the existing immigration policies to ensure they align with internationally approved standards, promoting fairness and inclusivity.

3.3 Further findings

Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, and Slovakia have strongly admonished violent extremism and related acts in several ways. For instance, the Czech Republic tries to counter the various forms of terrorism at the national and international levels by negotiating conventions for countering violent extremism. According to Ram (2003), the country has been prioritizing and setting aside funds for ensuring the safety of its population and overseeing the potential targets of violent extremism. Czech has also aligned its legislature according to the EU Counterterrorism Strategy. As a NATO member, Czech joins the fight against such threats to national security by sharing intelligence and expanding discourse with its neighbors. As per Czech's Security Strategy of 2015, a collaboration with international actors and supporting countries dealing with violent extremism helps it contain the threat of violent extremism (Ram, 2003). For them, complying with the EU and international law's counter-terrorism steps reduces the chances of the existence of violent extremism.

Since it acceded to the EU, Czech has been involved in various anti-terrorism projects with the UN, NATO, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. For instance, it became part of the Christchurch Call enterprise that was formed following the terror attack in New Zealand in 2019. According to the Embassy of France in Indonesia (2022), tackling the root causes of violent extremist ideologies by ensuring inclusivity, investing in resources and regular amendment of their policies are some of the things that Czech has achieved so far being part of Christchurch Call. The terrorist attack in Vienna in 2020 made the Czech Republic realize the extent of the threat of violent extremism. The country is much aware of the threats posed by violent extremism and sees the need to investigate radicalization in its society. However, Czech is short of certain networks and lacks a strong immigrant community which would help them establish the proper laws to deal with this threat.

According to Mareš and Petlák (2019), right-wing extremism in the Czech Republic has brought about an increase in violent extreme activities. During the anti-Roma uproar of 2009, several natives took to the street to destroy the properties of the Roma. As of 2020, the Czech Republic had an integration strategy for the Roma people. These areas included education, medical care, job allocation, and proper housing. The Integration Strategy aims to bar any biasness towards the Roma and easily coexist with them in society. Despite being an ethnic minority in the country, Czech strives to accommodate them through limited barriers in the job market, and housing sector. Levínská and Bittnerová (2022) posit that the Czech

government has also made it easier for the Roma to acquire medical care and get the chance for attaining proper learning in Czech schools.

Image 3: Trend of violent crimes in Europe 1990-2019.
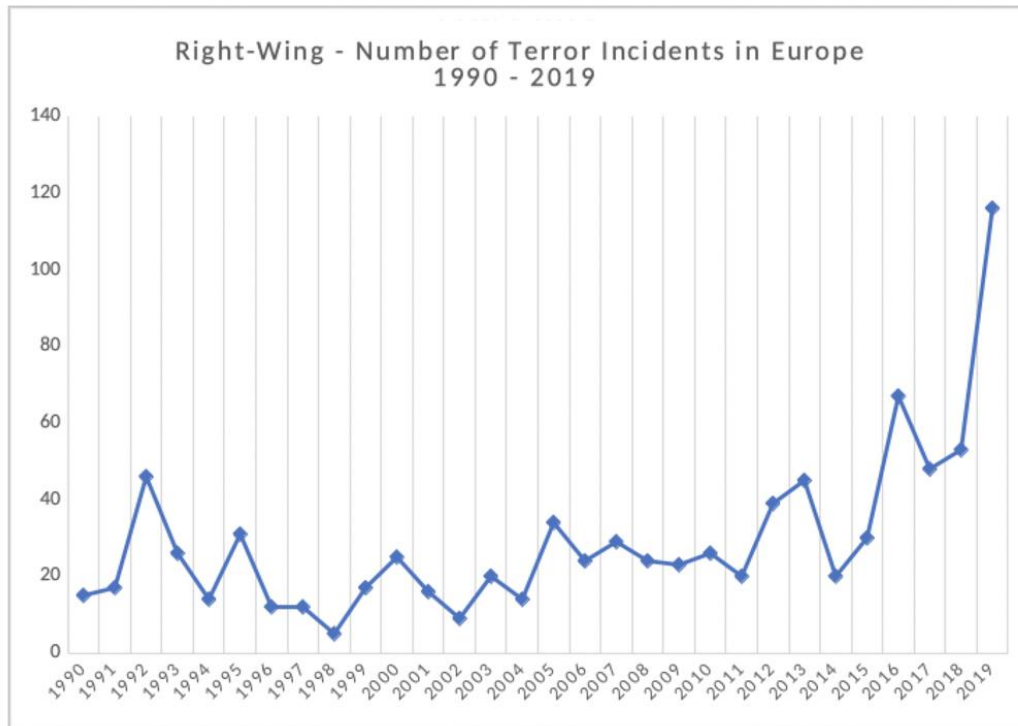
Such cases and the immigration crisis of 2015 led to a strong counter-reaction from the Czech government. As a result, paramilitary groups arose to keep the country's border safe. Doing so also helped minimize the violent extreme activities channeled towards migrants. The rise of hate speech and resentment towards Muslims has been identified as a threat to democracy (Levínská & Bittnerová, 2022). Czech still lurks behind when it comes to the full inclusion of Muslims as anti-Islamic sentiments continue to increase.

The 2017 incident where one anti-Islamic man blocked rail roads and left Arabic inscriptions portraying his hatred for Muslims is one among the several cases showing the state of the Czech Republic in the inclusion of groups such as Muslims (Embury-Dennis, 2018.) According to the *Independent*, this 70-year-old man was a Czech citizen whose motivation was to draw people's attention to the migration of Muslims in Europe. As a result of his actions, he evoked xenophobia and phobia against Muslims in the country. Individual instances of violence are often associated with left-wing extreme occurrences.

The measures taken by the government to deal with violent extremism include the permanent improvement of methods to counter violent extremism. Also, in 2018, the Czech

Republic established its Czech Radicalization Awareness Network through its Ministry of Interior (MOI). Zogata-Kusz (2020) reports that the Czech government frequently improves its Crime Prevention Strategies which is often tied to the regional and international measures of countering violence. Its Ministry of the Interior has placed much emphasis on the protection of persons against domestic violence. This body also sees to it that the victims of violent crime are accorded the proper support to avoid future recurrence of the same. The Czech Republic Police also ensures a good rapport between the police and people from minority groups. As a result, they easily identify crimes at latent stages. However, emphasis is on all the crimes against ethnic or religious groups as this is treated as a crime against humanity. The Czech government updates its Policy for Countering Extremism every year and ensures this policy is preventive (Zogata-Kusz, 2020). Consequently, MOI also stresses the extremist crimes committed through mediums like social networks.

Czech Judiciary also arranges workshops on extremism for those in and out of the justice system. The police get training on how to carry out intelligence operations and campaigns are channeled towards promoting social inclusion at various societal levels. These workshops also educate the masses on the challenge of social exclusion and its effects on minority groups. Targeted persons for this training are mostly young people between the age of 15 and 25, instructors, and security officers. Czech media promotes public awareness of the negative effects of hate violence by conveying messages of social inclusion in marginalized communities (Zogata-Kusz, 2020). In the past, such campaigns have ensued in Usti nad Labem and Moravia-Silesia which faces growing disparity in the employment sector following the existence of different groups of people occupying these areas.

As EU members, the Central European countries in this study work closely with each other to ensure the safety of their countries. The attacks in 2015 have made these countries realize that a common effort rather than individual work would help them attain this security. Also, the EU urges its member states to cooperate in the areas of countering radicalization. The EU's joint statement in 2015 following the Paris terrorist attack pointed out the need for upholding human dignity, and democracy and joining hands to protect all its citizens from religious or ethnic-motivated violent crimes (Saatçioğlu, 2021). The three agendas concluded from the meeting of the EU leaders in Brussels were security for citizens, addressing radicalization, and rethinking the EU's approach to countering violent extremism. The Council resorted to fully involving EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator and member states. Soon after the terror attacks, the EU home affairs ministers decided to strengthen their cooperation to tackle terrorism without infringing on justice, democracy, and freedom of expression

(Saatçioğlu, 2021). The EU member states reaffirmed their cooperation in fighting violent extremism during their 2020 meeting.

European Council (2022) records that the Commission pointed out online communication channels as possible venues for terrorists to champion extremism. After the September 11 terrorist attack, the EU identified a terrorist list that identifies persons and groups of people affiliated with terror activities. The EU enacted rigid rules on money laundering or ownership of certain ammunitions that would make survival difficult for persons engaging in violent extreme activities. Alberda, Duits, Van den Bos, Ayanian, Zick and Kempes (2021) stated that the EU also expanded its definition of what a terrorism offense would be to include joining a terror group, supporting them financially, or taking up any training on the same. The broad definition helps the EU member states to better address the challenge of violent extremism.

Image 4: Terror attacks in the EU 2006-2013.
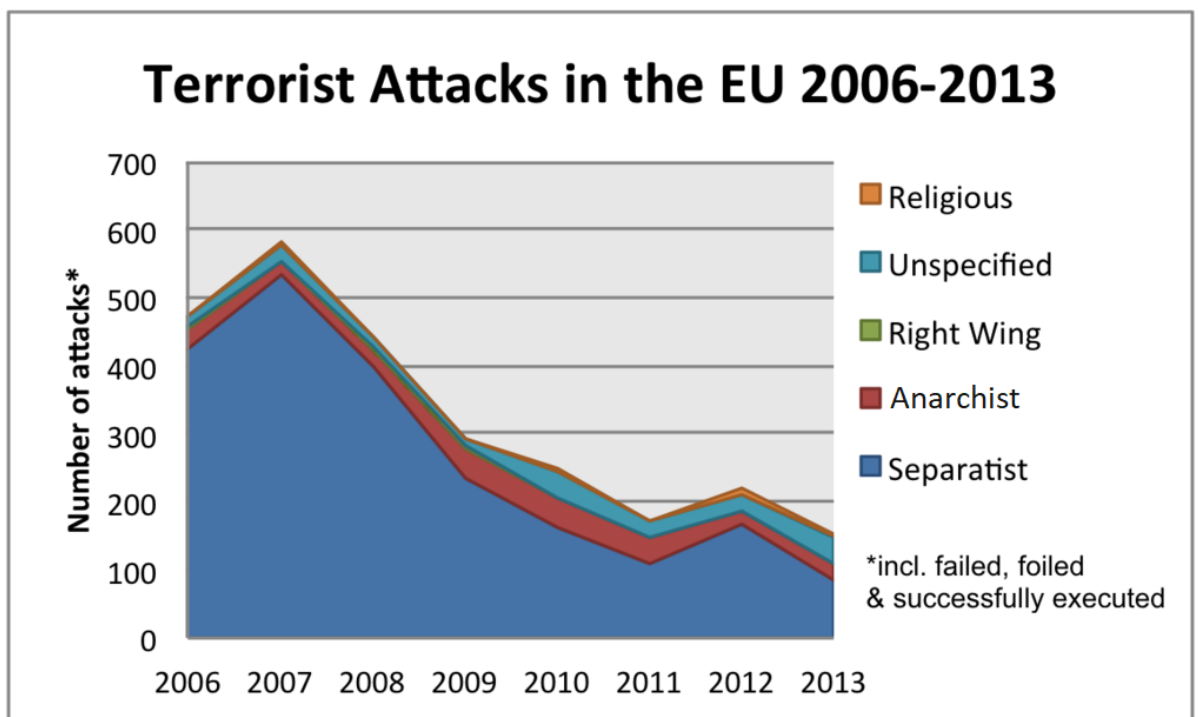
Data source: https://www.europol.europa.eu/latest_publications/37

Additionally, the Central European countries have had to embark on information sharing across their borders, particularly as members of the Schengen Information System. According to Ramón (2023), these countries identified this method as the best for keeping tabs on violent extreme activities. One practical way of ensuring national safety is through sharing the information of passengers flying in and out of one EU country to another (European Council, 2022). In doing so, passengers' information is passed from the airline to the respective

countries' immigration authorities for early prevention of fraudulent activities. The Berlin Christmas market terrorist attack made it apparent that perpetrators hide behind false identities when indulging in violent crimes. With the help of the EU identity repository, Central European countries have access to all information pertaining to foreigners' identities, particularly their biometrics. Other measures by Central European countries for addressing violent extremism include the multiple identity radar that notifies authorities of persons involved in fraud.

Education has also been identified as a great contributor to countering violent extremism. Young people are admonished to seek ways for resolving this mayhem hence countries like the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, and Hungary, are frequently creating opportunities in their formal curricula to establish proper skills. Institutions accord students from marginalized communities equal opportunity for learning leaving no room for radicalization. Since young people are in most cases the first targets for violent crimes, it is possible through proper training to transform them to be peacebuilders instead. The Institute of Social Safety (IBS) in Poland has deduced a way of handling violent extremism by educating its community on violent extremism as a threat to national security. This organization is working together with schools and local communities to teach people how to act in the event that violence occurs. The training improves people's interest in matters of national security. Since its initiation, IBS has coached personnel in more than 100 institutions in Poland, including instructors, and administration staff.

Consequently, (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe) OSCE in Poland also recognizes the need for countering violent extremism in the country. Evers and Kartsonaki (2021) discussed that the organization's leader realized the significance of collaborations among various sectors and with different stakeholders. Michal Drozniewski, the organization's chair pointed out that civil societies and state authorities need collective effort to successfully curb violent extremism. Countries need to hold frequent discussions around the subject of violent extremism on ways to curb the threats associated with it. OSCE has immensely been supporting other countries by organizing training on the proper remedies for dealing with radicalization (Evers & Kartsonaki, 2021.) Besides these, the organization also sees to it that there is social inclusion, strong travel document security, and proper execution of the UN security council resolution of proper use of ammunition.

Bernhard (2020) states that the violent far-right groups in Poland go way back to the post-communist era to date with several violent extreme activities subjected to different parties. Politics has played out in the surge of violent extremism hence discussions on the admission of Muslim migrants in Poland kicked out strongly during the migration crisis of 2015.

Following the thousands of migrants that were admitted into the country, far-right groups in Poland began protests on why these numbers were high. Juhász, Hunyadi, and Zgut (2015) posit that Hungary acknowledges cooperation locally and at the international level as an important tool for fighting terrorism and violent extremism. Hungary locates funds for protecting its citizens and works together with its neighbors Czechs, Slovaks, and Poland to ensure they counter violent extremism and radicalization (Juhász, Hunyadi & Zgut, 2015). Just like Czech Republic and Poland, Hungary is also part of the Christchurch Call enterprise whose aim is to fight violent crimes.

According to Kántás (2021), when Hungary set up the *Hungary Helps program*, it aimed at giving development aid to marginalized communities from Middle East and certain African countries. The country hosted a conference in 2019 that brought together different states and civil society organizations to find ways of curbing violent extremism. Emphasis was placed on Western Balkans as their closest neighbors (Kántás, 2021.) As countries that are very open to migrants, Central European countries have not yet confirmed that migrants are behind all the terror attacks. Despite reporting a smaller number of migrants over the years compared to its neighbors, Poland has issued residence permits to thousands by 2020. For instance, in 2022, Poland's open-door policy permitted it to accept more Ukrainians into the country. This policy also meant that these foreign nationals were granted temporary protection for up to eighteen months. As a result, they would also have full entry into the Polish employment sector.

Right-wing extremists in Central Europe have found it much easier to use the internet to fulfill their goal of radicalizing vulnerable people to join their ideologies. In the past, extremists have live-streamed their actions online or recruited members using platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and the rest, hence being able to reach a wide range of people. Right-wing individuals also have close ties in politics or greater networks making it easy for them to execute their plans. Besides facilitating their operations, the internet also gives extremists the proper ground for harassing their targets. Such individuals would start online campaigns calling out people to protect Europe, which would likely draw the attention of several people. Right-wing extremists use fake theories and spread fabricated news, run websites, or use pseudo platforms to misguide people.

To counter these problems, Central Europe as EU member states has initiatives for sensitizing the public on the repercussions of violence and its affiliates. Countries in this region have a special committee that meets regularly to hold discussions on countering violent extremism and eradicating racism. Anti-racism policies would limit the proper functioning of right-wing groups. Additionally, education offers a lasting opportunity to empower young

people on the cruelty of violent crimes and how to shun right-wing extreme activities. Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovakia are training their young people on self-awareness, or civic responsibility. These initiatives also involve integrating right-wing extremists into society and restoring their trust in the police and security personnel for them to report any violent extreme activities. These countries have realized the importance of working with former members of right-wing groups to properly connect with other violent extremists. Initiatives such as the EU Youth program help in fostering inclusion and sensitizing policymakers on the matters affecting vulnerable groups of people and possible ways of preventing future violent crimes. Policymakers are urged to share experiences and identify crime-preventive measures to avoid future atrocities.

Chapter 4

4.1 Discussion of the Result

This chapter analyzes the findings and considers why they are relevant to this study. The research also gives recommendations for further research on the effects of violent extremism on the immigration policies of nation-states, making a reference to Central European countries. As the study's main objective was to determine the relationship between violent extremism and immigration policies of states, the study's analysis was based on the earlier mentioned five themes and secondary sources on the same.

The distinct themes that emerged throughout this study were the perception of violent extremism as a threat to national security and societal stability, cooperation and regional dynamics among Central European countries, integration, and social cohesion to avoid discrimination of immigrant communities, sensitization, and creation of awareness as the necessary methods of promoting counter-narratives, and finally the protection of human rights and civil liberties in the context of immigration policies. The majority of the respondents understood the concept of violent extremism and its possible implications for immigration policies. Although violent extremism was not the only factor contributing to the frequent ratification of immigration laws, it could greatly compromise a country's national security.

This study realized the significant duty of states to protect citizens and the need to enhance their intelligence to counter this problem. Stringent checks and screening at border points and frequent revisions of old-fashioned laws should be made possible as this would help these countries attain national security. The study findings show that in addition to violent extremism, which is the primary driving factor for changes in immigration policies, multiculturalism, and integration also play significant roles. These findings imply that the failure of Central European countries to promote social cohesion and re-evaluate their policies deters their chances of stability. Therefore, countries are admonished to manage cultural diversity through proper integration. These findings highlight the need for integration when countering violent extremism. The methods identified include offering vocational training, encouraging civic participation among immigrants, and social interaction. Other methods include providing relevant information for immigrants in commonly used languages, preferably English. The findings also emphasize the need for immigration policies to align with international standards. Fairness and inclusivity while adhering to global norms would ensure equal treatment of immigrants.

Also, cooperation amongst Central European states and other regional and international bodies will play out in the successful resolution of the violent extremism threat. The findings point out that these countries should hold discussions around these issues and ratify immigration laws. Unified immigration policies and collaboration would effectively tackle the threat of violent extremism toward national security. There are discrepancies in the immigration sector in terms of how to treat immigrants. There exist significant differences in these countries' immigration policies, particularly regarding visa issuance and residence permit requirements. As a result of these disparities in the treatment accorded to foreigners, limitations arise in the overall effectiveness of immigration systems.

The findings draw us to the realization of the role of regional dynamics, particularly the experiences and policies of neighboring countries in shaping bias-free policies. It can be realized that often countries look to each other for guidance and may be influenced by the actions and enforcements implemented by neighboring countries in response to violent extremism. The collected data also draw conclusive arguments that from time to time, countries should reevaluate their policies to suit real-time situations and occurrences. Concerning the war between Russia and Ukraine, countries in Central Europe need to ensure their policies are aligned in such a way that they focus on regional security. The findings highlighted the need for stronger border control procedures, surveillance, intelligence cooperation, and the protection of human rights. There is also a belief that cooperation amongst Central European states to adopt uniform immigration policies among Central European countries would enable the development of effective techniques to counter violent extremism while ensuring the protection of human rights and national welfare.

On the theme of integration and social cohesion to avoid discrimination in immigrant communities, the findings illustrate a recurring situation of unfairness and discrimination in the treatment of certain individuals and groups. The study determined that specific populations like Syrians, Balkans, Nigerians, Muslims, and Africans, are subjected to stringent immigration policies following the stereotypes and assumptions about extremism. The study shows the need to formulate better integration strategies to avoid dismissals and allegations based on individuals' statuses. There is also the need for integration and social cohesion to counter violent extremism and ensure stability in societies. Integration would decrease the likelihood of engagement in violent activities. Hence the findings suggest collaboration with civil organizations and international bodies to facilitate the integration process.

Image 5: European migration crisis of 2015.
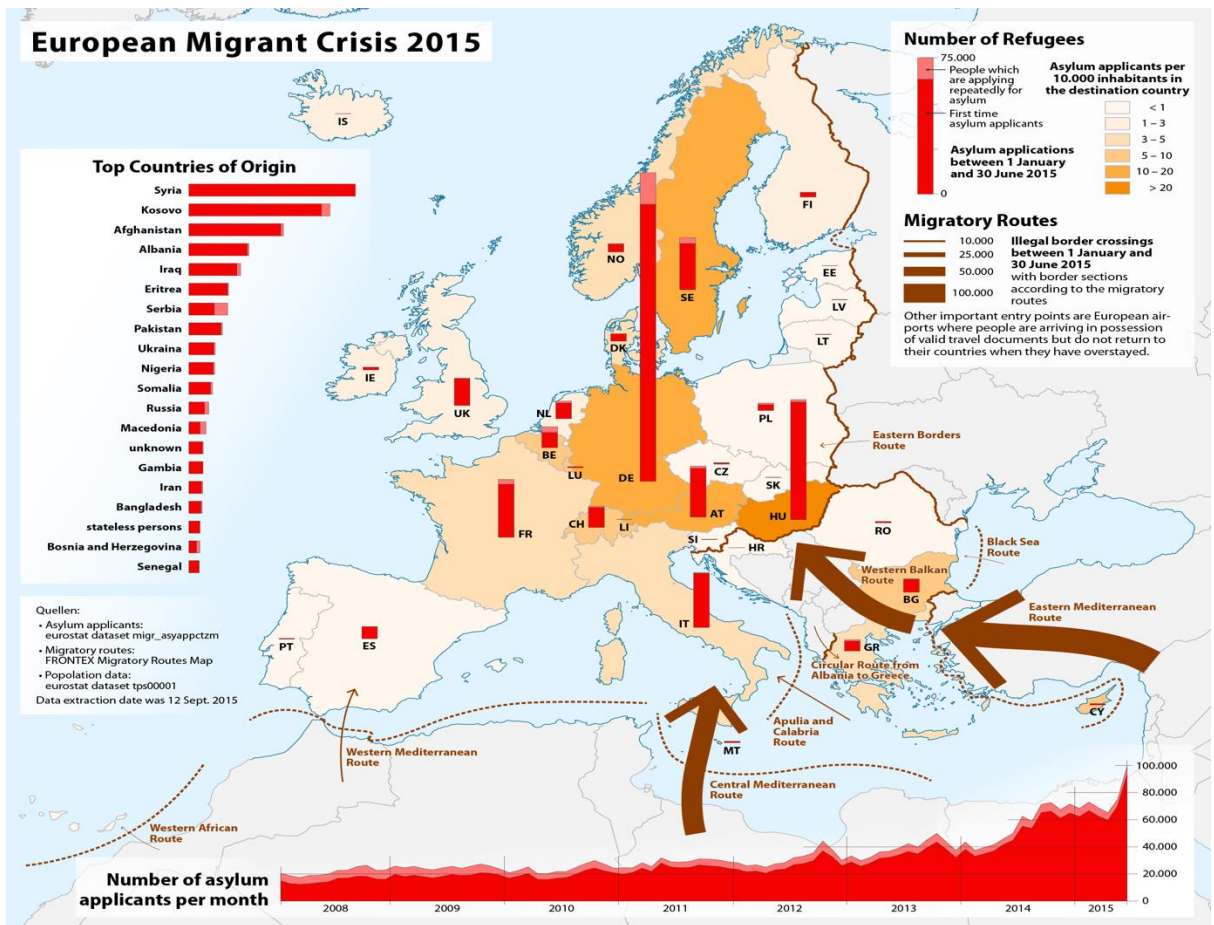
Concurrently, the findings point out the often-misinformed perceptions of specific groups, particularly Muslims, and the degree of aggressiveness they often experience. The collected data opposes broad generalizations and urge individual assessments instead. It was realized that there was a different treatment accorded to Ukrainians during the Ukrainian-Russian war and the 2015 European migrant crisis. This study's findings emphasize the need for immigration policies to be authentic and non-discriminatory. The disproportionality of these laws may destabilize individuals and communities. It is evident also the need for equal treatment as a guiding principle that will ensure fair treatment of everyone despite their race, religion, or nationality.

On the theme of education, sensitization, and the creation of awareness as the necessary methods of promoting counter-narratives, the findings portray the need for educating the public on the impact of violent extremism. These study findings suggest that mass education can help in better understanding the phenomenon of violent extremism, filter information from social media platforms, and avoid falling victim to fake news. The emphasis is made on having factual knowledge of immigration, fairness in immigration policies, and knowing what role one can play in facilitating the integration process. There is also an acknowledgment that certain

individuals or groups of people are often perceived based on their religion, culture, nationality, or race. This implies that such preconceived notions can lead to discrimination or marginalization hence the need to educate the public to think rationally and objectively, avoiding early conclusions or generalizations without substantial evidence.

Regarding media influence, the media can either exacerbate or alleviate the situation. We see that media coverage can not only raise fear and strengthen stereotypes but also shift attention to different issues and contribute to a more balanced understanding. The media's portrayal of immigrants as job snatchers is mentioned as a factor that may contribute to the tightening of immigration policies. It was determined that the perception of religious groups, particularly Muslims, as radical limits the admission of other immigrants into Central Europe. The findings admonish the association of religion with violent extremism as it is likely to contribute to negative stereotypes and prejudices. The survey shows that due to the perception of immigrants as competitors for job opportunities with locals, there has been a tightening of immigration policies in some Central European countries. Hence the fear of job loss or limited opportunities for locals is a possible reason for the changes in immigration policies.

The last theme identified here is the protection of human rights and civil liberties in the context of immigration policies. The findings highlight concerns regarding the discriminatory and inhumane aspects of immigration policies in Central European countries. Most arguments point out that while countries aim to protect their borders and ensure security, their immigration policies often result in the unjustifiable exclusion of innocent individuals. The discrepancy is evident from the law that shows concerns for victims of the Russian-Ukrainian war, as opposed to the 2015 European migration crisis. The findings suggest the need to balance national security concerns and human rights by conducting thorough background checks on every individual, rather than targeting only specific groups of people. Emphasis is placed on the fair treatment accorded to individuals based on their specific circumstances as opposed to their race, nationality, or religion.

The conversations also advocate for humane approaches of accepting individuals who have been affected by war, diseases, famine, or related catastrophes, rather than rejecting them. The study findings also suggest entrusting non-governmental organizations such as Human Rights Watch, Humanity in Action, and the International Service for Human Rights to oppose discrimination and advocate for the support of victims of violent extremism or related threats. It is evident from these findings that balancing national security concerns and non-discriminatory policies is a challenge. However, stringent immigration laws biased toward immigrants would worsen the situation. Since it is quite difficult to strike a balance between

national security and fair treatment, immigration policies must be grounded in human rights principles to promote fairness, inclusivity, and non-discrimination. There is a need to address discrepancies in immigration policies through fair checks and screening, inclusive and non-discriminatory laws, and practices.

The Council of Europe (COE), the EU, and the OSCE are the institutions that investigate violent extremism among other issues of human rights within the EU. Member states have a council of their Ministry of Foreign Affairs whose role is to handle issues of terrorism and any breaches of human rights. With the help of these bodies, Central European countries have an established mechanism for handling violent crimes and the right training for resolving similar cases. The collaboration between the local and international bodies has enabled the countries to monitor travels abroad, investigate the root causes of violence and ensure adequate integration programs for post-violent extreme individuals. These countries' cooperation has helped them deduce the proper penalties and punishment for offenders of national and global security. Working together helps countries to monitor their neighbors and where possible, suggest alternative approaches for tackling terrorism-related cases.

The networks of these respective Central European countries suggest to them legal frameworks for countering violent extremism. The Council of Europe has formulated policies for bringing terrorists to book for their ill-fated actions. As a result, other bodies like the Committee of Experts on Terrorism have sprouted from it. This committee identifies areas of weakness in the COE, particularly in its suppression of terrorism. European Convention on Human Rights is tasked with looking into the civil and political rights of locals and foreigners alike. Another convention which Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, and Hungary are part of by the virtue that they are in the EU is the European Convention on the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman Treatment. Being affiliated to these has given room for policy shaping, in the respective countries. Additionally, the Venice Commission is responsible for the respect of human rights and ensures that states uphold the rule of law. This body works closely with the member states of the COE to see to it that they have respect for all persons regardless of their nationality.

The European Union also brings together all its member states to ensure that they oblige to the laws and policies on counterterrorism. The European Parliament formulates laws, the European Council sets the entity's agenda, and the European Commission sees to it that all member states respect these laws. Having identified terrorism as a great threat to the safety of Europe, the EU addresses violent terrorism issues. The EU Counter-Terrorism Strategy of 2005 sought to bar people from joining violent extreme groups, ensure the safety of its citizens,

address reported terrorism cases, and finally ensure such atrocities are not prevalent in the future. The Council ensures regular revisions of the Counter-Terrorism Strategy to factor in any changes that occur as a result of natural causes. For instance, following the Syria and Iraq migration crisis in Europe in 2014, the Council modified its policies to accommodate this group of people. The same applies to their bid to counter money laundering which also contributes to violent extremism. The OSCE, on the other hand, covers not only North America and Asia but also Europe and offers a platform for holding discussions on matters of security. Members of this organization breach all obstacles to trust each other hence the ability to counter violence and extremism. Therefore, the findings affirmed that affiliation to the above-mentioned regional and international institutions would enable the countries under study to know how to handle refugee influx, migrants' integration, policymakers training, and importantly counter violent extremism.

5 Recommendation

This study employed liberal institutionalism theory, which acknowledges the role of international institutions and cooperation in promoting stability and ensuring stability. Based on the findings of this study, the Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia, and Hungary would best address the challenge of violent extremism by strengthening their cooperation. With the help of international organizations such as the European Union (EU), they need to work collectively on the best approaches for countering extreme violent activities. These countries also need to work on common norms and techniques to deal with violent extremism. Their legislation and law enforcement strategies on how to deal with those found engaging in extremist activities should be aligned with each other.

An exchange of expertise among these countries was also suggested after the successes that this was born in the past. Central European countries need to organize training programs, workshops, and even conferences for both civilians and law enforcers. The same programs would be suitable for civil societies and intelligence to determine ways to deal with violent extremism more promptly. The inclusion and promotion of social cohesion is a strong recommendation for any country with diverse groups of individuals and groups living within its borders. Central European countries need to promote civil society organizations' involvement in leading conversations and ensure social cohesion in the country. Marginalized communities, both religious and ethnic, need to investigate the causes of extremism and how to resolve them soon enough to prevent further radicalization.

In addition, liberal institutionalism emphasizes the significance of the rule of law and respect for human rights as ways to promote counterterrorism. Therefore, these countries must ensure that their human rights standards align with those of international human rights. Other recommendations include allowing freedom of speech and religion while ensuring the maintenance of security. Creating awareness and educating the masses about counterterrorism ideologies will enhance critical thinking and multicultural consciousness. This study suggests raising awareness of the risks and repercussions of radicalization in society. These recommendations can be made possible through collaboration among stakeholders, international organizations, and, importantly, Central European countries, while not forgetting to address the socio-political challenges unique to each of these countries.

Specific to these countries, the Visegrad Group countries should perhaps build up their cooperation within Europol and Eurojust to mutually combat transnational extremist activities. In addition, these countries need to ensure a properly functioning early warning system that

can identify violent extremist threats and establish early preventive measures for the same. Where possible, these countries need to channel funding to aid civil society organizations working towards countering violent extremism. This also means supporting projects aimed at achieving social cohesion and strengthening local communities. Further suggestions include promoting digital literacy and critical thinking among young people, as this group is more prone to taking part in extremely violent activities. Through online campaigns, these countries can persuade people to counter-narratives to address the threat of violent extremism.

They could do so as well by engaging with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) to promote social inclusion, as it is easier to have community outreach and arrange for the rehabilitation of extremists, offering them support to avoid relapsing into radicalization. Heads of state of the Visegrad group need to hold regular summits even with its other neighbors. Such summits like the one that was held in 2015 with Korea serve as a good basis for identifying loopholes in various sectors and thus suggest the best approaches to curb them. These joint regular political dialogues expand the knowledge of security and migration crises by identifying the root causes of the issues at hand. Such forums give room for the formulation of lasting conflict resolutions.

There is the limitation that unlike before when right-wing extremists mainly comprised of young people, today adults are also part of these groups. Therefore, new approaches must be founded to talk both adults and young people out of violent crimes. As urged by the Liberal Institutionalism theory, Central European countries' cooperation and coordination would go a long way in dealing with violent extremism. Together they can arrange rallies online and offline and strengthen the monitoring of how individuals use the internet. This study, therefore, recommends proper monitoring of online media and content and offers sensitization training not only to young people but also adults since the scope of the target group has grown. Educators and trainers should also increase their online presence since this is the most used platform. Also, have mounted and non-mounted safe spaces for extremists to air their woes. These spaces will aid in the establishment of proper methods of countering extremism. Importantly, educate the public on how to discern digital information and not to feed on everything they meet online. Also, reinforce strict regulations for any online harassment or racism.

6 Conclusion

Considering all the above, it is evident that there is a causal relationship between national security and violent extremism as far as immigration policies are concerned. This study sheds light on the negative impact of violent extremism and emphasizes the significance of sensitization and education in counteracting the stereotypes and misinformation linked to immigration and violent extremism. Educating the public and promoting critical thinking fosters social cohesion and dispel misconceptions. This study highlights discrepancies in immigration policies by identifying discriminatory and inhumane practices that hinder the integration of immigrants. As portrayed during this study, balancing national security concerns and human rights is quite complex; however, there is fair treatment of immigrants and thorough background checks. International institutions offer checks and balances to countries to ensure that immigrants' fundamental human rights are respected and protected. The findings of this study underscore the role of human rights institutions in advocating fairness, equality, and non-discrimination in immigration policies.

As suggested by most respondents and aided by Liberal Institutionalism theory, Central European countries need continued collaboration to overcome discrimination and opposition to immigration, as these factors hinder progress toward fair and inclusive societies. The cooperation could include intelligence sharing, allocation of resources for research and improvement, enactment of targeted border security measures, depoliticization of immigration, constant checks and balances, and a review of existing immigration policies. Strong diplomatic relations and cooperation at the regional and international levels facilitate the exchange of relevant information, enabling a more coordinated approach to address the challenges posed by violent extremism. Countries in this region should also invest in comprehensive studies that will grant policymakers the necessary insights to make informed decisions regarding effective measures to counter violent extremism.

There is great concern about addressing discrepancies in immigration policies, promoting education and critical thinking, and upholding human rights principles. Multilateral cooperation between Central European state regional bodies like the European Union would help Central European countries move towards an equitable society that embraces diversity and protects the rights of all individuals, irrespective of their background. Implementing humane and non-discriminatory policies contributes to respecting the dignity and rights of immigrants, ensuring that Central Europe is more inclusive and welcoming.

In general, emphasis is placed on the negative impact of violent extremism and the need for sensitization and education to counter stereotypes, misinformation, and fear of violent extremism. Encouraging a better understanding of these issues would enable individuals to think critically and filter the information they interact with on social media platforms. The reason for this is that propaganda provides room for fear and prejudice. Importantly, both locals and foreigners should foster an informed and cohesive society.

The growing concern for misinformed perceptions and stereotyping of immigrants based on their religion or nationality has led to discrimination, exclusion, and violation of individuals' rights. People are admonished to think more rationally, especially when referring to vulnerable groups affected by wars, diseases, or other natural and unnatural catastrophes. Instead of dismissing immigrants affected by these humanitarian crises, Central European countries should assist where possible. Although it is cumbersome to balance national security and non-discriminatory immigration policies, thorough background checks on all individuals would ensure fairness during the process.

Besides making immigration laws stricter, countries should also look for ways to make them fair while still protecting their nationals. Profiling and unequal treatment deny individuals' fundamental human rights and contradict the principles of fairness and inclusivity that immigration policies should embody. Countries should align their immigration laws with human rights policies and promote equality and nondiscrimination. National security concerns may encounter opposition from individuals opposing immigration of any form. However, countries are urged to maintain their efforts to overcome these challenges and ensure that their policies uphold human rights, foster inclusivity, and counter discrimination. Despite the desire for fewer border controls and free movement within the European Union, enacting border security measures specifically targeting violent extremism remains relevant. Hence, countries should maintain fair scrutiny of people at entry points while determining any likely connections to extremist parties before permitting entry.

In summary, regular evaluations and assessments will enable policymakers to identify areas of improvement, address emerging challenges, and maintain a fair and inclusive immigration system. Reviewing existing immigration policies and aligning them with internationally approved standards will ensure the fairness and inclusivity of all groups of people in Central European states. Finally, Central European states can create a more secure and inclusive society for immigrants while still upholding their national security interests and international obligations. In the course of the study, the hypothesis was therefore confirmed,

since it was established that violent extremism has impacted the immigration policies of these CE states and that the mitigation measures taken by CE states to counter it are insufficient.

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Appendices

Appendix A Interview Questions

Impact of violent extremism on Immigration Policies of Central European Countries.

I am conducting a research focusing on exploring *"Impact of violent extremism on Immigration Policies of Central European states."* I kindly ask for your participation by sharing any relevant information that could contribute to my study. Your input would greatly assist in advancing this research.

Informed Consent

Description (optional)

Do you wish to participate? *

⭕ Yes

⭕ No

After section 1   Continue to next section   ▼

Declined to participate

You have declined to participate. Thank you for your time. You may close the browser or click submit button below.

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DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Kindly mark the applicable section.

1. Age (Years) *

- ○ 18-29
- ○ 30-39
- ○ 40-49
- ○ 50 and above

2. Sex *

- ○ Male
- ○ Female
- ○ Other...

3. Nationality. *

- ○ Czech Republic
- ○ Poland
- ○ Hungary
- ○ Slovakia
- ○ Other...

4. Current country of residence. *

- ○ Czech Republic
- ○ Poland
- ○ Hungary
- ○ Slovakia
- ○ Other...

5. Level of formal education you have attained. *

○ Elementary

○ Secondary

○ Bachelor's Degree

○ Master's Degree

○ Doctoral Degree

○ Other…

6. Major source of income *

○ Business Trading

○ Government worker

○ Employed in private sector

○ Other…

After section 3   Continue to next section   ▾

75

THE IMPACT OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM ON IMMIGRATION SECTOR OF STATES

Fill in the spaces you response.

*

1. Are you aware of the concept of violent extremism?

◯ Yes

◯ No

2. In your own words, how would you define violent extremism? *

Long answer text

*

3. Do you believe that violent extremism has led to stricter immigration policies in Central European states? (**Why/Why not?)**

Long answer text

*

4. Have there been any specific incidents or events related to violent extremism that have had a notable impact on immigration policies?

Long answer text

*

5. How do you perceive the connection between violent extremism and the perception of immigrants or specific immigrant groups in Central European states?

Long answer text

THE IMPACT OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM ON IMMIGRATION SECTOR OF STATES

Fill in the spaces you response.

*

1. Are you aware of the concept of violent extremism?

○ Yes

○ No

2. In your own words, how would you define violent extremism? *

Long answer text

3. Do you believe that violent extremism has led to stricter immigration policies in Central European states? (**Why/Why not?**)

*

Long answer text

4. Have there been any specific incidents or events related to violent extremism that have had a notable impact on immigration policies?

*

Long answer text

5. How do you perceive the connection between violent extremism and the perception of immigrants or specific immigrant groups in Central European states?

*

Long answer text

6. Have immigration policies in Central European countries changed in response to the perceived threat of violent extremism? How?

*

Long answer text

After section 4   Continue to next section   ⌄

MITIGATION MEASURES TO CONTAIN THE PROBLEM OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN CENTRAL EUROPE.

Fill in the spaces you response.

*

7. Are you familiar with the immigration policies of Central European countries?

Short answer text

*

8. How do immigration policies contribute to national security in the context of violent extremism?

Long answer text

⋮⋮⋮

*

9. Do you believe immigration policies should consider the potential risks of violent extremism? (**YES/NO**) Why?

10. How can national security concerns be balanced with human rights and non-discrimination in immigration policies?

*

Long answer text

11. Besides violent extremism, what other factors do you believe can influence the immigration policies of nation states and how effective are they in influencing immigration policies?

*

Long answer text

12. Based on your understanding of the impact of violent extremism on immigration policies, what recommendations would you propose to Central European states to effectively address this issue while ensuring fair immigration practices?

*

After section 5   Continue to next section   ▾

Section 6 of 6

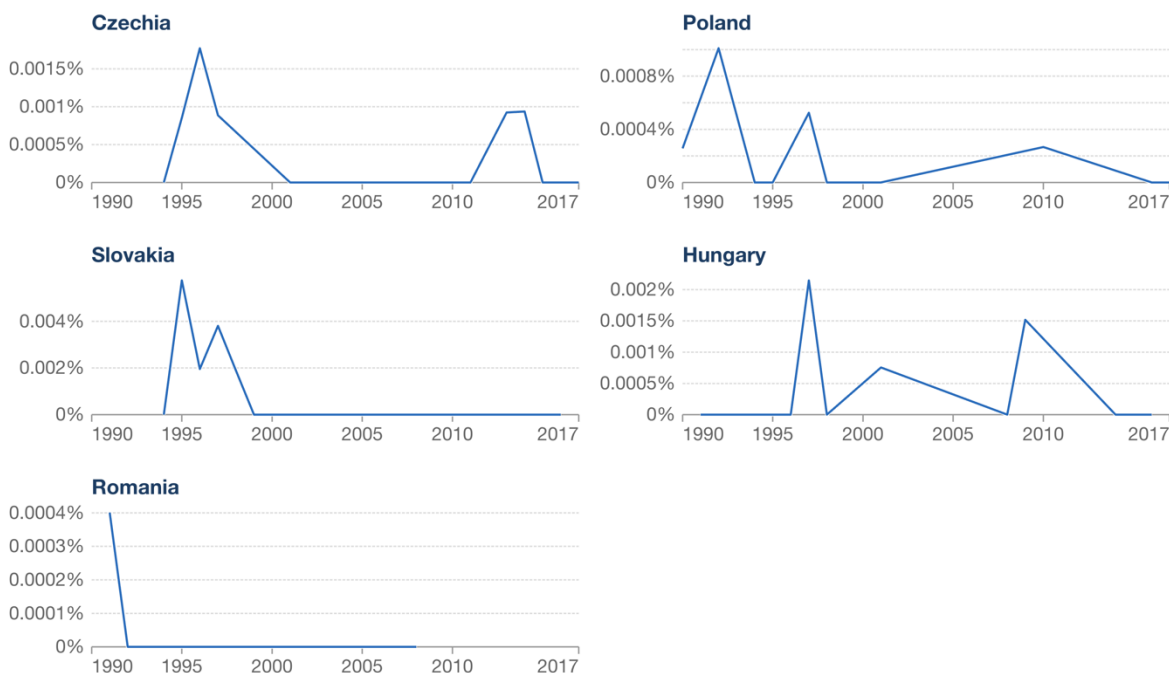**Survey submission**   ⌄   ⋮

If you wish not to continue answering these questions then you may close the browser window now.

If you are still willing, then click the submit button below.

Appendix B Maps and Graphs

Terrorism as a share of total deaths, 1990 to 2017

Deaths from terrorist attacks given as a share of total deaths (from all causes) in any given year.

Source: OWID based on IHME & GTD · OurWorldInData.org/terrorism · CC BY

Terrorism as a share of total deaths, 1990 to 2017

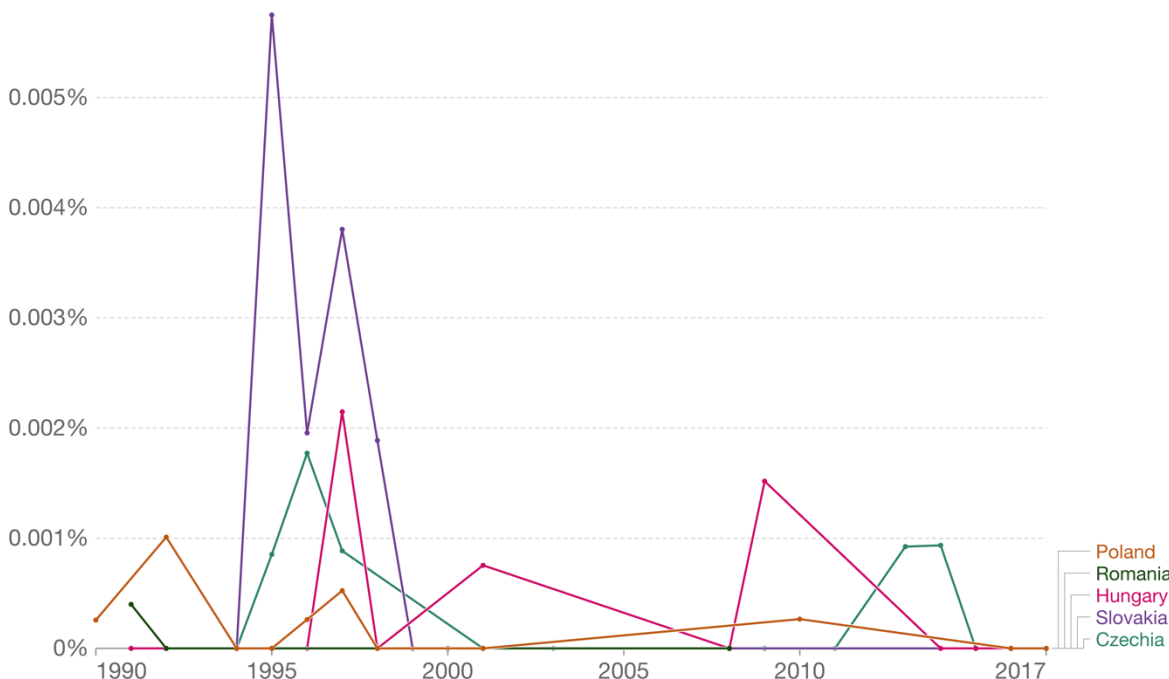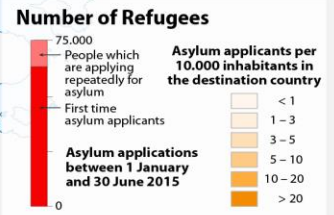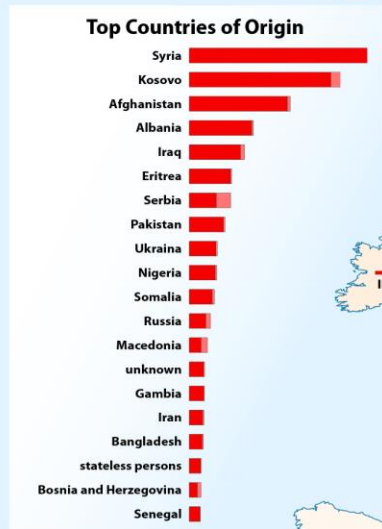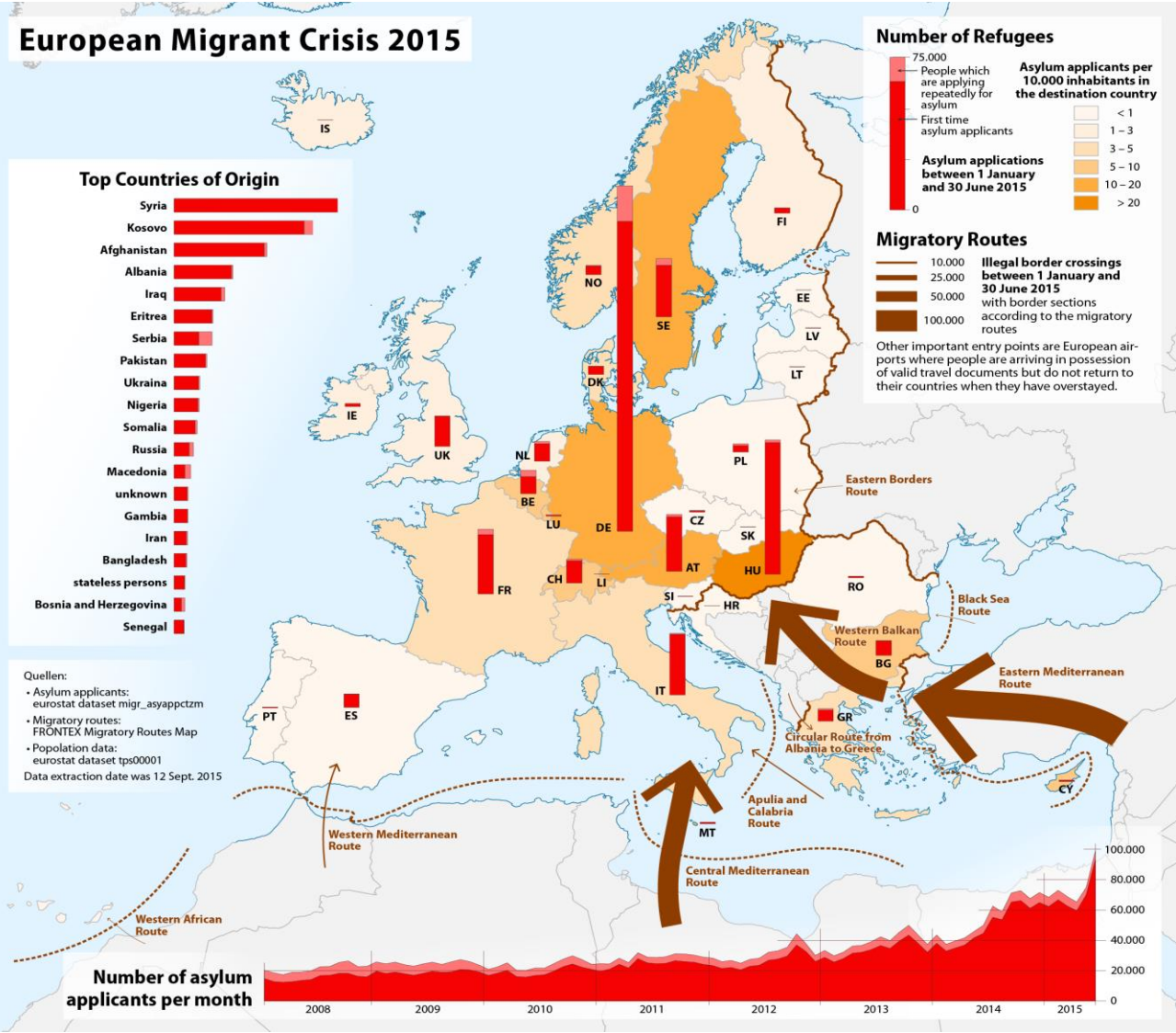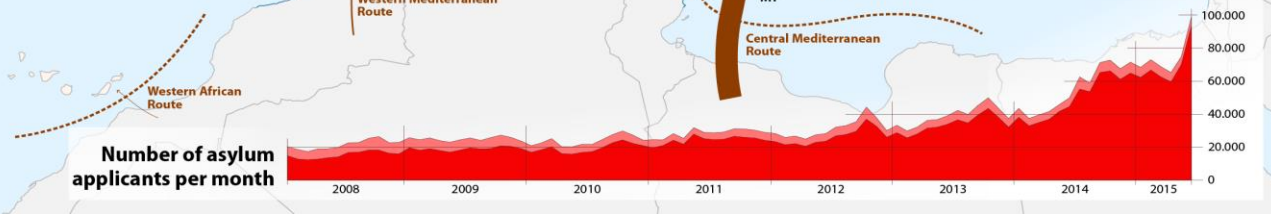Deaths from terrorist attacks given as a share of total deaths (from all causes) in any given year.
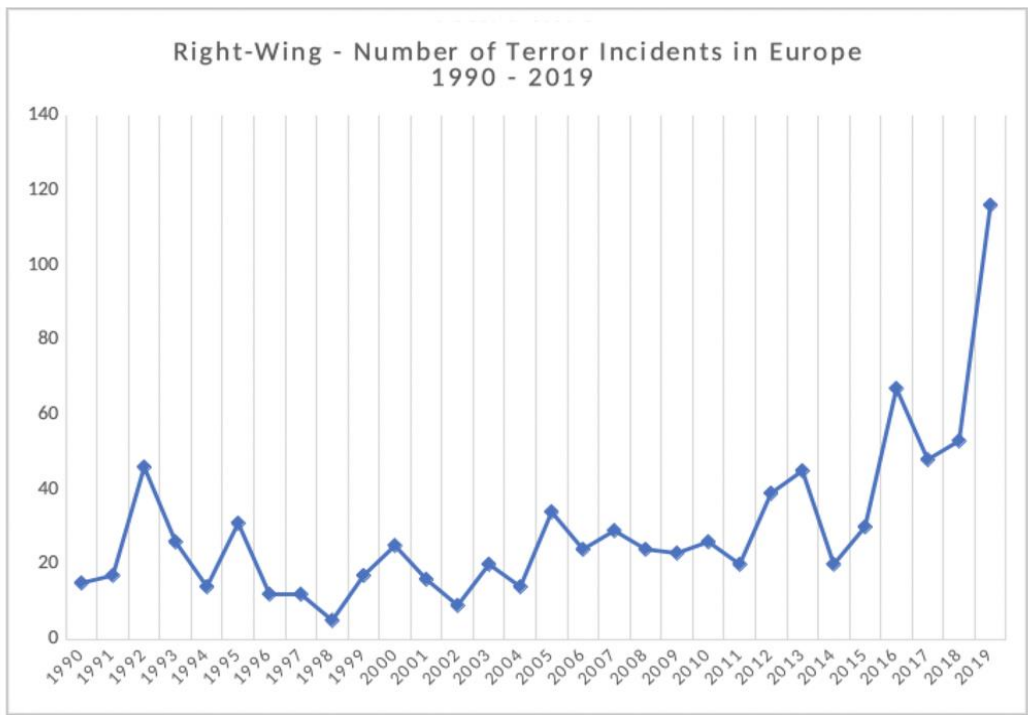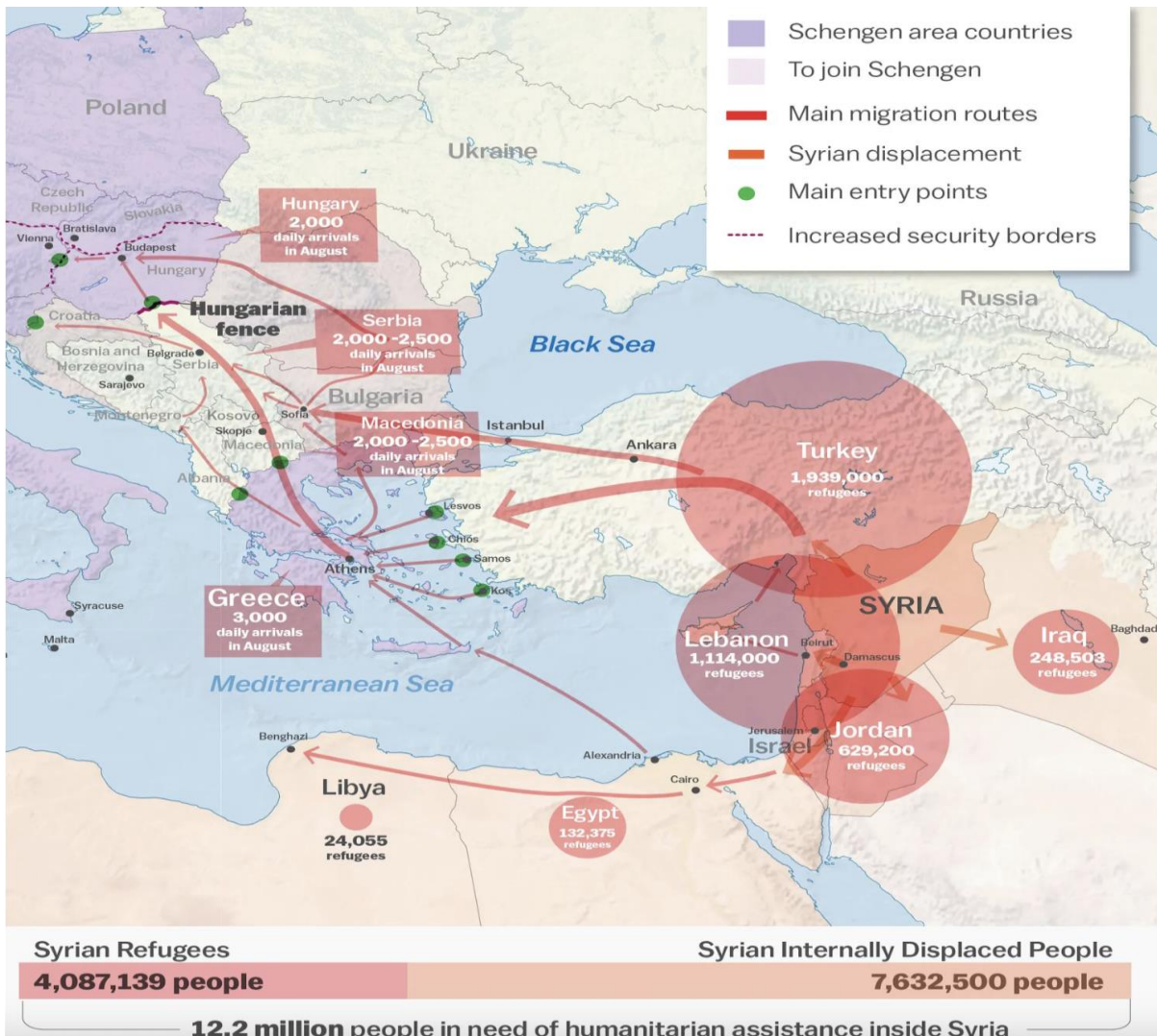

Source: OWID based on IHME & GTD · OurWorldInData.org/terrorism · CC BY
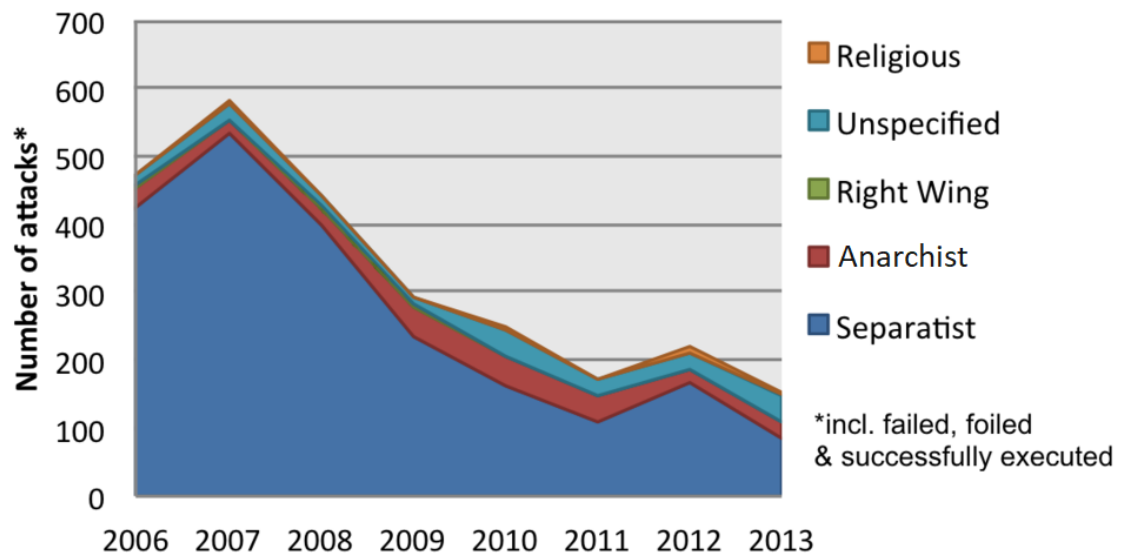
European Migrant Crisis 2015

Number of Refugees

75.000 — People which are applying repeatedly for asylum
— First time asylum applicants

Asylum applications between 1 January and 30 June 2015
0

Asylum applicants per 10.000 inhabitants in the destination country
- < 1
- 1 – 3
- 3 – 5
- 5 – 10
- 10 – 20
- > 20

Migratory Routes

- 10.000
- 25.000
- 50.000
- 100.000

Illegal border crossings between 1 January and 30 June 2015 with border sections according to the migratory routes

Other important entry points are European airports where people are arriving in possession of valid travel documents but do not return to their countries when they have overstayed.

Top Countries of Origin

- Syria
- Kosovo
- Afghanistan
- Albania
- Iraq
- Eritrea
- Serbia
- Pakistan
- Ukraina
- Nigeria
- Somalia
- Russia
- Macedonia
- unknown
- Gambia
- Iran
- Bangladesh
- stateless persons
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Senegal

Quellen:
- Asylum applicants: eurostat dataset migr_asyappctzm
- Migratory routes: FRONTEX Migratory Routes Map
- Popolation data: eurostat dataset tps00001

Data extraction date was 12 Sept. 2015

IS
NO
SE
FI
DK
EE
LV
LT
IE
UK
NL
BE
LU
DE
PL
CZ
SK
AT
HU
RO
CH
LI
SI
HR
FR
IT
PT
ES
MT
GR
BG
CY

Eastern Borders Route
Black Sea Route
Western Balkan Route
Eastern Mediterranean Route
Circular Route from Albania to Greece
Apulia and Calabria Route
Western Mediterranean Route
Central Mediterranean Route
Western African Route

Number of asylum applicants per month

2008 2009 2010 2011 2012 2013 2014 2015

100.000
80.000
60.000
40.000
20.000
0

| Schengen area countries |
| To join Schengen |
| Main migration routes |
| Syrian displacement |
| Main entry points |
| Increased security borders |

Syrian Refugees
4,087,139 people

Syrian Internally Displaced People
7,632,500 people

12.2 million people in need of humanitarian assistance inside Syria

Right-Wing - Number of Terror Incidents in Europe
1990 - 2019

Terrorist Attacks in the EU 2006-2013

Data source: https://www.europol.europa.eu/latest_publications/37