

**What Explains European Union Member State Behaviors toward the Responsibility
Sharing for People in Clear Need of International Protection?
Bargaining Power in the EU Refugee Regime**

Dissertation zur Erlangung des Doktorgrades
der Sozialwissenschaftlichen Fakultät
der Georg-August-Universität Göttingen

vorgelegt von
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geboren in Orikum, Vlorë

Göttingen, 2022

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Tag der mündlichen Prüfung: 28.05.2021

To the memory of Indrit and Valeria

Table of Contents

1	Introduction.....	1
1.1	Research Puzzle and Research Question.....	3
1.2	State of the Art on National State Behavior toward Refugees and Cooperation on Responsibility Sharing in the EU, and Theoretical Gap.....	7
1.3	Conceptualization of State Preferences and Liberal Intergovernmentalism.....	12
1.4	Research Design and Case Selection.....	13
1.5	Summary of Empirical Results.....	15
1.6	Why Does It Matter? Scientific and Political Relevance.....	16
1.7	Outline of the Study.....	17
2	Institutional Design of the EU Refugee Regime.....	19
2.1	The Right to Seek Asylum in the International Refugee Regime.....	20
2.2	The Communitarization of the EU Refugee Regime.....	22
2.3	The Harmonization of the Common European Asylum System.....	23
2.4	The Dublin III Regulation in the Context of the EU Refugee Issue.....	26
2.4.1	The Juridical Implications of Dublin III Regulation.....	27
2.4.2	The Implications of the Dublin III Regulation for the Respecting of Human Rights.....	29
2.5	The EU Response to the Refugee Crisis.....	29
2.5.1	Relocation and Resettlement.....	30
2.5.2	The Hotspots.....	31
2.5.3	The EU-Turkey Deal.....	31
2.5.4	The EU Regional Trust Fund.....	32
3	State of the Art.....	34
3.1	Literature Review on EU Member State Behaviors and Regional Cooperation on Refugees.....	36
3.1.1	Public Goods Theory.....	38
3.1.2	Venue shopping.....	40
3.2	Theorizing Member State Preferences in the European Integration Studies Literature.....	42
3.2.1	Neofunctionalism.....	43
3.2.2	Postfunctionalism.....	45
3.3	The Promise of Liberal Intergovernmentalism.....	46
3.4	Summary of the Argument and Theoretical Gap.....	50
4	Rational Theory of State Preferences, Interdependence, and State Behavior.....	53

4.1	Liberal Intergovernmentalism	54
4.1.1	State Preferences	55
4.1.1.1	Economic interests	56
4.1.1.2	Geopolitical Interests	58
4.1.2	Interstate Bargaining Power	58
4.1.3	Institutional Choice	62
4.2	Liberal Intergovernmentalism’s Observable Implications in Asylum Policy	64
5	Research Design and Methodology	67
5.1	Qualitative Research Design.....	68
5.1.1	Hypotheses and Operationalization.....	70
5.1.1.1	Dependent Variables	71
5.1.1.2	Independent Variables.....	72
5.1.2	Case-Study Methodology	75
5.1.3	Case Selection	77
5.2	Data Collection.....	78
5.2.1	Primary Sources	80
5.2.2	Secondary Sources	80
5.3	Interviews as Primary Sources.....	81
5.3.1	Selecting Interviewees.....	83
5.3.2	Conducting Interviews	84
5.4	Data Analysis.....	85
5.5	Interpreting and Summarizing the Data.....	86
6	Explaining the Italian State’s Behavior toward Refugees: Formal Acceptance and Cooperation on Responsibility Sharing.....	88
6.1	State Preferences: The Italian Government’s Argument for Formally Accepting Refugees	89
6.1.1	Economic Interests	91
6.1.1.1	The Agricultural Sector.....	98
6.1.1.2	The Outside Options: The Flows Decree	102
6.1.1.3	The Social Security System	105
6.1.2	Ideology.....	108
6.2	Interstate Bargaining Power	115
6.2.1	Italy’s Position as a First-Entry Country	115
6.2.2	Italy’s Bargaining Power.....	119
6.3	Summary of the Empirical Findings: The Italian Case Study	126

7	Explaining the Hungarian State’s Behavior toward Refugees: Nonacceptance and Noncooperation on Responsibility Sharing.....	128
7.1	State Preferences: The Hungarian Government’s Argument for Not Accepting Refugees	129
7.1.1	Economic interests	131
7.1.1.1	The Industrial Sector.....	135
7.1.1.2	The Outside Options: The Regional Labor Force.....	137
7.1.2	Ideology.....	140
7.2	Interstate Bargaining Power	146
7.2.1	Hungary’s Position as a Transit Country	147
7.2.2	Hungary’s Bargaining Power	151
7.3	Summary of the Empirical Findings: The Hungarian Case Study	160
8	Explaining the German State’s Behavior toward Refugees: Voluntary Acceptance and Cooperation on Responsibility Sharing.....	162
8.1	State Preferences: The German Governmental Argument for Voluntary Accepting the Refugees	163
8.1.1	Economic Interests	165
8.1.1.1	The Industrial Sector.....	168
8.1.1.2	The Outside Options	173
8.1.2	Ideology.....	175
8.2	Interstate Bargaining Power	182
8.2.1	Germany’s Position as a Destination Country	182
8.2.2	Germany’s Bargaining Power	185
8.3	Summary of the Empirical Findings: The German Case Study	190
9	Comparison of the Three Case Studies	191
9.1	Empirical Evidence in Relation to the Research Question.....	192
9.2	Empirical Evidence in Relation to the Theory	198
10	Conclusion	204
10.1	Summing up the Research Findings	205
10.2	Contributions of the Study.....	208
10.3	Limits of the Study and Future Research	210
	References	212
	Appendix	243

List of Abbreviations

AfD	Alternative for Germany
BA	German Federal Employment Agency
BAMF	German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees
BDA	Confederation of German Employers' Associations
CEAS	Common European Asylum System
CJEU	Court of Justice of the European Union
CW	Cold War
D III R	Regulation (EU) No 604/2013 (Dublin III Regulation)
D IV R	Dublin IV Regulation
DC	Destination country
DESTATIS	German Federal Statistical Office
DV	Dependent variable
EASO	European Asylum Support Office
EBCG	European Border and Coast Guard Agency
ECHR	European Convention on Human Rights
ECtHR	European Court of Human Rights
EIG	Economic interest group
EMU	European Monetary Union
EPU	European Political Union
EU	European Union
EUAA	European Union Agency for Asylum
EUAM	European Agenda on Migration
EUROSTAT	European Statistical Office
EURTF	European Regional Trust Fund
FEC	First-entry country
GDP	Gross domestic product
HCSO	Hungarian Central Statistical Office
IG	Interest group
IGO	Intergovernmental organization
ILO	International Labour Organization
INPS	Italian National Social Security Institute

ISTAT	Italian National Institute of Statistics
IV	Independent variable
JHA	Justice and Home Affairs
LD	Legislative decree
LFS	European Union Labour Force Survey
LI	Liberal intergovernmentalism
LIRT	Liberal International Relations theory
MT	Maastricht Treaty
NF	Neofunctionalism
NGIG	Nongovernmental interest group
NGO	Nongovernmental organization
NL	Lega Nord (Northern League)
OIN	Office of Immigration and Nationality
OMN	Operation Mare Nostrum
PCNIP	People in Clear Need of International Protection
PF	Postfunctionalism
QMV	Qualified majority voting
RQ	Research question
RS	Relocation scheme
SI	Supranational institutionalism
SIPROIMI	Protection System for Beneficiaries of International Protection and for Unaccompanied Foreign Minors
SMEs	Small and medium-sized enterprises
TA	Treaty of Amsterdam
TC	Transit country
TEU	Treaty on the European Union
TFEU	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
The 1951 Geneva Convention	The 1951 Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WWI	World War One
WWII	World War Two

List of Figures

Figure 1. Chapter 1—Introduction	2
Figure 2. Arrivals by Sea in Italy, Greece and Spain in 1997–2017	3
Figure 3. Chapter 2—Institutional Design of the EU Refugee Regime	20
Figure 4. Chapter 3—State of the Art	36
Figure 5. Chapter 4—Theory of State Preferences, Interdependence and State Behavior	54
Figure 6. Rational Framework of International Cooperation	54
Figure 7. Chapter 5—Research Design and Methodology	68
Figure 8. Unemployment Rate in the EU in 2008–2015	73
Figure 9. First Asylum Applications in the EU in 2011–2015	74
Figure 10. Levels of Empirical Analysis	76
Figure 11. Chapter 6—Explaining the Italian State’s Behavior toward Refugees: Formal Acceptance and Cooperation on Responsibility Sharing	89
Figure 12. Italian Economic Interests	92
Figure 13. Unemployment Rate of Italian Citizens and Migrant Laborers in Italy in 2008–2015	93
Figure 14. Youth Unemployment Rate in Italy in 2008–2015	95
Figure 15. Italian and Migrant Laborers in Agriculture in 2008–2015	98
Figure 16. Birth Rate in Italy in 2008–2015	105
Figure 17. Italian Ideational State Preferences	109
Figure 18. Italian Public Opinion on the Two Most Relevant Issues Faced at the National Level	113
Figure 19. Italian Public Opinion on (Dis)agreement with Helping Refugees in 2015	114
Figure 20. Arrivals by Sea and Asylum Seekers in Italy in 2011–2015	117
Figure 21. Comparison of Refugee Arrivals by Sea and Those Present in the Structures of the Reception System in Italy in 2014–2015	121
Figure 22. Italian Bargaining Power in Relation to Unilateral Alternative Policy	123
Figure 23. Italian Bargainig Power in Relation to Alternative Coalitions	125
Figure 24. Chapter 7—Explaining the Hungarian’s State Behavior toward Refugees: Nonacceptance and Noncooperation on Responsibility Sharing	129
Figure 25. GDP’s Trend in Hungary in 2008–2017	131
Figure 26. Unemployment Rate in Hungary in 2008–2015	132
Figure 27. Employment Rate in Hungary in 2008–2015	134
Figure 28. Hungarian Economic Interests	135
Figure 29. Hungarian Ideational State Preferences	140

Figure 30. Hungarian Public Opinion on the Two Most Relevant Issues Faced at the National Level in 2011–2015.....	142
Figure 31. Hungarian Public Opinion on (Dis)agreement with Helping Refugees in 2015 ..	146
Figure 32. Asylum Applications in Hungary in 1990–1999	148
Figure 33. Asylum Seekers in Hungary in 2000–2015	150
Figure 34. First Asylum Applications Lodged in the EU Member States in 2015	154
Figure 35. Hungarian Bargaining Power in Relation to Unilateral Alternative Policy.....	158
Figure 36. Hungarian Bargaining Power in relation to Alternative Coalitions.....	159
Figure 37. Chapter 8—The German State’s Behavior toward Refugees: Voluntary Acceptance and Cooperation on Responsibility Sharing	163
Figure 38. GDP’s Trend in 2005–2017	165
Figure 39. Unemployment Rate in Germany in 2005–2017	166
Figure 40. German Economic Interests.....	168
Figure 41. The BA-X indicator’s Trend in Germany in 2008–2017.....	169
Figure 42. German Ideational State Preferences	175
Figure 43. German Public Opinion on Dis(agreement) with Helping Refugees in 2015	179
Figure 44. The German public opinion on the Two Most Relevant Issues Faced at the National Level in 2011–2015.....	181
Figure 45: First* Asylum Applications in Germany in 1990–2015.....	183
Figure 46. German Bargaining Power in Relation to Unilateral Policy Alternative.....	188
Figure 47. German Bargaining Power in Relation to Alternative Coalitions	188
Figure 48. Chapter 9—Comparison of the Three Case Studies	192
Figure 49. Chapter 10—Conclusion.....	205

List of Tables

Table 1: LI's Paradigm.....	47
Table 2: Bargaining Power in Relation to Unilateral Alternative Policy.....	60
Table 3: Bargaining Power in Relation to Alternative Coalitions	60
Table 4: Bargaining Power in Relation to Issue Linkages	61
Table 5: Variation in DV_1 and DV_2	72
Table 6: Distribution of Case Studies across the Level of Migration Pressure in 2015.....	77
Table 7: Case Selection for EU Member States with High Migration Pressure	78
Table 8: Data Gathering Process	79
Table 9: The Migrant Quotas Provided by the Flows Decree in Italy in 2011–2015	103
Table 10: Emigration in Italy in 2013–2015	106
Table 11: Patterns of EU Member States' Behavior to the Acceptance of Refugees	193
Table 12: Patterns of EU Member States' Behavior to the RS	196
Table 13: Distribution of Cases for H_1	198
Table 14: Dimension of State Preferences in Function of Economic Interests toward the Acceptance of Refugees	199
Table 15: Distribution of Cases for H_2	200
Table 16: Dimension of State Preferences in Function of Society's Ideology toward the Acceptance of Refugees	201
Table 17: Distribution of Cases for H_3 A,B	202
Table 18: Dimension of Bargaining Power toward the Responsibility Sharing for Refugees	203

1 Introduction

The Schengen Agreement represents one of the core projects of European integration, yet lately it has faced times of crisis (Biermann et al. 2019; Schimmelfennig 2018b). In particular it has been challenged by the continuous refugee arrivals on the shores of the EU, especially in the critical year 2015 following the civil war in Syria and the political destabilization in the Middle East (Niemann and Zaun 2018). The FECs—namely Italy, Greece, and Spain—represent the core channels through which refugees enter EU territory.

The high numbers of arrivals by sea of more than one million people in 2015 and around 362,000 in 2016, according to UNHCR¹, met with strong variation in the behavior of EU member states toward refugees. This led to three patterns of state behavior at the national level, as determined by the primary economic interests of domestic actors. In addition, secondary ideological interests have contributed further in this regard too. First, formal-acceptance patterns reflect the controversial nature of the crucial economic domestic interests regarding refugees, and furthermore the constrained ideological ones. Second, nonacceptance patterns mirror the weak economic interests that domestic actors have concerning refugees, and a nationalistic ideology that leads also to the latter's refused entry or stay. Third, voluntary-acceptance patterns reveal the strong economic interests of domestic actors regarding refugees, and a dominant Europeanized society regarding their acceptance at the national level. Furthermore, the diverging behavior of EU member states toward the acceptance of refugees at the national level calls into question the D III R, which represents the only EU regulation regarding the responsibility for examining an asylum application within the CEAS.

The EU lacked a common solution to such an issue despite the measures undertaken by its institutions aimed at introducing the principle of responsibility sharing for refugees among EU member states, which have been not at all adequate (Börzel and Risse 2018). In particular, a temporary RS was proposed by the European Commission and decided on by the European Council, according to which the EU member states had to relocate “people in clear need of international protection” (PCNIP)² arriving in the FECs Italy and Greece over the biennium mid-September 2015 to mid-September 2017 (EU Commission 2015a; 2015b).

Likewise, the RS revealed strong variation in the cooperative behavior of EU member states regarding the choice of introducing the principle of responsibility sharing for refugees at the

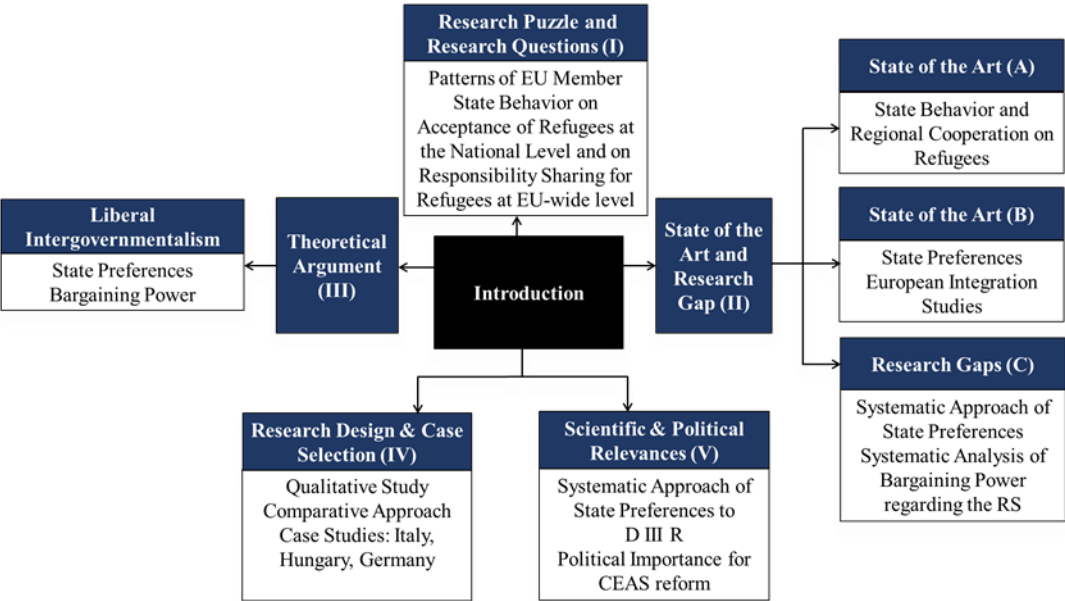
¹Data of “UNHCR—Monthly Data Update: December 2016”. For further information, see <https://reliefweb.int/report/greece/refugees-migrants-sea-arrivals-europe-monthly-data-update-december-2016> (accessed January 16, 2017).

²The term PCNIP will be used as a synonym for “refugees” in the present thesis given that they are legally provided with a status, which is decided upon once the asylum application has been lodged.

EU-wide level. This led to two patterns of EU member state behavior toward responsibility sharing for refugees: cooperative and noncooperative. In this context, this study puts forward an analysis of the motivations of EU member states that determines, first, the variation in their behavior regarding whether to accept or refuse refugees and, second, the variation in their cooperation with the RS.

This chapter sets out the structure of this study (see Figure 1 below), starting with the delineation of the research puzzle and question. Second, it proceeds with the conceptualization of the explanatory factors determining the outcomes relating to further cooperation at the EU-wide level in the field of asylum. Third, the factors explaining EU member state behaviors vis-à-vis integration in the field of asylum policy are examined on the basis of the concept of “state preferences.” LI theory proposes a threefold rational framework aimed at explaining the behavior of states at the international level through the formation process of national preferences, bargaining power, and the institutional choice to pool or delegate authority to a common institution (Moravcsik 1993; 1998). Fourth, the choice for a qualitative small-N research design based on a comparative approach is explained. In addition, both scientific and practical rationales are provided regarding the selection of Italy, Hungary, and Germany as case studies. Fifth, the empirical results of the study are briefly presented. Sixth, the scientific and political relevancies of the study are delineated. In sum, the overall outline of the study is described by summarizing the core proposals of each chapter.

Figure 1. Chapter 1—Introduction

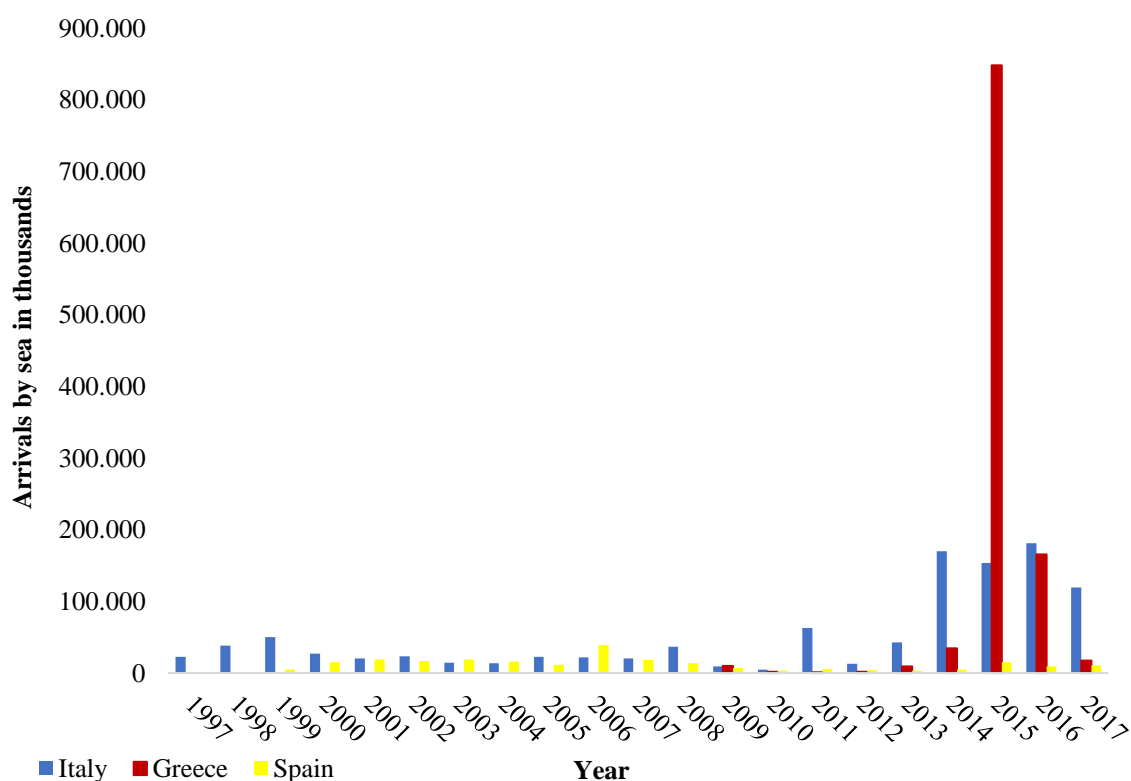


Source: Author’s own depiction.

1.1 Research Puzzle and Research Question

The EU faced unprecedented refugee flows³ particularly in the crucial year 2015 that continued up until late 2017. The southern countries—namely Italy, Greece, and Spain—have registered the highest migration pressure in relation to arrivals by sea of all EU member states since 1997 (see Figure 2 below)⁴.

Figure 2. Arrivals by Sea in Italy, Greece and Spain in 1997–2017



Source: Author's own depiction, based on IOM, ISMU Foundation, and UNHCR data.

The high migration pressure on Italy and Greece in 2015 stressed further the relevance of Article 13 (1)⁵ of D III R, according to which the EU member state where the third-country national first entered irregularly is responsible for the examination of their asylum application (The Dublin III Regulation 2013/604 2013). Furthermore, both countries proceeded with the

³“Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council” (p. 2). For more information, see: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=JOIN:2015:0040:FIN:EN:PDF> (accessed April 26, 2016).

⁴Data from the “IOM Report” (p. 26). For more information, see: <https://s.gwdg.de/XH4BOo> (accessed November 25, 2019). UNHCR data regarding sea arrivals in the EU (p. 1). For more information, see: <https://data2.unhcr.org/ar/documents/download/53447> (accessed November 25, 2019). With regard to Greece, the data have been provided since 2009.

⁵“The Regulation (EU) N. 604/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 Establishing the Criteria and Mechanisms for Determining the Member State Responsible for Examining an Application for International Protection Lodged in one of the Member States by a Third-country national or a Stateless Person (Recast).” For further information, see: <https://s.gwdg.de/HZVXVu> (accessed April 15, 2016).

acceptance then registration of asylum seekers, as Article 13 (1) of D III R requires, determining thus in the first instance compliance with this regulation. In addition, the continuous refugee flows, the fragility of the national asylum systems, as well as the lack of solidarity from other member states regarding the deteriorating situation on the EU's southern shores brought the FECs to the decision of no longer registering refugees, and allowing them to travel toward northern EU member states. This led to noncompliance with D III R as well as to a second movement of refugees within the EU itself.

Meanwhile in mid-summer 2015 the refugee flows entered the EU by land through the Western Balkan route as the result of the Greek decision to refuse registration, and thus the examination of asylum applications of PCNIP too. In this context Hungary became another EU member state facing high migration pressure in the first half of 2015, when more than 350,000 refugees crossed its borders (Kallius, Monterescu, and Rajaram 2016). In contrast to the FECs, the Hungarian government acted immediately with the aim to avoid the examination of high numbers of asylum applications by emphasizing its full compliance with the FEC rule under D III R. Nevertheless the measures undertaken by Hungary—among which were the construction of a fence 175 kilometers long and four meters high along the country's border with Serbia—sparked strong debate within the EU (Kupfermann 2017).

In mid-August 2015, the German government declared its willingness to accept the refugees from Syria who found themselves waiting in Keleti train station in Budapest.⁶ This was, on the one hand, a voluntary act argued to be based on Article 1 of the German Constitution.⁷ On the other, it led to the de facto suspension of the FEC rule of D III R. In the same vein, other northern EU member states such as Sweden and the Netherlands also accepted further refugees coming from Italy or Greece. These diverse reactions—initial acceptance with subsequent nonacceptance (formal compliance with D III R), outright nonacceptance (noncompliance with D III R), and voluntary acceptance (noncompliance with D III R)—beg the first research desideratum: Why did the various EU member states choose to pursue such different paths in handling the situation?

On May 13, 2015, the EU responded to the refugee arrivals with the implementation of two legislative packages, including a series of measures aimed at addressing the refugee issue on both its internal and external borders under the framework of the EUAM (EU Commission 2015a). In particular, two Relocation Decisions—made with the aim to assist the FECs Italy

⁶The discourse of Chancellor Angela Merkel at a summer press conference. For further information, see: <https://s.gwdg.de/UoqoG0> (accessed June 13, 2017).

⁷Article 1 of the German Constitution asserts respect for human dignity as well as fundamental human rights. For further information, see: <https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/gg/index.html#BJNR000010949BJNE001700314> (accessed November 15, 2019).

and Greece, given the high number of arrivals by sea of PCNIP—are important among the EUAM measures. Given the high number of irregular entries into Europe through Italy, Greece, and Hungary during the year 2015, the European Council adopted the first Decision establishing the relocation of 40,000 PCNIP whose asylum applications had been registered in one of these three countries. The relocation respectively of 24,000 people from Italy and 16,000 people from Greece, following the refusal of Hungary to be assisted, had to be carried out over the biennium mid-September 2015 to mid-September 2017 (EU Council 2015a). Furthermore, according to the first Decision, PCNIP’s relocation was possible for all people whose asylum application had been lodged with success in Italy or Greece after August 15, 2015, and whose nationality had had a recognition rate of the status of “refugee” or “beneficiary of international protection” in the previous quarter of at least 75 percent or higher.⁸

The second Decision established the relocation of 120,000 additional PCNIP entered in Italy and Greece after March 24, 2015 given the continued high numbers of arrivals by sea in the previous year 2014 as well as in the first half of 2015 in both countries (EU Council 2015b). The core criteria constituting the distribution key among willing EU member states were the size of population with a 40 percent weighting, the national GDP weighted by 40 percent, the average of asylum applications lodged in each EU member state between 2010 and 2014 weighted by 10 percent, as well as the unemployment rate weighted by 10 percent. In addition, the European Council established through an amended decision the legal commitment that EU member states had to respect the second Relocation Decision. This permitted EU member states to fulfill their obligations to relocate people from Italy and Greece through the voluntary admission of PCNIP from Turkey (EU Council 2016). Thus, the number of PCNIP that had to be relocated from Italy and Greece was reduced based on several measures undertaken at the internal level: namely the RS and the EU-Turkey deal.⁹ Nevertheless, the fulfillment of the legal commitment of EU member states to the second Relocation Decision over the biennium mid-September 2015 to mid-September 2017 varied strongly in practice.¹⁰

In addition, the core principle that the Relocation Decisions implied is responsibility sharing for refugees according to Article 78 (3) of the TFEU. It recognized the right of the Council, upon the previous proposal of the Commission and following consultancy with the Parliament,

⁸“Study of the European Parliament, Implementation of the 2015 Council Decisions Establishing Provisional Measures in the Area of International Protection for the Benefit of Italy and of Greece.” For more information, see: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2017/583132/IPOL_STU\(2017\)583132_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2017/583132/IPOL_STU(2017)583132_EN.pdf) (accessed July 5, 2017).

⁹Conclusion of the Council meeting “Justice and Home Affairs” on July 22, 2015. For further information, see: <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-11130-2015-INIT/en/pdf> (accessed July 13, 2017).

¹⁰The data regarding the relocation last updated November 14, 2017. For further information, see the “Factsheet on Relocation of the European Commission” available online at: <https://s.gwdg.de/6qwIUZ> (accessed February 4, 2018).

to take action when an EU member state is facing large inflows of third-country nationals (Official Journal of the European Union 2008). In effect, in the second legislative package the European Commission advanced the proposal to introduce within the framework of D III R a permanent allocation mechanism for PCNIP (EU Commission 2015d).

In this context it is relevant to understand, as two further research desiderata, the following: Why did the cooperation of EU member states regarding the RS vary? Why and under what circumstances did EU member states negotiate over whether to maintain the status quo represented by D III R in its current form or to seek further cooperation at the EU-wide level in the field of asylum? DCs such as Germany and Sweden that voluntarily accepted refugees decided to support further cooperation by promoting responsibility sharing for refugees among EU member states through the RS. Likewise, FECs such as Italy—having been countries only formally accepting refugees, instead of upholding the status quo represented by D III R—opted also for supporting the RS. TCs like Hungary, demonstrating their nonacceptance of refugees, showed a strong determination for maintaining only the status quo and clearly refused to endorse the RS.

To sum up, this study addresses the following two RQs:

RQ₁: What explains EU member state behaviors regarding the (non) acceptance of refugees at the national level?

RQ₂: What explains EU member state behaviors toward the responsibility sharing for PCNIP at the EU-wide level?

They address two DVs: namely the degree of acceptance of refugees at the national level (DV₁) and the cooperative behavior of EU member states toward the responsibility sharing for refugees at the EU-wide one (DV₂).

In order to take a systematic approach, this study makes use of an analytical framework derived from LI. It first analyzes the formation process of national preferences on whether to accept or refuse refugees in 2015 (RQ₁). Thus it traces three different patterns of EU member state preferences, being either for or against the acceptance of refugees. Furthermore, it proceeds to tackle the nature of the second RQ₂: that is, the variation in the cooperation of EU member states in the field of asylum at the EU-wide level. In particular, it focuses on the negotiation process between EU member states on whether to maintain the status quo (D III R) or to promote further cooperation regarding the responsibility of examining the asylum applications at the joint EU-wide level (as exemplified by the RS).

1.2 State of the Art on National State Behavior toward Refugees and Cooperation on Responsibility Sharing in the EU, and Theoretical Gap

The EU refugee issue in the crucial year 2015 has emphasized the necessity to address scientifically the core question of why cooperation among EU member states on the responsibility sharing for refugees at the EU-wide level took the form it did, and how further integration in this policy field played out. Therefore, the study is situated in two academic fields: Migration Studies and European Integration Studies. The former addresses the concept of “burden sharing” and its significance in relation to cooperation on the responsibility sharing for refugees. The latter deals with the integration in a specific policy field, as EU asylum policy might be the result of the patterns of state behavior toward the cooperation thereon. In addition, there has been less scientific research in relation to the underlined issues—especially in reference to the 2015 refugee crisis. Therefore, this study aims precisely at explaining the variation in EU member state behaviors regarding the (non)acceptance of refugees at the national level (RQ₁) and cooperation on the responsibility sharing for them at the European one (RQ₂). To do this, it posits—in line with LI’s paradigm—that the variation in cooperation on responsibility sharing for refugees at the EU-wide level (DV₁) depends on the strength of the patterns of EU member state behavior regarding the acceptance or not of refugees at the national one (DV₁).

Migration Studies has addressed the cooperation on burden sharing regarding refugees at the regional level through two specific approaches: the public goods theory and the notion of “venue shopping.” First, public goods theory,¹¹ economically derived, explains the burden sharing among states within a community according to the concept of the distribution of costs and benefits vis-à-vis the determined burdens (Betts 2003; Hartley and Sandler 1999; Olson and Zeckhauser 1966). In other words, the provision of a public good at the community level represents the benefits that states obtain as the result of what they supply: that is, the contributions derived from all states (Thielemann and Dewan 2006, 352). The premise underpinning the public goods theory has been used to argue that burden sharing was practiced with regard to refugees in Europe during the 1990s (Suhrke 1998). Suhrke argues that states’ choice to provide public goods such as refugee protection for displaced persons is made in relation to the derived benefits therefrom. In particular, the latter include the reduction of the security costs given that migration and refugees are associated with this topic at the national level; also relevant is the fulfillment of moral obligations that EU countries have at the

¹¹The two core characteristics of a public good in comparison to a private one are nonexcludability and nonrivalry.

international level (Suhrke 1998, 399–403). In addition, the refugees also receive benefits: protection as well as assistance given their status as forcibly displaced people. Conversely, Betts (2003) identifies additional state interests leading to the provision of burden sharing regarding refugees as a public good: the excludable altruistic and excludable prestige benefits.

Thielemann (2003) puts these approaches into two categories: on the one side, the cost-benefit logic that assumes that states engage in burden sharing regarding refugees based on strategic actions. On the other, the norm-based understanding according to which states act in line with the logic of appropriateness that is focused on the identity and the relevance of socially constructed norms. With a special focus on the EU burden-sharing initiatives, Thielemann argues that they are formed in relation to the threat that the migration pressure potentially represents to the EU integration project; they exist in relation to standards regarding the respecting of human rights as well.

Venue shopping, meanwhile, represents the other theoretical approach that has been developed in Migration Studies with the aim to explain cooperation in the field of asylum policy, particularly in the EU (Guiraudon 2000; 2003). Accordingly, the decisions made regarding intergovernmental cooperation within the field of EU asylum policy are determined by national actors such as Ministries of the Interior with the aim of realizing their restrictive asylum policies “by circumventing liberal domestic veto players namely the courts, the NGOs” (Guiraudon 2000, 252). In the same vein, Guiraudon explains that cooperation in the field of asylum at the EU-wide level is determined by intensive transgovernmentalism between JHA officials.

The empirical literature in Migration Studies on the public goods theory and the venue shopping approach posits cooperation on burden sharing following a cost-benefit logic and the relevance of the involved national states with regard to their further integration into EU asylum policy. Nevertheless, that literature fails to identify the explanatory factors leading to the variation in cooperation patterns vis-à-vis burden sharing for refugees. Systematic analysis of EU member state behaviors in this sense is missing too.

European Integration Studies fills the theoretical gap on state behaviors regarding cooperation in a specific policy field. As a matter of fact, the theoretical postulations derived by the core EU integration theories—namely NF, PF, and LI—conceptualize member state behaviors regarding cooperation on responsibility sharing for refugees at the EU-wide level by taking into account domestic behavioral patterns. This coincides, hence, with the aim of this study. However, the underlined EU integration theories differ in respect to each other. The question that arises, then, is what represents the most adequate one to address both of the RQs of the present study.

NF's theoretical paradigm assumes that member state behaviors regarding cooperation in a specific EU policy field is explainable as being the result of the interests of domestic actors, as well as of supranational ones—especially the EU Commission (Haas 1958; Rosamond 2005). Therefore, it provides an endogenous formation of EU member state behaviors at the national level that change in relation to the preferences of the supranational institutions. On the one side, NF explains how the pressure derived from domestic actors leads to unexpected outcomes. On the other, this paradigm underestimates domestic actors compared to the centrality of the EU institutions, especially the Commission (Schimmelfennig and Rittberger 2006). NF fails as well in its explaining of the lack of integration to date (Schmitter 2004).

PF argues, meanwhile, that the driver of variable EU integration is the politicization of identity by domestic political parties that leverage public opinion in order to produce divergence in the degree of integration seen (Hooghe and Marks 2009). Therefore, this particular theoretical approach is especially focused on the relevance of identity as the source of the formation of states' preferences. LI provides a rational framework that explains the variation in cooperative behavioral patterns within a specific policy field as being the result of the primary economic interests of domestic actors. It is these that inform states' preferences (Moravcsik 1993; 1998). The core societal actors are, in fact, the EIGs then—a fact contrary to PF's theoretical paradigm, which underlines the relevance of the EU institutions instead. Thus, LI represents the most satisfying theory to draw on for providing answers to the RQs that this study addresses: namely the variation in EU member state behaviors vis-à-vis the acceptance of refugees at the national level and cooperation on the responsibility sharing for them at the European one.

With regard to the 2015 refugee issue especially, few studies have explained by way of the underlined EU integration theories the diverse outcomes witnessed regarding cooperation in the field of asylum in that year as well as the behaviors of EU member states toward refugees. These theories are, however, still important because they have contributed empirically on a specific topic for which further research is strongly needed. In this context (Schimmelfennig 2018a), drawing on NF's theoretical postulations, focuses particularly on the outcomes of both crises that concerned the two core EU projects: namely the Eurozone and the Schengen Area. Accordingly, the outcomes related to the Schengen crisis—namely a lack of integration achieved—rely on weak transnational actors (i.e. migrants) and on EU supranational capacity, which in the field of asylum is not particularly strong either. As a consequence, states defected away from cooperation and undertook instead unilateral policies aimed at stopping migration. This study contributes, then, to the explanation of these integration outcomes in the context of the refugee issue.

Other scholars draw on PF theory and argue that the EU refugee crisis reflects the intersection of two specific processes: namely the politicization manifested already during the Eurozone crisis among member states as well as the Europeanization of identities determining the resistance to further integration (Börzel and Risse 2018, 85). Accordingly, the politicization process occurred within EU member states as the result of illiberal, Islamophobic right-wing parties, which led to anti-immigrant movements in their societies—with it having affected the behavior of member states when it came to deciding whether to accept or refuse refugees in mid-summer 2015 (Börzel 2016). Therefore, elucidated is the relevance of the ideologies and the respective politicization that led to the lack of EU solutions to the refugee issue in that crucial year.

Bauböck (2018) provides a normative explanation meanwhile. He lists three factors affecting EU member state behaviors when it came to the responsibility sharing for refugees referring also to the year 2015, starting with the FEC rule itself—which does not connote a burden-sharing mechanism vis-à-vis refugees. The lack of shared norms regarding the granting of refugee status constitutes another explanatory factor influencing the choice of refugees on where to seek asylum within the Union. The principle of open borders, as the Schengen Agreement requires, is the third factor enabling the FECs to allow refugees to travel onward to the northern EU countries. Thus Bauböck's study addresses the issue in normative terms, but without differentiating between the various EU countries while also failing to provide a systematic analysis of national actors' interests at the domestic level (and the nature of them). The present study seeks to rectify these shortcomings then.

LI has been used to explain the CEAS's crisis as the result of an absence of common solutions provided by the EU institutions and of the lack of member state willingness to implement the launched measures aimed at addressing the refugee issue at the EU-wide level (Zaun 2017). In particular, LI has been applied to decode the divergent behaviors of EU member states regarding the degree of acceptance of refugees at the national level as well as vis-à-vis cooperation at the EU-wide level respectively. In this regard, it has been argued that the behavior of EU member states with concern to the nonadoption of the permanent asylum quota in the context of the 2015 refugee issue reflects the interdependence that exists in relation to migration pressure from outside (Biermann et al. 2019). Likewise, (Schimmelfennig 2018b) argues that the behavior of member states toward the responsibility sharing for refugees at the EU-wide level reflects the constellations of state preferences in relation specifically to that migration pressure's impact at the domestic level. These effects depend on the exact geographical positions of the EU member states, and on their economic as well as regulatory asylum conditions too (Schimmelfennig 2018b, 1586).

Zaun (2018) provides a more detailed analysis regarding the negotiation of a permanent quota system under the form of a crisis relocation mechanism proposed by the Commission in September 2015 and included in the proposals of recasting D III R in May 2016 (towards D IV R), via the application of the LI paradigm, regarding member state behaviors toward the refugee issue at both the national and EU-wide levels. Her study is particularly important for the theoretical and the empirical debates that this thesis addresses, representing one of the few scientific works that applies LI theory in explaining the EU refugee issue. Therefore, her work will be addressed extensively as compared to other such studies. First, Zaun explains the variation in acceptance of refugees at the national level in relation to the pressure exercised by the national electorate vis-à-vis the rise of right-wing parties in the context of the 2015 refugee issue. As a consequence, two types of EU member state emerge regarding the degree of acceptance of refugees: non-host states (Visegrad countries—the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia)¹² and host states (Germany, Austria, Sweden).

Second, Zaun posits the variation in cooperation regarding the introduction of a permanent asylum quota based on the principle of responsibility sharing for refugees existing in relation to the exact migration pressure that respective EU member states face. Non-host states prefer upholding the status quo instead of responsibility sharing for refugees, thus maintain the status quo through unilateral actions applied by right-wing governments. By contrast, host states affected already by high migration pressure will prefer to cooperate at the EU-wide level in order to reduce refugee arrivals. In addition, FECs tend to be against engaging in the responsibility sharing for refugees—that as the result of the low numbers of asylum applications that are lodged in these countries.

Notwithstanding the contributions of the abovementioned studies regarding a recent issue for which further research is strongly needed, they fail to comprehensively and systematically analyze behaviors toward refugees at the national level (and the reasons for them). The diverging patterns of cooperation witnessed with regard to responsibility sharing at the EU-wide level are overlooked too. Furthermore, they do not identify who the core societal actors in the field of asylum are.

In particular, contrary to Zaun (2018), Schimmelfennig (2018b), and Biermann et al. (2019), this thesis—following LI—provides a systematic analysis of states' preferences reflecting the diverse patterns of EU member state behavior toward the acceptance of refugees. In this regard, it identifies who the domestic actors in the field of asylum are, the sources of their interests,

¹²The Visegrad countries have created the “Visegrad Group” known as “Visegrad Four – V4” with the aim to promote the cooperation within the EU central countries in different aspects of the EU integration process. For further information, see <https://www.visegradgroup.eu/> (accessed June 13, 2017).

and how they affect patterns of cooperation vis-à-vis responsibility sharing for refugees at the EU-wide level. Therefore, it theorizes the 2015 EU refugee issue and delineates a comprehensive empirical analysis by tracing systematic patterns of behavior toward refugees at the national level and regarding related cooperation at the European one too.

1.3 Conceptualization of State Preferences and Liberal Intergovernmentalism

This study assumes that the core actors in society are the domestic ones whose goal is to pursue their interests by determining the behavior of the states that they inhabit (Moravcsik 1993; 1997). Thus it draws on LI, which explains the outcomes of European agreements as being the result of the behaviors of the respective EU member states according to a threefold rational framework. First, it starts with the formation process of national preferences based on rational choices made by the governments involved; the determinants hereof are the economic interests of those domestic actors (Moravcsik 1998). Second, it considers bargaining power based on the distribution of conflicts both within EU states and across them (Moravcsik 1993). Third, it considers the institutional choices that EU member states pursue aiming at pooling or delegating authority from the national to the EU-wide level (Moravcsik 1998, 9; Schimmelfennig 2004).

With regard to the first factor, this study analyzes the formation process of national preferences among EU member states (DV_1) in relation to the FEC rule under the framework of D III R in the year 2015, doing so based on primary economic interests and on secondary ideational ones too. Following LIRT, the study assumes that states act in an issue-specific, interdependent world (Moravcsik 2001; Moravcsik and Nicolaïdis 1999). Interdependence is determined by the set of costs and benefits that are generated under bargaining conditions established when states interact at the international level, or domestic groups at the national level (Keohane and Nye 1977).

Thus the behavior of member states at the EU-wide level is determined by the degree of existing bargaining power that, according to LI theory, evidences both the nature of state preferences and the intensity of them. Moravcsik (1998) termed the resulting discrepancies in the perceived value of benefits of cooperation “asymmetrical interdependence.” In the context of this study, bargaining power is analyzed in relation to the behavior of member states toward cooperation at the EU-wide level (DV_2). This is operationalized by registering a member state’s choice of whether to opt for the status quo represented by D III R or to introduce instead the principle of responsibility sharing for refugees through their consent to participation in the RS. LI’s third proposed stage is, as noted, the institutional choice to pool or delegate sovereignty; this is not part of the analysis here, as EU member states did not reach a common agreement

regarding the introduction of a mechanism establishing the responsibility sharing for refugees within the EU member states.

In sum, this thesis advances the following theoretical argument: the behavior of EU member states regarding the acceptance of refugees at the national level is explainable as the result of the primary economic and secondary ideological interests of domestic actors vis-à-vis refugees, whose impact determines the cooperation or not on responsibility sharing at the EU-wide level. As a consequence, EU member states demonstrate the following differentiated behaviors:

- with regard to RQ₁, the formal acceptance, nonacceptance, and voluntary acceptance of refugees at the national level;
- with regard to RQ₂, cooperation and noncooperation at the EU-wide level. The bargaining power exercised by member states in relation to unilateral policies addressing migration pressure and to alternative coalitions is key here.

1.4 Research Design and Case Selection

This study relies on a comparative case study approach aiming at understanding the causal effects (King, Keohane, and Verba 1994, 83–85) of EU member state preferences on their behaviors regarding the EU-wide RS during the crucial year of 2015. The small number of cases employed allows for an in-depth analysis and high internal validity (Mitchell and Bernauer 1998). Cases are selected for maximum variation in the DV (King, Keohane, and Verba 1994, 143). Pronounced variation in the acceptance of refugees on the national level (DV₁) as well as in the willingness to cooperate on the EU one (DV₂) recommends Italy, Hungary, and Germany be the cases studied. This contributes to understanding the choices of EU member states on whether to promote the allocation mechanism with the aim to share responsibility for examining asylum applications during the crisis—and also, in future.

Accordingly, based on LI, the study takes a systematic approach regarding the formation process of national preferences among EU member states vis-à-vis accepting refugees in 2015. The conducting of semi-structured interviews with experts from domestic groups in the field of asylum and migration contributes to the understanding of their interests. It is the latter, as noted, that determines the patterns of behavior of EU member states in relation to the degree of acceptance of refugees. Therefore, the theoretical argument is eventually succeeded by an empirical comparison of distinct cases.

EU member states characterized by controversial primary interests toward refugees at the national level—namely economic ones, and that as the result of the differentiated preferences

of domestic actors—formally accept refugees. Furthermore, the secondary ideological interests—divided between Europeanization and Euroscepticism—contribute further to the formal acceptance or not of refugees. With regard to the selected case studies, Italy reflects this pattern of state preferences.

On the contrary, EU member states whose domestic actors have weak primary interests—namely economic ones—regarding refugees do not formally accept them. Moreover, nationalistic ideology, as a secondary determinant, strengthens further their nonacceptance thereof at the national level. These patterns characterize the Hungarian state's behavior toward refugees.

EU member states where domestic actors have strong primary interests vis-à-vis refugees that are economic in nature accept them voluntarily. In addition, secondary ideological interests—characterized principally by European values dominating over Euroscepticism—contribute further to the voluntary acceptance of refugees. These patterns mirror the German state's behavior toward refugees.

In combination with the interviews, content analysis of a series of documents related to the migration pressure experienced is performed with the aim to understand the power and position of states during the EU negotiations on whether to maintain the status quo represented by D III R or to opt for a new agreement instead—namely the RS. Furthermore, the information provided by the interviewed experts in the field of asylum and migration is integrated with the content analysis. The documents concerned are mainly reports that reflect the national economic indicators regarding the development of the respective EU member states, political parties' manifestos, legal reports, decree laws, as well as reports related to the meetings of the EU Council expressing the (preliminary) choices of EU member states regarding the allocation mechanism for refugees at the EU-wide level.

This serves to introduce responsibility sharing for refugees at the EU-wide level. Therefore, the intensity of the migration pressure faced—following the interdependence of state preferences—is what determined the degree of bargaining power of member states at the EU-wide level. Thus, member states with high migration pressure in terms of arrivals by sea of refugees as well as asylum applications, such as Italy (FEC) and Germany (DC), opted for further cooperation in the field of asylum—thus agreeing with the notion of responsibility sharing for refugees at the EU-wide level. By contrast, EU member states with low traditional migration pressure—such as Hungary (TC), which registered high numbers of asylum applications only in the first half of 2015—have preferred to uphold the status quo instead of consenting to the RS.

1.5 Summary of Empirical Results

This study argues that the national preferences of EU member states vis-à-vis accepting or refusing refugees are determined by the constellation of primary interests of their domestic actors, being economic in nature. In this way, it rejects the existing literature—according to which the behavior of EU member states toward refugees is determined exclusively by migration pressure (Schimmelfennig 2018b), the preferences of the electorate (Niemann and Zaun 2018; Zaun 2018) and the politicization of identity as capitalized on by right-wing political parties (Börzel 2016; Börzel and Risse 2018). Furthermore, those primary economic interests are themselves determined by the demands for labor within EU member states compared to the best alternative options that they have. In addition, the social security system represents another explanatory factor that can induce states—Italy—to accept third-country nationals for demographic reasons in this context.

The secondary ideological interests underlined by the empirical evidence contributed further to the formation of national preferences regarding the acceptance or refusal of refugees in 2015. The ideological interests refer to solidarity and the respecting of human rights, the degree of openness of society, and the upholding of the principle of *non-refoulement* under the 1951 Geneva Convention. In this regard, it is relevant to underline that the European ideology represents only a secondary source informing states' preferences. The bargaining power of EU member states during the negotiation process, in line with LI, is determined in relation to the unilateral policy alternatives at the national level, the alternative coalitions, as well as the issue linkages (Moravcsik 1998).¹³

Accordingly, EU member states decide whether to opt for the new agreement or to maintain the status quo. In this regard, this thesis argues as follows: First, EU member states for whom the benefits deriving from the agreement are greater compared to those generated by maintaining the status quo choose to cooperate even despite the existence of unilateral policies as well as alternative coalitions. In the selected case studies, this pattern characterizes the Italian state's behavior toward the responsibility sharing for refugees. Second, EU member states for whom the benefits deriving from the maintenance of the status quo are greater in comparison to the gains related to pursuing the negotiating agreement do not cooperate. Furthermore, these states—notwithstanding the existence of unilateral policies and alternative coalitions—exercise a bargaining power whose strength depends on the voting procedure foreseen in the negotiation process. This reflects the noncooperative behavior of Hungary, whose bargaining power is

¹³The last determinant regarding bargaining power—that is, the issue linkages—is not included in the analysis because its theoretical assumptions do not align with the research interests of this thesis (see 6.2.2).

lower as the result of the QMV procedure used for the RS. Third, EU member states for whom the benefits regarding the new agreement are greater compared to those derived by maintaining the status quo are cooperative. This pattern pertains to the German state's cooperative behavior toward the responsibility sharing for refugees.

1.6 Why Does It Matter? Scientific and Political Relevance

This study aims at explaining the behavior of EU member states regarding the (non)acceptance of refugees at the national level, and furthermore their cooperation on responsibility sharing at the European one. Therefore the scientific contribution lies in the theorization of EU member state behaviors in a specific field, one where greater research is clearly needed: that is, EU asylum policy and the recent 2015 refugee issue—which is particularly undertheorized. In this sense, following LI, the study provides a systematic and comprehensive bottom-up analysis of patterns of state behavior vis-à-vis acceptance or not of refugees at the national level. In particular, it depicts the primary interests of domestic actors toward refugees (economic ones) as well as a secondary category thereof (ideational ones). Furthermore, it delineates rationally a systematic explanation regarding the patterns of EU member state behavior regarding cooperation on responsibility sharing for refugees on account of the set of interests that states have toward them at the domestic level and of the power that they exercise during the negotiation process in order to realize them. As such, the study also tackles the demands that states have toward refugees at the national level and the supply side (that is, the RS)—which mirrors how the EU responds to the migration pressures faced by its national governments. This leads further to greater understanding of government asylum policy in respective EU member states.

This study has also a high political relevance. Given the centrality of asylum policy in the EU, particularly after the refugee issue of 2015, it sheds light also on how member states will likely behave regarding agreement with the CEAS reform and the introduction of an allocation mechanism based on the principle of responsibility sharing for refugees and asylum seekers at the EU-wide level. In this regard, particularly important are the research findings related to the primary economic and secondary ideational explanatory factors that determine the accepting or refusing of refugees by different EU member states.

1.7 Outline of the Study

The study is structured in the following way: Chapter 2 delineates the institutional design of the EU refugee regime, an examination that is divided into two parts. The first sheds light on the communitarization process of EU asylum policy aimed at the creation of a common area of freedom, security, and justice, finalized with the entry into force of the TA in 1999. In particular the new competencies that the EU institutions have acquired in the field of asylum are explained, such as the extended ones of the Commission regarding the initiatives aiming at cooperation and the unanimity procedure at the heart of the Council (upon consultation with the Parliament). Furthermore, examined also is the Treaty of Lisbon (2009) and the legislative competencies that it attributes to the EU institutions with the aim to create common procedures regarding the granting of refugee status and hence asylum, the temporary protection procedure, as well as incentives for cooperation with third countries. The core competencies acquired by the EU institutions are the co-decision procedure via the medium of QMV in the Council for asylum-policy issues, the co-legislative role of the Parliament together with the Council, as well as more relevant tasks attributed to the CJEU aimed at hearing asylum cases.

The second part delineates the institutional design of the CEAS, which consists of five directives: namely the Asylum Procedures Directive (2013/32/EU), the Reception Condition Directive (2011/98/EC), the Qualification Directive (2011/95/EU), the Eurodac, and D III R. The focus lies particularly on the FEC rule, established, as noted, by D III R, that constitutes the only EU regulation assigning responsibility to EU member states on examining asylum applications. It concludes by scrutinizing how the EU institutions have answered the refugee issue in the crucial year 2015.

Chapter 3 reviews the literature regarding EU member state behaviors toward refugees at the national level and on cooperation concerning responsibility sharing at the European one. Furthermore, it identifies a research gap regarding the behavior of member states with regard to further integration in several EU policy fields. Chapter 4 develops the theoretical argument of this study. It uses LI's threefold rational framework, particularly the formation process of national preferences and bargaining power, to explain the patterns of EU member state behavior vis-à-vis responsibility sharing for refugees. Chapter 5 explains the research design of this work. It clarifies the choice for a qualitative comparative approach, as well as the data-gathering process occurring primarily through interviews.

Chapters 6, 7, and 8 present the analysis. Chapter 6 sheds light on the Italian state's behavior toward the responsibility sharing for refugees. It addresses, first, the formation of state preferences focused on the formal acceptance of refugees following primary economic

interests: namely the current demand for labor as the result of the high youth unemployment rate and the retirement system, given the country's aging population. The secondary ideological interests, situated between Europeanization and Euroscepticism, have contributed further in this sense. Second, the migration pressure—especially in reference to the arrivals by sea—has determined the Italian state's cooperative behavior vis-à-vis responsibility sharing for refugees (by upholding the RS).

Chapter 7 analyzes the second case study: that is, Hungary. Taking into consideration that, on the one hand, the demand for labor can be fulfilled by better alternatives than refugees, it is argued that the latter's nonacceptance constitutes a rational decision from the Hungarian perspective. This is further strengthened by nationalistic ideology, opposite in nature to European values. On the other hand, it is demonstrated how a TC with traditionally low migration pressure does not cooperate on the responsibility sharing for refugees and thus refuses the agreement represented by the RS.

Chapter 8 analyzes the German state's behavior toward the responsibility sharing for refugees, starting with the national preferences that led to their voluntary acceptance. In particular, it is explained that the demand for labor sustained by a low unemployment rate and a necessity for revitalizing the retirement system given the aging population, in tandem with insufficient alternative options, led domestic actors to promote the acceptance of refugees. Furthermore, a country like Germany with high migration pressure in reference to asylum applications lodged will promote further responsibility sharing for refugees—and thus consent to the RS.

Chapter 9 summarizes the empirical evidence in relation to LI as well as to the RQs by stressing the contradictions encountered and shedding light on the explanations for further integration or not into EU asylum policy. Chapter 10 summarizes the empirical findings with a special focus on the theoretical and empirical contributions regarding the behavior of states regarding whether or not to promote further integration in the field of asylum. Moreover, it delineates the limits of the study with a special focus on the variable nature of state behavior in respect of the policy field and period of time taken into consideration in this study. Finally, the implications derived from the present scientific work are addressed with concern to future research on state behavior in the field of asylum policy.

2 Institutional Design of the EU Refugee Regime

This thesis advances, as noted, the argument that EU member state behaviors regarding the responsibility sharing for refugees in the crucial year 2015 is explainable as being the result of states' preferences, as determined by the interests of domestic actors. Consequently, it is of relevance to understand the architecture of the CEAS in reference to the competencies that states have delegated to the EU institutions in the field of asylum. This contributes to the further investigation of the variation in cooperation on responsibility sharing for refugees under the EU legislative and legal framework in the field of asylum, representing the aim of the present chapter.

More specifically, the contribution made herewith to the delineation of the EU refugee regime is threefold. First, it allows us to understand deeply the ways in which EU member states have addressed the refugee issue at the domestic level given the configuration of competencies that they have compared to the respective EU institutions in this policy field. Second, it sheds light on the diverse behaviors of member states regarding cooperation at the EU-wide level regarding the responsibility sharing for refugees in both 2015 and beyond. Third, it elucidates future cooperation on EU asylum policy in relation to the debate that still surrounds this policy field at present.

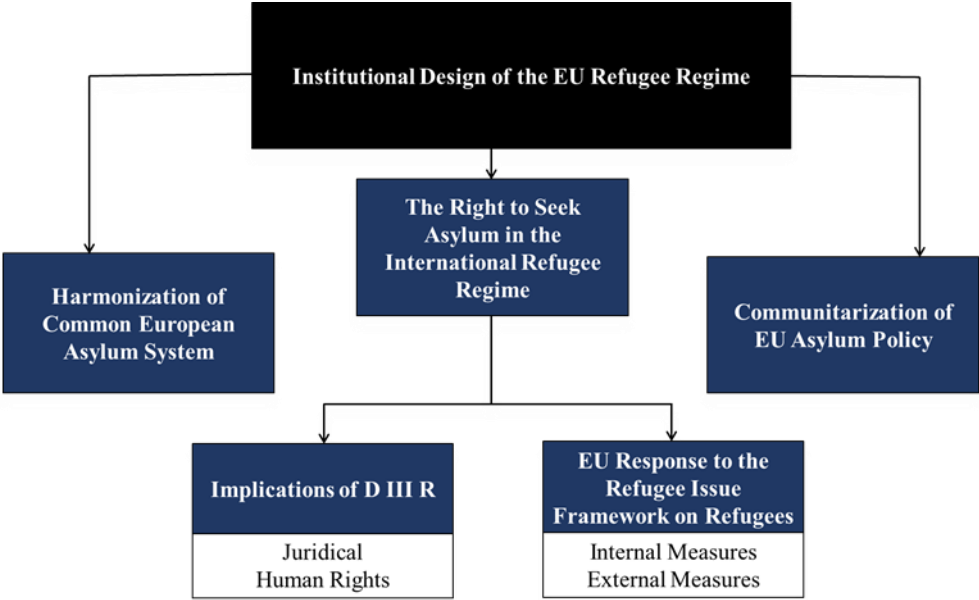
To these ends, the chapter is structured as it follows: First, it outlines the principles relating to international refugee protection as underlined by the 1951 Geneva Convention. Second, it traces the evolution of cooperation in the field of asylum in the EU from the intergovernmental to the community level, leading to two communitarization processes vis-à-vis EU asylum policy. In particular, the focus is on the TA and the corresponding innovations that it introduced regarding EU asylum policy. Third, the harmonization of the latter is analyzed in relation to the five transitional years related to the TA's implementation. In addition, the innovations introduced by the Lisbon Treaty are delineated, as leading to the current institutional design of the CEAS.

Fourth, the chapter contextualizes D III R during the EU refugee issue of 2015. In this regard, the juridical implications regarding the responsibility that EU member states have for the examination of an asylum application in line with D III R are identified—as are the corresponding consequences. In addition, outlined also is the impact that it had on the respecting of human rights and on those entitled to PCNIP status. In particular, the definition of a “refugee” provided by the 1951 Geneva Convention as well as the principle of *non-refoulement* that are brought into contrast as the result of the application of D III R are focused on. Especially relevant here is the ECHR, whose principles have also come into contrast with those of D III

R. These controversies are explained in order to provide a more comprehensive description of the CEAS.

Fifth, the EUAM launched in 2015 with the aim to address the refugee issue at both the internal and external levels of the EU is summarized. In particular, the focus is on the RS and the resettlement program aimed at relocating and resettling refugees from one EU member state to another and from a third country to a given EU member state respectively. The structure of the current chapter is presented below (see Figure 3 below).

Figure 3. Chapter 2—Institutional Design of the EU Refugee Regime



Source: Author’s own depiction.

2.1 The Right to Seek Asylum in the International Refugee Regime

Both WWII and the installation of the Communist system in Eastern Europe in its aftermath increased the number of asylum seekers within Europe (Cutts 2000). The continuous movements of displaced people on the European continent underlined the necessity to design an international convention in order to address the issue of refugees at the international level (Hatton 2005, 108). Previous attempts relating to cooperation in the field of refugee protection had been in development since the late nineteenth century, and later on arose as the result of the closure of European borders during the Balkan Wars (1912–1913), following WWI, as well as with the Russian Revolution of 1917 (Lavenex 1999, 5). Therefore UNHCR instituted the 1951 Geneva Convention and the respective 1967 Protocol, which together represent the first and most relevant sources of international refugee law (Guild 2006; Lavenex 2001a; Lavenex

1999). In particular, Article 1 A (2) of the 1951 Geneva Convention¹⁴ provides the definition of a “refugee” as follows:

Any person [...] owing to well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.

Furthermore, Article 33 (1) of the 1951 Geneva Convention¹⁵ sets out the principle of *non-refoulement*:

No Contracting State shall expel or return (“refouler”) a refugee in any manner whatsoever to the frontiers of territories where his life or freedom would be threatened on account of his race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.

Therefore, the 1951 Geneva Convention and the 1967 Protocol represent, on the one hand, the cornerstone of the international refugee regime focusing on the provision of the right to seek asylum (Kaunert 2009; Lalić Novak and Padjen 2009). On the other, in contrast, the right to grant asylum remains still the domain of the individual state, being closely connected to the principle of sovereignty (Lavenex 1999, 12). Furthermore, the 1951 Geneva Convention has been criticized for not addressing other relevant issues relating to international cooperation on refugee protection: namely such matters as unexpected refugee flows, responsibility sharing, as well as the lack of determined rules regarding the admission of refugees (Hatton 2005; Ineliger 2019).

In sum, the international provision of refugee protection, as established by the 1951 Geneva Convention, and its legal binding obligation of *non-refoulement* for the signatory countries have been crucial for the development of the international refugee regime. This led to the evolution of the latter in Europe as driven by the cardinal principle of implementing and respecting the 1951 Geneva Convention regarding the status of “refugee” at both the European and national levels. This allows us to further understand the subjective right to seek asylum, the rights of EU member states in providing it, as well as the behavior of those states regarding cooperation on responsibility sharing for refugees too.

¹⁴Article 1 of the 1951 Geneva Convention provides the definition of a refugee. For further information, see <https://www.unhcr.org/4ca34be29.pdf> (accessed July 15, 2016).

¹⁵Article 33 of the 1951 Geneva Convention provides the definition of a refugee. For further information, see <https://www.unhcr.org/4ca34be29.pdf> (accessed July 15, 2016).

2.2 The Communitarization of the EU Refugee Regime

In the following, the key phases relating to the evolution of cooperation in the field of asylum in the EU will be traced. This led to two processes: namely the communitarization and the harmonization of this policy field. This does not imply a detailed historical excursus of the European asylum system, because this is not the aim of the thesis.

Cooperation in the field of asylum in the EU represents a necessity that would be particularly underlined following the abolition of the internal controls within EU member states that led to the creation of the single European market in 1992, being based on the principle of the free movement of people, goods, services, and capital (Guild 2006, 635). The Single European Act signed in 1986 and the MT signed in 1992 created, respectively, the common European space without internal borders. As a consequence, EU member states might have lost control over their national borders especially in reference to asylum seekers (Lavenex 1999, 34). Therefore cooperation among EU member states in the field of asylum dates back, first, to the intergovernmental conferences leading to the First Schengen Agreement in 1985 and to the Ad Hoc Group on Immigration in 1986, which induced the Schengen Implemented Convention in 1990 and the Dublin Convention of the same year (Lavenex 2001a). The latter established particularly the rules relating to the responsibility that an EU member state has to examine an asylum application in line with national legislation. Furthermore, the MT signed in 1992 and entering into force in 1993, represents a crucial achievement regarding cooperation on EU asylum policy—defined as a “matter of common interest” (Treaty of Maastricht 1992, 131) and included under the third pillar of “JHA” (Monar 2014).

The TA signed in 1997 and entered into force in 1999 was the crucial stage of the communitarization process of EU asylum policy that transferred this policy issue from the third intergovernmental pillar to the first communitarized pillar (Baldwin-Edwards 1997; Juss 2005). In particular, the core aim of the TA, proposed during the intergovernmental conference of 1996, was the design of a common area of freedom, security, and justice (Lavenex and Uçarer 2002; Lavenex and Wagner 2007). The TA thus achieved two fundamental goals in the field of asylum: First, the communitarization of asylum policy at the EU-wide level (Lavenex 2001a, 127). In this regard, it is relevant to stress the new Title IV of the TEU named “Visas, Asylum, Immigration and other Policies related to Free Movement of Persons” (van Selm-Thorburn 1998, 631). In addition the new Title was transferred from the third pillar of the MT based on the intergovernmental cooperation to the first pillar of TEU, leading to supranational cooperation (Lavenex 2001b, 864).

Second, it founded the new supranational architecture with increasing competencies for EU institutions in the upcoming five transitional years in the field of asylum: namely the Commission, the Parliament, and particularly the CJEU (Uçarer 2002, 27). Therefore the Commission acquired the right to propose initiatives regarding asylum issues and the Parliament could now be involved in decision-making procedures, which remained unanimous, to the extent that the Council might allow this—as still the core decision-making body in the EU (Lavenex 1999, 46). Meanwhile, the CJEU is the only EU institution that acquired specific competencies in the field of asylum in line with Article 68¹⁶ of the TA, according to which it now had the right to provide preliminary and interpretative acts in this policy field (Lavenex 2001a, 130).

Article 63 of the TA, formulated during the 1999 Tampere European Council meeting, posited among others the adoption of the following measures after the end of the five transitional years (Treaty of Amsterdam 1997)¹⁷:

- the application of the 1951 Geneva Convention and its relative 1967 Protocol regarding decisions in the field of asylum;
- the establishment of a series of criteria able to determine which of the EU member states might be responsible for the examination of an asylum application;
- the provision of minimum standards regarding the reception of asylum seekers in EU member states, their qualification as refugees, the asylum procedure, as well as the provision of temporary protection for people who not might be able to return to their country of origin.

A deeper harmonization of the EU asylum policy and system followed from these provisions being adopted, as explained in the next section.

2.3 The Harmonization of the Common European Asylum System

The implementation of the CEAS, completed in two phases, is what specifically led to the harmonization of the EU asylum system (Guild 2006; Hatton 2015; Lalić Novak and Padjen 2009; Lavenex 2015; 2018). The first phase was initiated by the conclusions of the 1999 Tampere EU Council, with the aim to implement all the provisions advanced during the TA and

¹⁶For further information, see especially Article 66 (1) of the TA. Available online at: <https://s.gwdg.de/YA3vU7> (accessed June 15, 2016).

¹⁷For further information, see Article 63 of the TA. Available online at: <https://s.gwdg.de/VhUbhD> (accessed June 15, 2016).

with them being concluded by 2005 (Toshkov and Haan 2013, 663). In this context, four Directives focused on the establishment of common minimum standards and two Regulations were adopted (Costello and Mouzourakis 2016).¹⁸ However, the Commission stressed that the process of harmonization had not been fully achieved (Bauloz et al. 2015). The core criticisms refer to the limits regarding the abovementioned minimum protection standards, the lack of commitment to the 1951 Geneva Convention, as well as the discretion that EU member states still had at the national level regarding the measures included in the Directives and Regulations (Chetail 2016, 15–16).

The EU Commission Green Paper on the future of the CEAS of 2007, focused on the recommendations of the Hague Programme in 2004, started the second phase of the EU asylum system's harmonization. This concluded in 2012 (Lambert 2009, 523). In particular, it had a special focus on the creation of “a common European asylum procedure and a uniform status for those who are granted asylum or subsidiary protection” (EU Council 2004, 3) and on the promotion of solidarity among the respective EU member states (EU Commission 2007, 10; Hatton 2015).

With regard to the development of the second CEAS phase, it is relevant to underline the importance of the Treaty of Lisbon that entered into force in 2009—changing the institutional assets of the EU asylum system. The three most relevant innovations are the following ones: First and foremost, the creation of the CEAS with Article 78 (2) of the treaty now renamed the TFEU—with it being legally binding (Chetail 2016, 19). Furthermore, it attributed to the EU institutions further competencies related to the creation of common procedures of asylum granting and temporary protection, uniform processes in reference to the recognition of refugee status, as well as the establishment of new standards to incentivize cooperation with third countries (Peers 2008, 232–34).

Second, it shaped the legislative architecture of EU asylum policy. More specifically, it established the co-decision with QMV in the Council for asylum-policy issues. Moreover, the Parliament acquired extended competencies in the decision-making process in the field of asylum. Thus, it now became co-legislator with the Council (Kaunert and Léonard 2012, 1406). Third, a more relevant role in analyzing asylum cases was given to the CJEU. The

¹⁸They are the Reception Conditions Directive (EU Council Directive 2003/9/EC), the Asylum Qualification Directive (Council Directive 2004/83/EC), the Asylum Procedure Directive (Council Directive 2005/85/EC), and the Temporary Protection Directive (Council Directive 2001/55/EC). The Regulations are: the Council Regulation (EC) 343/2003 Establishing the Criteria and Mechanisms for Determining the Member States Responsible for Examining an Asylum Application Lodged in One of the Member States by a Third-Country National; Council Regulation (EC) 407/2002 Laying Down Certain Rules to Implement Regulation (EC) 2725/2000 concerning the Establishment of Eurodac for the Comparison of Fingerprints for the Effective Application of the Dublin Convention.

implementation of the Lisbon Treaty completed, then, the second phase of the communitarization process of the European asylum system.

The CEAS's design consists of the following Directives and Regulations:

- The Asylum Procedure Directive (2013/32/EU) establishes the norms regarding asylum applications, and specifies that they have to be registered not later than three working days from the moment that a person first seeks international protection (The Asylum Procedures Directive 2013).
- The Reception Condition Directive (2013/33/EU) establishes the standards relating to the acceptable material conditions for people who apply for international protection, including housing and food and those regarding detention as well as accommodation centers. In this regard, particularly important are the conditions for people with special needs and for unaccompanied minors. According to several scholars, the core aim of this Directive—though it is not explicitly referenced—is to avoid venue shopping as the result of the secondary movement of refugees between EU member states (Buonanno 2017; Chetail 2016).
- The Qualification Directive (2011/95/EU)¹⁹ represents a crucial instrument of the CEAS since it delineates the standards that recognize the status of beneficiary of international protection, of refugee, as well as of subsidiary protection. With regard to refugee status, the provided definition is in line with that of the 1951 Geneva Convention; the decision whether to grant asylum remains at the discretion of the individual member state meanwhile.
- The Eurodac Regulation (603/2013)²⁰ concerns a fingerprint database aiming at assisting EU member states in the exchange process of required information regarding applicants for asylum.
- D III R sets out the criteria that establish which EU member state is responsible for the examination of an asylum application and for the Eurodac, which goal is the prevention, detection and investigation of crimes such as terrorism through the European fingerprint database. In particular, Article 13 (1) establishes that the member state marking the place of an individual's first entry into EU territory examines the asylum application vis-à-vis international protection.

¹⁹For further information regarding the Qualification Directive (2011/95/EU), see <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32011L0095&from=EN> (accessed May 15, 2016).

²⁰For further information regarding the Qualification Directive (2011/95/EU), see <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32013R0603&from=de> (accessed May 15, 2016).

In sum, the CEAS's implementation led to the institutional harmonization of the EU asylum system (Lalić Novak and Padjen 2009). However, the CEAS has also been criticized for not particularly contributing to the further development of norms regarding reception conditions, the asylum procedure, as well as the qualification Directives (Peers 2013, 16). More specifically, criticisms have been addressed at D III R for not at all improving the rules regarding responsibility sharing for refugees at the EU-wide level as well as solidarity (Kaufmann 2020; Zaun 2017).

Moreover, the EU refugee issue—especially in the biennium 2014–2015—underlines the weaknesses that have characterized the CEAS's evolution process. In particular, D III R and the FEC rule led to a series of dysfunctionalities at both the domestic and EU-wide levels. Consequently, an uneven redistribution of refugees within the EU followed—as did the undermining of the respecting of human rights. These issues will be addressed in the following sections in order to contextualize the CEAS's application during the 2015 refugee issue and the underlying dysfunctionalities accompanying that.

2.4 The Dublin III Regulation in the Context of the EU Refugee Issue

D III R represents the cornerstone of the CEAS regarding responsibility sharing for refugees at the EU-wide level. Furthermore, Article 13 (1), as explained in the previous section, attributes specifically to the EU member state of first entry the responsibility to examine an asylum application. In particular, the refugee issue in the biennium 2014–2015 challenged the CEAS's functionality and emphasized further the weaknesses of D III R stemming from the application of the FEC rule.

In this context the southern EU member states such as Italy, Greece, and Spain, geographically placed along the Central, Eastern, and Western Mediterranean routes respectively, faced disproportionately high refugee arrivals in 2015 (Hampshire 2016). Furthermore Hungary, as the result of open borders along the Balkan route, registered unprecedented refugee arrivals in the summer of that year (Schimmelfennig 2018b, 1586). Responsibility sharing for refugees at the EU-wide level is, then, undermined as the result of Article 13 (1) of D III R and the FEC rule. This means that, on the one hand, it is necessary to understand its juridical application. Of special focus in examining this will be the secondary movement of refugees between the respective EU member states as the result of the application of D III R's "take charge" and "take back" clauses.

On the other hand, it is important to shed light on the implications that D III R had for EU member state behaviors during the 2015 refugee issue. In this regard, focus is on the

contradictions that characterize the applicability of Article 13 (1) regarding the respecting of human rights at both the EU-wide and international levels. The controversies that the application of D III R reflects in relation to the 1951 Geneva Convention and its related 1967 Protocol as well as concerning the ECHR are highlighted here.

2.4.1 The Juridical Implications of Dublin III Regulation

D III R focuses on a series of criteria aimed at enhancing the conditions under which a state provides international protection (Hruschka 2014, 472). In particular the relevance of family unity regarding unaccompanied minors is emphasized (Articles 6 and 8),²¹ and people whose family members have been granted international protection in another EU member state are acknowledged (Article 9).²² However, the efficiency of D III R was challenged during the 2015 refugee issue as the result of a series of controversial juridical implications derived from its application.

With regard to the behavior of EU member states when it comes to responsibility sharing for refugees, the following two dysfunctionalities afflict D III R (Brekke and Brochmann 2015, 148):

- the unequal redistribution of refugees as the result of the application of the FEC rule;
- the secondary movement of refugees within the EU given the differentiated reception conditions in member states, those resulting from a lack of harmonized domestic asylum policies at the EU-wide level.

Concerning the first aspect, it is relevant to underline that Article 13 (1) of D III R²³ stipulates that:

[When] an applicant has irregularly crossed the border into a Member State by land, sea or air having come from a third country, the Member State thus entered shall be responsible for examining the application for international protection. That responsibility shall cease 12 months after the date on which the irregular border crossing took place.

²¹For further information, see respectively Articles 6 and 8 of D III R. Available online at: <https://s.gwdg.de/kwP2Go> (accessed April 15, 2016).

²²For further information, see Article 9 of D III R. Available online at: <https://s.gwdg.de/kwP2Go> (accessed April 15, 2016).

²³For further information, see Article 13 of D III R. Available online at: <https://s.gwdg.de/kwP2Go> (accessed April 15, 2016).

As a consequence, FECs Italy and Greece were obliged to register the arriving refugees and to proceed with the examination of their asylum applications (Mitchell 2017, 297). This led to unequal migration pressure being exerted on these two countries that, along with the poor standards of refugee reception, led to the eventual secondary movement of refugees toward the northern EU member states of Germany, Sweden, and the Netherlands (Maani 2018, 99).

In reference to the second aspect, namely the secondary movement of refugees, Article 18 of D III R contains the aforementioned “take back” and “take charge” clauses. According to the first, Article 18 (1 b, c, d)²⁴ stipulates that for FECs:

The Member State responsible under this Regulation shall be obliged to take back:

- b. [...] an applicant whose application is under examination and who made an application in another Member State or who is on the territory of another Member State without a residence document;
- c. [...] third-country national or a stateless person who has withdrawn the application under examination and made an application in another Member State or who is on the territory of another Member State without a residence document;
- d. [...] third-country national or a stateless person whose application has been rejected and who made an application in another Member State or who is on the territory of another Member State without a residence document.

Regarding the “take charge” clause meanwhile, Article 18 (1a) states that for FECs:

The Member State responsible under this Regulation shall be obliged to:

- a. take charge [...] of an applicant who has lodged an application in a different Member State.

In sum, determining which country is responsible for the examination of an asylum application under the circumstances of the secondary movement of refugees was the key challenge faced vis-à-vis the CEAS framework in 2015 and beyond. Consequently the applications of D III R led to a series of contradictions relating to the respecting of human rights both during the 2015 refugee issue and afterward; these issues are now examined.

²⁴For further information, see Article 18 of D III R for all the relevant paragraphs mentioned in the text. Available online at: <https://s.gwdg.de/kwP2Go> (accessed April 15, 2016).

2.4.2 The Implications of the Dublin III Regulation for the Respecting of Human Rights

The application of D III R, as mentioned above, has led to a lack of respect for human rights and the failure to adequately process those entitled to receive PCNIP status. Reception conditions, considered to be inadequate (especially so in the FECs), represent the core factor explaining the lack of respect demonstrated for human rights vis-à-vis refugees. In this regard, the ECtHR suspended the return of Afghan asylum seekers to Italy and Greece (Mitchell 2017, 320; Morgades-Gil 2015, 440; Zaun 2017, 256). This was based on Article 3 of the ECHR, according to which: “No one shall be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.” Furthermore, this has led to a clear contradiction with the 1951 Geneva Convention and the most important principle that it cites: namely *non-refoulement* (Fullerton 2016; Langford 2013).

In sum, the abovementioned controversial clauses of D III R and its corresponding dysfunctionalities—emphasized particularly in the context of the refugee issue in 2015—have had an impact on the behavior of member states at both the national and EU-wide levels. This has been reflected also in their revealed positions regarding the measures undertaken at the EU-wide level in order to address the refugee issue, which will be explained in the next section.

2.5 The EU Response to the Refugee Crisis

The dysfunctionality of D III R during the 2015 refugee issue had the following consequences. First, it led to an uneven numbers of refugees being shared between the southern and northern EU member states (Brekke and Brochmann 2015; Hampshire 2016; Maani 2018). Second, it caused the suspension of the Schengen acquis as the result of the reintroduction of border controls among EU member states following the secondary movement of refugees (Biermann et al. 2019, 247).

In this context, the Commission proposed joint solutions aimed at addressing the 2015 refugee issue at the EU-wide level (EU Commission 2015a). The EUAM represents the core proposal in this regard, being launched on May 13, 2015 (Bačić Selanec 2015). It consisted of two packages, including measures to address the refugee issue at both the internal and external levels (Niemann and Zaun 2018):

- internal measures include the RS, resettlement, and the designation of “hotspots”;
- external measures concern the EU-Turkey deal, the EURTF, the concept of “safe countries of origin,” as well as the EBCG.

In the following, the measures that address at both levels (internal and external) cooperation on responsibility sharing for refugees will be briefly explained in order to provide a complete overview of them. This means that the introduction of the principle of “safe countries of origin” in September 2015 is not explained in detail, because it refers to the asylum applications lodged principally by citizens of the Western Balkan countries (EU Commission 2015d). Accordingly, the list of such countries includes: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Turkey.

In addition the EU Commission proposed the EBCG in December 2015, which entered into force in October 2016, with the aim to combat smugglers and to gain greater control over the EU’s external borders (EU Commission 2015h; Niemann and Zaun 2018). Therefore, given that this initiative does not address directly responsibility sharing for refugees at the EU-wide level it will also be examined only in passing.

2.5.1 Relocation and Resettlement

The relocation and resettlement schemes represent significant measures undertaken within the EUAM’s framework. The former aims at transferring PCNIP from one member state to another (EU Commission 2015a) while the latter provides for the resettlement of 20,000 refugees from a third country to a given member state (EU Commission 2015h). In particular, the RS consisted of an initial program aimed at resettling 40,000 asylum seekers from the FECs—Italy (24,000) and Greece (16,000)—within two years from the respective approvals, and thus by October 2017 (EU Council 2015a). Furthermore it emphasizes the principle of solidarity among EU member states that finds its juridical basis in Article 80 (3)²⁵ of the TFEU, according to which:

The policies of the Union set out in this Chapter and their implementation shall be governed by the principle of solidarity and fair sharing of responsibility, including its financial implications, between the Member States. Whenever necessary, the Union Acts adopted pursuant to this Chapter shall contain appropriate measures to give effect to this principle.

In particular, the RS decision’s legal basis in Article 78 (3)²⁶ of the TFEU is established as follows:

²⁵For further information, see Articles 80 of TFEU. Available online at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:C:2016:202:FULL&from=EL> (accessed May 22, 2016).

²⁶For further information, see Articles 80 of TFEU. Available online at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:C:2016:202:FULL&from=EL> (accessed May 22, 2016).

In the event of one or more Member States being confronted by an emergency situation characterized by a sudden inflow of nationals of third countries, the Council, on a proposal from the Commission, may adopt provisional measures for the benefit of the Member State(s) concerned. It shall act after consulting the Parliament.

Accordingly, the Council—taking into consideration the high numbers of refugees arriving in the southern EU member states Italy and Greece as well as those crossing the Union’s eastern borders, particularly Hungary’s—in summer 2015 decided to relocate 120,000 people seeking international protection. Furthermore it was established that within a period of two years 15,600 asylum seekers would be relocated from Italy, 50,400 from Greece, and another 54,000 from Hungary (EU Council 2015b); Hungary refused to be included in this package however. Despite the underlined RS goals to be achieved in the triennium 2015–2017, only 31,503 people were eventually relocated: some 10,265 from Italy and 21,238 from Greece (EU Commission 2017b).

2.5.2 The Hotspots

The designation of “hotspots” was initiated with the aim to assist those EU member states facing high migration pressure, particularly Italy and Greece. The identification of hotspots was coordinated in line with the activities of four European agencies: namely EASO, the EU Border Agency (Frontex), the EU Police Cooperation Agency (Europol), and the EU Judicial Cooperation Agency (Eurojust). These agencies were charged with assisting local staff in procedures related to the asylum application process, the registration of refugees, fingerprinting, and the return to the country of origin or to safe third countries (EU Commission 2015a; 2015b). The Commission identified four hotspots in Italy: Lampedusa, Pozzallo, Porto Empedocle, and Trapani. Five were acknowledged in Greece meanwhile: Lesbos, Chios, Samos, Leros, and Kos (EU Commission 2015f; 2015g).

2.5.3 The EU-Turkey Deal

The EU-Turkey deal was proposed in December 2015 by the Commission in relation to the EUAM’s actions, with the aim to address the refugee issue on the EU’s external borders (EU Commission 2015j). The agreement foresaw the like-for-like resettlement of every Syrian citizen from Turkey to the EU upon the return back of every Syrian citizen from Greece to Turkey, being signed in March 2016 (EU Commission 2016). In addition, the EU provided EUR 3 billion for the biennium 2016–2017 in order to assist Turkey with the just-launched program.

Despite the relevance that the EU attributed to this deal, it has since been criticized for a series of reasons. First, Turkey is not an EU member state—thus it is not bound by EU law. Moreover, Turkey does not possess internal mechanisms ensuring that all steps of the international-protection procedure are upheld (Poon 2016, 1198). Criticism has also been addressed at the EU for not fulfilling its proper international obligations in the field of asylum, and for sending back refugees to a country not definable as a safe third country (Baban, Ilcan, and Rygiel 2017; Rygiel, Baban, and Ilcan 2016).

2.5.4 The EU Regional Trust Fund

The promotion of programs, funds, and aid directed toward Syria's neighboring countries represents another relevant EU response to the 2015 refugee issue. EU member states were recommended to pay particular attention to overseeing further cooperation, assistance, and solidarity being provided to external-border countries in Syria's vicinity. The Commission first proposed the EURTF as a response to the Syrian refugee crisis in December 2014. Furthermore, the EURTF was born as an agreement on behalf of the EU and Italy. It accounted for an initial amount of EUR 20 million being provided by the EU and EUR 3 million by the Italian government.²⁷

The EURTF known as the Madad Fund operates actively in Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, and Egypt, countries that urged immediate assistance to help stabilize refugee flows from Syria. The Madad Fund was conceived as a financial mechanism to last for a period of 60 months. The Fund's board meeting held on May 29, 2015, decided to adopt contributions of almost EUR 40 million: EUR 20 million on the basis of the European Neighborhood Instrument and a further EUR 18 million on the basis of the Instrument for Pre-Accession. Education, vocational training, and the living conditions for Syrian children in a post-conflict environment, as well as for students and adults in the neighborhood countries, are the main sectors of the Fund's work (EU Commission 2014). According to the last EURTF's report published in June 2019, the EU and Turkey has provided EUR 1,7 billion up to March 2019 for 67 projects that have been promoted in order to assist refugees in education, healthcare and livelihoods.

This chapter has elucidated the institutional design of the CEAS, with a special focus on the delegation of competencies from the national to the joint EU-wide level in the field of asylum. This examination allows us to better understand the diverse behaviors of EU member states regarding cooperation under the framework of the European as well as national asylum systems.

²⁷For further information, see the press release: "European Commission and Italy launch first ever EU Regional Trust Fund in response to the Syrian Crisis." Available online at: <https://s.gwdg.de/qGVGET> (accessed January 15, 2018).

However a more detailed explanation of member states behaviors toward responsibility sharing for refugees at the national and EU-wide levels can be offered through close engagement with a literature review. This will be the aim of the next chapter.

3 State of the Art

This chapter sets out the scientific debate relating to the behavior of EU member states regarding the (non)acceptance of refugees at the national level (RQ₁) and concerning cooperation on the responsibility sharing for them at the European one (RQ₂). This thesis situates itself in two study fields. On the one hand, it addresses the concept of “burden sharing” as relating to refugee protection and the corresponding debate in Migration Studies regarding cooperation, with a special focus on the EU. On the other, it conceptualizes states’ preferences and their relevance as relating to the behavior of those states in a specific policy field—that here within European Integration Studies, and according to LI’s theoretical paradigm. Furthermore, what is relevant is that the economically based rational approach represents the common denominator across these fields and supports further the theoretical argument of this study. Accordingly, EU member state behaviors vis-à-vis cooperation on the responsibility sharing for refugees at the EU-wide level is explained as the result of the intensity of the primary economic state preferences regarding the (non)acceptance of refugees at the national level.

The concept of burden sharing, postulated in relation to public goods theory as based on a cost-benefit logic and applied in the defense field, refers to states’ contribution within a given military alliance and the corresponding fairness that should characterize them (Hartley and Sandler 1999, 668). As a consequence, burden sharing in the field of asylum is conceptualized in relation to states’ encountered both costs and benefits in the provision of refugee protection, as well as in normative terms (Betts 2003; Suhrke 1998; Thielemann and Dewan 2006). The other relevant debate in this regard is the cooperation—especially among EU member states in order to promote further integration in this policy field (i.e. asylum)—also in relation to burden-sharing mechanisms. In particular this is explained by the earlier-mentioned concept of “venue shopping,” according to which decisions on asylum policy at the national level are determined by domestic actors; at the intergovernmental level meanwhile, they are fixed by the degree of transgovernmentalism between EU officials within the JHA’s Council (Guiraudon 2000; 2003).

This led, thus, to the relevance of domestic actors regarding the behavior of member states at the EU-wide level. This thematic focus is taken up in European Integration Studies. The three dominant theories in this field—namely NF, PF, and LI—will be analyzed with regard to their respective approaches aimed at explaining cooperation at the EU-wide level in reference to states’ preferences in a specific policy field. The choice to base the study presented here on LI specifically will also be explained.

NF argues that states’ preferences are formed as the result not only of the interests of domestic actors but also of the EU supranational institutions, for example the Commission (Haas 1958).

Furthermore, the former change their preferences in relation to those of the latter—thus the integration process is not exclusively driven by states, but above all by the preferences of the European institutions. Therefore the EU integration process is sectoral, mainly economic, and represents a transformative self-reinforcing process according to which the demand for integration in a determined sector requires integration in other ones (Haas 1958; Pollack 2005). PF identifies as the core societal actors citizens as well as political parties, which through their various strategies politicize public opinion in relation to identity—especially in referenda or elections for office (Hooghe and Marks 2009). This raises a “constraining dissensus” at the domestic level against EU institutions, which is further transmitted at the European one especially through Eurosceptic political parties (Schimmelfennig 2017, 322). Therefore, PF focuses only on public opinion and political parties by avoiding looking at the role of the economic interest groups that act rationally in a given society.

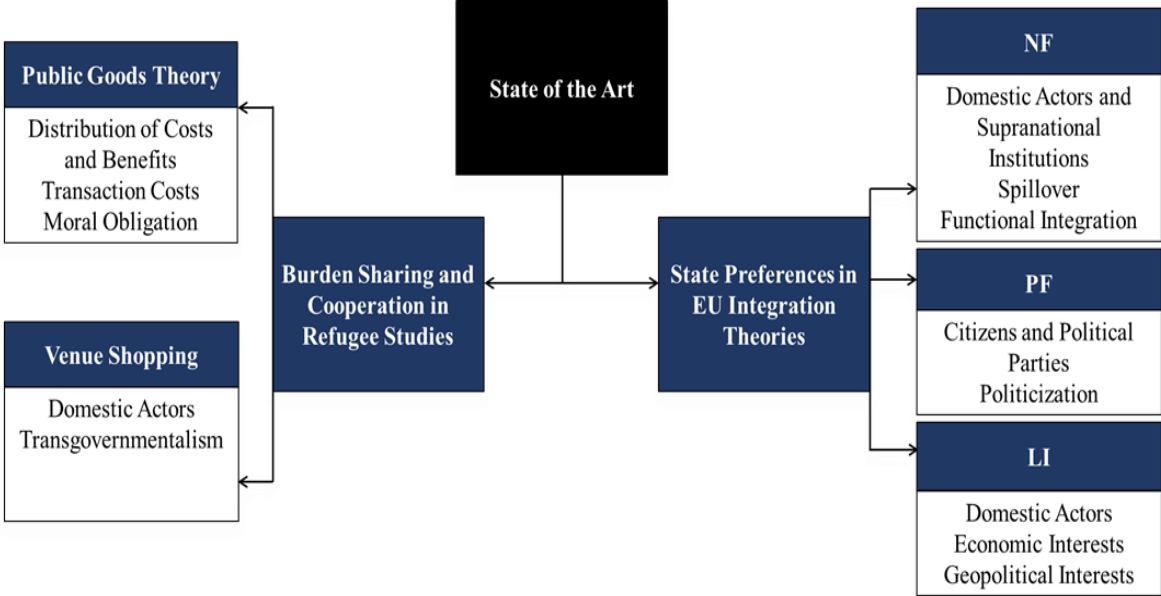
LI assumes that a threefold rational framework of state preferences, bargaining power, and institutional choice explains the integration process (Moravcsik 1993; 1998). In particular, it argues that economic domestic interest groups are the core societal actors whose interests inform states’ preferences (Moravcsik 1997). It is interdependent state preferences especially that explain the behavior of member states at the EU-wide level, being the result of the constellation of primary economic interests between domestic actors (Moravcsik 1993). Therefore LI’s theoretical paradigm provides a systematic analysis of states’ preferences, leading to a rational explanation regarding EU member state behaviors toward cooperation in a specific policy field.

This study aims precisely to address the above RQs through such a rational lens. In sum, the theoretical approaches in the field of Refugee Studies on the one hand and of European Integration Studies on the other represent the conceptual framework of this thesis. This engages with the state-of-the-art debate on the behavior of EU member states regarding the (non)acceptance of refugees at the national level and concerning cooperation on the responsibility sharing for them at the European one.

Therefore, first, this chapter addresses the concept of burden sharing, as well as cooperation in the field of EU asylum policy. Second, it delineates the theoretical debate regarding states’ preferences as well as the assumptions of EU integration theories, as well as their application in the latest literature regarding the 2015 refugee issue. Third, it outlines LI’s theoretical postulations and their relevance to the RQs that this study addresses. Fourth, the summary of

the theoretical argument and of the research gap conclude the chapter. The structure of the thesis follows in Figure 4 below.

Figure 4. Chapter 3—State of the Art



Source: Author’s own depiction.

3.1 Literature Review on EU Member State Behaviors and Regional Cooperation on Refugees

The refugee issue in the year 2015 underlined the key question that is the cooperation among EU member states in their aiming at further integration in the asylum policy field. In particular, it refers to the reasons influencing EU member state behaviors regarding the equal allocation of refugees at the EU-wide level, which in the literature is known as burden sharing or responsibility sharing. This leads to the investigation of the following two issues in the academic debate in Refugee and Asylum Studies. First, the outputs of the Europeanization of EU asylum policy, with a special focus on the legislative aspects as well as the corresponding effects on the domestic level (Zaun 2017, 6). Particularly important is, hence, the responsibility sharing for refugees and the willingness that states have to participate in it (Wahlbeck 2019). In this regard, the empirical evidence from other regional organizations elsewhere shows that cooperation regarding the commitment to human rights at the regional level is explained as the result of negative externalities (Jetschke 2015). Accordingly, these externalities are the costs relating to the accommodation of refugees—including providing shelter, food, and medical

treatment. These costs also influence state behavior on whether to accept or not refugees at the national level.

Second, there is a necessity to investigate the behavior of member states and the EU institutions with a special focus on their respective preferences in this policy field, and their interaction in relation to the concept of “power” (Bonjour, Ripoll Servent, and Thielemann 2018, 410). In order to address these two issues, the study looks at states’ preferences—with, as noted, special focus on the interests of domestic actors that inform the positions of the respective member states at the EU-wide level during negotiation processes. Furthermore, the focus on EU member states’ preferences regarding responsibility sharing for refugees is understood as a further step toward cooperation at the EU-wide level.

Therefore, it is important to understand how the set of problems relating to responsibility sharing for refugees has been addressed in Refugee and Asylum Studies. In this regard, two approaches will be examined: on the one side, the public goods theory (Olson 2009; Olson and Zeckhauser 1966) that explains through a paradigm of costs and benefits why states participate in burden sharing for refugees by providing their protection as a public good (Suhrke 1998). On the other, the “joint-product model” (Cornes and Sandler 1996) applied in refugee policy explains that states provide refugee protection, which represents a private good, because their contributions in this regard are compensated for by the derived excludable benefits that each of them receives (Betts 2003; 2010). Accordingly, burden sharing for refugees is pursued for normative reasons related to the respecting of human rights and solidarity with PCNIP. With a special focus on the interests that push EU member states to participate in burden-sharing schemes, scholars identify also international compliance as a core interest in providing refugee protection (Thielemann 2003; Thielemann and Dewan 2006).

The term burden sharing, used in the first part of the chapter, will be replaced with the notion of responsibility sharing in its second part (and throughout the rest of the thesis). This choice is explained as follows:

“Responsibility-sharing” casts refugees in a more favorable light, as potential contributors and assets for their host societies and as the holders of rights that create correlating responsibilities for States. States bearing “burdens” may see themselves as passive recipients of those arriving and seeking protection; while “responsibility” can be seen to imply legal obligations and a requirement to take positive action (Türk and Garlick 2016, 665).

Regarding cooperation in the field of EU asylum policy meanwhile, the literature review that follows will focus on the venue-shopping approach. The latter explains why states make the

choices that they do and why refugee policies emerge that lead to the Europeanization of this particular policy field—as well as have an impact on domestic politics too (Lahav and Guiraudon 2006).

3.1.1 Public Goods Theory

The behavior of states in relation to the provision of protection for refugees has attracted significant research interest from within Migration Studies, particularly in the subfield of Asylum Studies. Public goods theory represents the core theoretical approach that has been applied by Migration Studies scholars in order to scrutinize burden sharing for refugees. This theory, primarily addressing economic considerations, makes the core assumption that national governments provide public goods to the individuals and groups of a given society; thus they are collective (Olson 2009, 14).

Cornes and Sandler (Cornes and Sandler 1996) distinguish between two types of good: pure public goods and private goods respectively. The former are characterized by benefits that are nonexcludable (available to all individuals) as well as nonrivalrous (indivisible in relation to the consumption of all other relevant individuals) (Cornes and Sandler 1996, 8–9). Private goods have benefits that are excludable and rivalrous meanwhile. Therefore, this approach postulates that the provision of public goods by states is pursued in relation to the contribution that they make as well as to those made by other states. This argument has been further extended with the aim to understand particularly the burden sharing of public goods within military alliances, revealing that large states shoulder higher burdens compared to smaller ones—consequently resulting in the latter being free riders.

In the field of Refugee Studies, Suhrke (1998) has applied the logic of public goods theory regarding refugee protection. With regard to the benefits, she argues that states provide public goods (that is, refugee protection) in relation to the derived increased security and international order respectively (Suhrke 1998, 400). Thus, the legitimated security interests that states have enhance their participation qualitatively and quantitatively vis-à-vis the provision of refugee protection (Milner 2000, 3). Furthermore, she provides empirical insights on the diverse behaviors of EU member states toward the responsibility sharing for Bosnian refugees and argues empirically that for both kind of states (cooperative or not), the overall outcomes are restrictive asylum policies. In the same vein, Schuck (1997) argues that states' interest with concern to burden sharing is ultimately the goal to control the admission of refugees. Instead, he argues, it should be based on a normative framework with the aim to comply with

international law, uphold human rights, and especially enforce the principle of *non-refoulement* cited by the 1951 Geneva Convention (Schuck 1997, 272).

Betts (2003) uses the joint-product model as an alternative explanation for the concept of burden sharing in Refugee Studies. Accordingly, the benefits relating to the provision of a public good might be also excludable (Sandler 1993). In this regard, Betts argues that the provision of refugee protection establishes a positive relationship between the contribution of states regarding it and the corresponding excludable benefits that they derive from doing so. Furthermore he identifies excludable altruistic benefits of a normative nature and relating to solidarity and human rights, as well as the excludable prestige benefits relating to the linkages established between states during related negotiations (Betts 2003, 286–88). With regard to the latter, this means that the issue linkages that are created in other policy fields motivate states to further cooperation during the negotiation process vis-à-vis burden sharing for refugees at the international level (Betts 2010, 19).

Thielemann (2003) develops further the abovementioned approaches related to the burden-sharing concept, and categorizes them into two branches: the cost-benefit logic and the norm-based logic, following the concept of “social action”. The former, based on a rational framework, underlines that actors form their own preferences independently of institutions. In this regard, cooperation on burden sharing for refugees is explained according to the following motives: First, the obtained benefits exceed the costs of contributing. Second, the insurance rationale means that states share the burdens for refugees in order to compensate for the current contributions via the possible reduction of costs in times of crisis in the future (Thielemann 2003, 255–56). In addition, the collective logic of providing public goods is severely hampered by the possibility of free riding—meaning, as noted, that smaller states take advantage of larger ones regarding the provision of public goods (namely burden sharing for refugees) (Thielemann 2003; Thielemann and Dewan 2006).

Conversely the second of Thielemann’s two branches, based on the logic of appropriateness, assumes that actors’ actions are based on socially constructed norms whose source is the realm of identity, with a dependency on the institutional context (Thielemann 2003, 257). Accordingly, cooperation related to the burden sharing for refugees relies on solidarity—which might be perceived as the commitment that a state has to show toward the members of a given group. It is based on the respecting of outcomes related to the common decision-making that characterizes it, and the obligations that states have toward each other within a membership community.

Boswell (2003), through a comparison between Germany and the United Kingdom, identifies another pattern of burden sharing: that is, the distribution of refugees within a given

country. She adds that the explanations for this pattern are the distribution of costs at the intraregional level, the prevention of social tensions, as well as the avoidance of attracting refugees in future. Supposing the extension of this burden-sharing pattern to the EU-wide level, Boswell argues that it might contribute particularly to the rational distribution of socioeconomic costs regarding the acceptance of refugees, the legitimization of the abovementioned criteria regarding their distribution as well as the refugees' participation in the accommodating areas.

Following on from cooperation in the field of asylum, other studies have focused on the factors that explain the choices of refugees regarding the EU DCs where they prefer to obtain respective legal protections. In this regard, Thielemann (2004) identifies a series of structural factors explaining the differentiated burdens of refugees among EU member states as the result of refugees' own preferences. The latter are: economic, meaning GDP and unemployment rate; historical, regarding the relationship between the host and sending countries; political, related to the reputation that the DC has in the one of origin; and geographical, referring to the distance between them.

Policy harmonization represents one of the means that states use in order to share the burdens relating to refugees. This leads to the necessity to investigate further the EU context, and the academic debate regarding cooperation at the EU-wide level in the asylum policy field. This follows in the next section.

3.1.2 Venue shopping

Venue shopping represents another approach used here to analyze the preferences of EU member states in the field of asylum, with a special focus on intergovernmental conferences. Venue-shopping theory was developed in the field of American public policy studies, and relies on the "venue policy" concept—defined as "the institutional locations where authoritative decisions [about a policy] are made" (Baumgartner and Jones 1993, 32). Accordingly, interests groups change the venue related to their policy of interest at the same governance level in order to realize their own preferences through the attraction of policymakers with similar preferences (Baumgartner and Jones 1993).

Guiraudon (2000; 2003) was the first scholar to start looking at states' preferences in the field of migration and asylum through this theoretical lens. She agrees that the form of EU cooperation in the field of migration and asylum—especially following the TA's implementation—is typically intergovernmentalist. This means that national governments are the core actors that further as well as control the integration process in this specific policy field, specifically on the basis of the negotiation process and of corresponding bargaining rounds.

Empirically, Guiraudon argues that restrictive state preferences regarding migration do not form as the result of the interests of domestic actors. Conversely, they reflect the interests of political actors in fact: namely the ministers of the interior who aim to control migration, and thus they choose the kind of policy venues that allow them to achieve their underlying goals. This enables them to avoid the pressure exerted by domestic actors in the field of asylum, such as courts, migration-aid groups, or parliamentarians and other liberal ministries.

Lavenex (2001b; 2006) identifies another instance of venue shopping in the field of asylum: that is, the externalization of the EU's migration regimes through transgovernmental actors. These are specifically the Justice and Home Affairs officials who have further promoted the involvement in the process of the relevant third countries of origin in order to address—read prevent—migration. Furthermore, following a comparison between Germany and France, she argues that the Europeanization of refugee policies is embedded somewhere between human rights norms and internal security, leading to restrictive domestic asylum policies ideational in nature.

Kaunert and Léonard (2012) apply the theoretical paradigm of venue shopping in the field of asylum and with a special focus on state preferences. In relation to the outcomes of cooperation on EU asylum policy, they make a distinction between “liberal provisions” and “restrictive provisions” respectively. The former concern the implementation of the EU asylum Directives (see 2.2), the latter diminish them instead. This is explained by the asylum-system venues where the EU—for example the Commission, the Parliament and the CJEU—have acquired even greater related competencies (Kaunert and Léonard 2012, 1410) through the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty, and the inclusion of the Charter of Fundamental Rights in it. With regard to the refugee issue in the crucial year 2015 and up until the end of 2016, Lavenex (2018) shows through a sociological approach the organized hypocrisy embedded between the engagement of the EU in promoting further its values and the institutional measures aimed at limiting them.

Bonjour, Ripoll Servent, and Thielemann (2018) go beyond the previous approaches and underline the necessity to provide additional theoretical assumptions on these topics. In particular, they stress the necessity to apply theoretical postulations leading to the following analytical levels: First, the identification of the domestic actors who inform state preferences, and the role of ideological and external pressure in this regard. Second, the extent to which power in the field of asylum belongs to the EU institutions and to domestic policymakers. This allows investigation of the conditions under which the design of asylum policy occurs, addressing at the same time why and how. Third, it is relevant to provide empirical evidence

relating to integration, thus policy outcomes in the field of migration and asylum—and above all, to measure them.

The present thesis aims at providing in-depth empirical evidence regarding these underlying analytical levels then. This means that it first provides a systematic analysis of EU member state preferences regarding the (non)acceptance of refugees at the national level, leading to a detailed explanation of cooperation or not on the responsibility sharing for them at the European one. In particular, it identifies the crucial national explanatory factors regarding cooperation in the field of asylum by filling the theoretical gap in this policy field—something vital given that systematic scientific literature is currently lacking.

3.2 Theorizing Member State Preferences in the European Integration Studies Literature

The literature review on relevant works in Refugee and Asylum Studies underlines the core theoretical approaches through which scholars have explained the mechanics of responsibility sharing for refugees. This has been done from the state perspective as well as from that of the cooperation at the EU-wide level that led to the Europeanization of this policy field. This thesis aims at explaining why cooperation on responsibility sharing for refugees at the EU-wide level varies with regard to member state behaviors toward the (non)acceptance of refugees at the national one. Therefore, this underlines further the relevance of the behaviors of EU member states at the national level, what exactly explains them, and how they influence the negotiation process at the EU-wide level regarding overall cooperation on asylum policy.

The conceptualization of behaviors vis-à-vis responsibility sharing for refugees is derived from EU integration theories: namely with concern to state preferences. This allows us to identify the domestic actors, their interests regarding refugees, as well as the translation into cooperation or not at the EU-wide level. In the following the conceptualization of state preferences in the three theories—NF, PF, and LI—that have dominated the academic debate in European Integration Studies is set out.

According to NF's theoretical paradigm states' preferences are endogenous, while the key societal actors are interest groups and the political elite (Haas 1958; Rosamond 2005). However, underlying interests change over time in relation to those of the EU institutions (such as the Commission) that drive and control cooperation with regard to the EU integration process. This in itself represents a functional transformative process, one in which the demand for integration in a determined sector leads to further integration in another sector (Pollack 2005). PF identifies as the core societal actors citizens and the political parties, where the latter

use the former through strategies that lead to the politicization of identity (Hooghe and Marks 2009). Thus the unevenness the EU integration process is explained as the causal effect of politicized state preferences with regard to identity.

LI implies the exogenous formation of state preferences, and argues that they reflect the interests of domestic groups that are then represented further by the states at the heart of the negotiation process (Moravcsik 1993; 1998). LI thus posits that the EU integration process is controlled by states and not by the EU institutions (Schimmelfennig and Rittberger 2006). As a consequence, LI's theoretical paradigm is of crucial relevance for the argument that this thesis advances. First, LI—through the exogenous notion of state preferences—allows us to understand who the domestic actors are, their interests, as well as the sources of the latter. Second, it allows us to understand the effects that state preferences have on responsibility sharing for refugees at the EU-wide level.

In the following, the three aforementioned EU integration theories are explained in detail and compared to each other as regards their core postulations and the criticisms of each. This contributes further to identifying why LI is ultimately the most satisfactory choice of theoretical argument for this particular study, in line with the specific RQs that it seeks to address. In addition, a detailed review of the literature that applies these three theories to the 2015 refugee issue is provided. Only few studies have sought to explain the refugee issue during the biennium 2015 to 2017 based on these three EU integration theories. This informs the decision to now examine them closely, as part of establishing the literature gaps that the present study will help rectify.

3.2.1 Neofunctionalism

NF represents the dominant theory that explained the EU integration process during the 1950s. Furthermore, it has been categorized as a branch of the supranationalist school of thought (Schimmelfennig and Rittberger 2006, 74). Contrary to LI's theory based on the primacy of the economic interests of domestic actors in the determination of state preferences, NF conceptualizes the EU integration process instead through the concept of “spillover” that aims at explaining sectoral integration in the EU—being predominantly economic in nature (Haas 1958, 283). Furthermore, NF identifies three typologies of spillover: functional, political, and institutional. These deepen integration according to the preferences of different domestic interest groups: the bureaucratic elite, trade unions, as well as the general public (Haas 1958, 33–56):

- functional spillover is sectoral, and assumes that the integration in a determined sector occurs upon the same outcome in another one as the result of the problems that arise during this process and which can only be resolved in accordance with the other ones;
- political spillover occurs when the national political elite expects to resolve integration problems at the supranational level given the impossibility to address them at the national one, which leads to the process of actor socialization (Lindberg and Scheingold 1970);
- institutional spillover emphasizes the role of the EU institutions (above all of the Commission) that assist EU member states in pursuing their common interests, thus to integrate further.

Therefore NF emphasizes that the actors driving the EU integration process are not only national but also supranational ones, such as the Commission, the Parliament, and the CJEU (Schimmelfennig and Rittberger 2006). They, conversely, reflect the domestic interests that might vary across time, while the outcomes of integration refer to an ongoing process that is not fixed and not exclusively measured through the achieved agreements (Schmitter 2009). The NF's crucial assumption is that the EU integration process occurs on the basis of self-sustaining interests in a determined sector that demands further integration in other ones (Pollack 2005, 359).

Compared to the other two EU integration theories, NF is dynamic in the sense that it analyzes the integration process over time as the result of endogenous decisions that have been taken on the past (Moravcsik 2005, 353). NF has been also strongly criticized for two reasons: First, it explains only the integration process without providing insights regarding the reasons for a lack of achieved integration (Schmitter 2004, 47). Second, it underestimates the role of domestic actors and their interests relating to the EU integration process as compared to supranational ones, and addresses only economic integration without taking into consideration other prevailing concepts such as "sovereignty."

Nevertheless, NF has still been fruitfully applied to the explanation of the 2015 refugee issue. Niemann and Speyer (2018) use NF to dissect the creation of the EBCG, which represents one of the proposed EUAM measures at the external level regarding the refugee issue. Accordingly, it is argued that the negotiation process relating to the EBCG reflects the interdependent patterns that have been created among member states within the Schengen Area and the necessity to cooperate on the external borders of the EU given the lack of competences that Frontex had in this regard in 2015. Furthermore, it is shown that the determinants of those interdependent

patterns were the sunk costs related to the Schengen Agreement itself, those regarding the hypothetical loss of economic integration that the latter advanced, as well as the political relevance hereof. This study thus explains through NF's theoretical assumptions one specific outcome relating to the refugee issue. However, it does not provide more systematic insight regarding the behavior of the respective EU member states in this regard.

Schimmelfennig (2018a) provides a detailed explanation of the differentiated outcomes of integration between the Eurozone and the Schengen crises. With regard to the latter, he explains the lack of integration in this field through two of NF's concepts: on the one side, the weak transnational actors interested in enhancing it further led the countries less affected by migration to renege on cooperation (and vice versa). On the other, EU supranational capacity in the field of asylum being not particularly strong allowed member states to react to the refugee issue through unilateral actions such as the suspension of D III R. Despite the contributions that this article makes in comparative terms between the Eurozone and the Schengen crises, it explains the outcomes without offering a systematic analysis of the internal factors behind such variation.

In sum, on the one side it is relevant to emphasize the theoretical contributions of these NF scholars regarding a topic on which further research is definitely needed. On the other, it is important to look also at the theoretical postulations of the other two EU integration theories vis-à-vis the RQs at hand.

3.2.2 Postfunctionalism

PF emerged late in the first decade of the new millennium, and is associated specifically with the scholars Liesbet Hooghe and Gary Marks. Hooghe and Marks (2009) argue that the EU integration process is driven by domestic politicization. Accordingly, political parties represent the key actors here—being ones who use strategically leverage public opinion through the process of politicizing identity. Thus the EU integration process reflects the variation in states' preferences vis-à-vis that politicization of identity across individuals, countries, and political parties. Accordingly, the rise of populist parties is not only explainable in terms of protest against EU integration but reflects also the preferences of those societal actors who have lost out from the globalization process (Kriesi 2008, 159). Other scholars define EU politicization in relation to the “increased level of resistance against the EU and its policies, but also an increased utilization of these political institutions by societal groups to achieve desired goals” (Wilde and Zürn 2012, 139).

With regard to the 2015 refugee issue, PF has been used to explain the outcomes of the Schengen crisis. Börzel (2016) investigates the EU's lack of efficient solutions regarding the behavior of member states in the context of the 2015 refugee crisis. This, she argues, is due to the political constraints that are manifested by right-wing populist parties, which guided by nationalistic ideas as well as anti-Islamic sentiment preclude governments from proceeding with further integration.

Börzel and Risse (2018), following the same PF concepts (politicization and collective identity), argue that the lack of a common solution being provided by EU member states to the refugee issue is due to the politicization by populist parties regarding the Union's core identity. In addition mass politicization leads to differentiated integration policies, which in the case of the Schengen crisis are expressed through the mobilization of the EU's populist parties against refugees (Schimmelfennig 2018a, 979). Thus the anti-immigration reaction of those populist parties cultivates transnational cleavages, further influencing party competition too—as a strategy used to determine bargaining power vis-à-vis EU integration (Hooghe and Marks 2018). In sum, PF theory provides an alternative explanation of the EU integration process compared to classical theories thereon. With a special focus on the role of public opinion, voting, and political parties, PF explains that the driver of EU integration is the politicization of identity capitalized on by political parties whose degree of influence determines the degree of integration (Hooghe and Marks 2020).

As shown above, PF's application to the refugee issue and the corresponding Schengen crisis shed light on the central role of public opinion regarding the mobilization as well as the diffusion of anti-immigrant sentiment within EU member states. Consequently PF provides a valid theoretical and empirical argument through its determining of different sources of state preferences and strategies leading to diverse integration outcomes. PF differs in comparison to NF, then, for the following reasons: First, the sources of states' preferences are ideational for the former and economic for the latter. Second, societal actors (namely domestic interest groups) are dominated by the EU supranational institutions for NF compared to by citizens and the political parties for PF. Third, the explanation of bargaining power is determined by the distribution of gains for NF and by the party-competition strategy in relation to ideology for PF.

3.3 The Promise of Liberal Intergovernmentalism

LI, which will be explained in greater detail in chapter 4, advanced a new and innovative argument during the 1990s aimed at explaining the further integration achieved at the EU-wide

level. Its premise consisted of the crucial role of domestic interest groups, as the core actors in society whose interests determine state behavior at the national level (Moravcsik 1998). LI's paradigm is grounded in the following theories: the liberal theory of state preferences, the interstate bargaining theory regarding their power in relation to asymmetrical interdependence, as well as the functional theory of the institutional choice that states have for credible commitments (see Table 1 below).

Table 1: LI's Paradigm

Level of abstraction	Preferences	Cooperation	Institutions
High	IR rationalist: state actors in international anarchy, rational choice of international institutions		
Medium	Liberal theory of state preferences	Bargaining theory	Functional theory of institutional choice
Low	Domestic economic constraints	Intergovernmental asymmetrical interdependence	Credible commitments

Source: Schimmelfennig (2004, 76).

LI's threefold rational framework is explained as follows meanwhile (Moravcsik 1995, 612):

- state preferences rest on the identification of relevant domestic actors and their primary economic interests and secondary geopolitical ones, as determining state behavior. Therefore, here LI clearly draws on LIRT;
- bargaining power is conceptualized according to interstate bargaining theory and assumes that the negotiating power of EU member states depends on the unilateral and alternative coalitions that they have compared to the proposed cooperation at the EU-wide level;
- institutional choice relates to governments' decision to delegate or pool national sovereignty at the EU-wide level. Doing so on the one hand supports credible commitments, while on the other it is characterized by high uncertainty. Governments will decide against delegating or pooling sovereignty especially if compliance is

expected to be low on issues that could alternatively be resolved by compromises or package deals.

LI thus represents the theory *par excellence* that has been most used for two decades now in order to explain the EU integration process. Nevertheless, it has been subject to criticisms not only in the field of European Integration Studies but also in International Relations. The first critique is emphasized by social constructivism, according to which state preferences are formed in line with the ideational and cultural values that represent the social construction at hand (Risse 2004, 161). Social constructivism particularly focuses on the concept of “Europeanization,” defined as follows:

Europeanization is the emergence and development of political, legal and social institutions at the EU-wide level of distinct structures of governance – that is, of political, legal and social institutions associated with political problem-solving – that formalize interactions among the actors, and of policy networks specializing in the creation of authoritative European rules (Risse, Cowles, and Caporaso 2001, 3).

LI’s state preferences are challenged empirically regarding the centrality of economic interest groups as the key determinants of state behavior. Forster (1998), examining British behavior during the negotiations relating to the MT, argues that state preferences are determined previously by the political goals of the governments that represent the relevant actors at the national level. Thus, they do not stem hierarchically from economic interest groups in his view.

LI’s second rational stage—that is, interstate bargaining power—has been empirically criticized for neglecting the role of the European institutions regarding the outcomes of negotiation processes at the EU-wide level meanwhile (Kleine and Pollack 2018, 1498). In this regard a refined version of intergovernmentalism theory—defined as “new intergovernmentalism”—explains that the decision-making process at the EU-wide level is guided by the deliberation and the consensus-building of national governments, which aim to avoid controversy over their national goals during the negotiation process (Bickerton, Hodson, and Puetter 2015, 711). Thus this logic refutes LI’s assumption that national states are the core actors who drive and control the EU integration process—it is, rather, a collective endeavor. In this regard, a further critique is provided: On the one side, historical-institutionalist theory criticizes LI for not taking into consideration that states’ positions might be altered by the outcomes of agreements and result in different preferences suddenly on the part of other governments (Pierson 1996, 126). On the other one, it ignores the role of the EU institutions—

that instead will aim to increase their own autonomy in order to strengthen supranational governance (Sandholtz and Sweet 1998, 26).

With regard to institutional choice, LI has been criticized for citing only credible commitments as being the core drivers behind states delegating or pooling authority. By contrast, other theories such as social constructivism emphasize the institutionalization of ideas being the core explanation for the formation of the community (Parsons 2003). Furthermore, Tsebelis and Garret (2001, 385) underline the necessity to take into account the interactions between the different EU institutions and their corresponding impacts (and previously the institutional choice). Despite the criticisms that have been addressed at LI, it nevertheless still represents a valid theory given its ability to provide comprehensive empirical analysis—that based on its theoretical microfoundations—regarding the outcomes of decision-making processes in a given EU policy field (Moravcsik 2018). LI can help explain, hence, the outcomes of the decision-making process regarding cooperation on responsibility sharing for refugees at the EU-wide level.

Zaun (2018) explains the failure of the Commission to introduce a permanent quota system for refugees via the application of LI's theoretical framework. First, she explains that state preferences are formed as the result of the pressure exercised by the increasing presence of populist parties, and the corresponding effects on the national electorate. In this regard, she identifies two categories of EU member state preferences: namely host countries (Germany, Austria, Sweden) and non-host countries (Hungary, Poland). Second, she explains bargaining power—as causing the lack of approval seen for an automatic quota system for asylum seekers at the EU-wide level as resulting from the migration pressure of the year 2015.

Despite the relevance of this study—as one of the few shedding light on diverse EU member state behaviors toward the refugee issue during the year 2015—it falls short in two regards. On the one side, it does not provide a rationalist-economic overview of state preferences, as LI predicts. Instead, it underlines the role of populist parties as the main explanatory determinant of state preferences. On the other hand, this leads to the emphasis of the national electorate as the crucial actor in society; that is in clear contradiction with LI, which identifies manufacturers and more generally speaking economic interest groups as the core domestic actors.

Biermann et al. (2019) analyze the outcomes of the Schengen crisis referring to the year 2015 with a particular focus on the second stage of LI's theorization: that is, bargaining power. They do so by drawing on the concept of “interdependence”—specifically as relating to the migration pressure faced by EU member states—to explain the outcomes witnessed with the (non-)reform of the CEAS, and therewith the lack of adoption of an asylum quota system. Furthermore, they identify in relation to state preferences two typologies of states: namely

affected states with high migration pressure and non-affected states with low migration pressure. This leads to bargaining power being determined in relation to the unilateral policies that states have available regarding relieving the migration pressure—explained as the “Rambo” game. Again, this study identifies patterns of state preferences but fails to divulge their core sources, as well as to flag which domestic actors are of relevance in determining responses to the refugee issue of 2015 and beyond.

Schimmelfennig (2018b) argues that the state preferences in reference to the Schengen crisis cannot be explained in economic terms but only in relation to the migration pressure that affects the EU member states. This means that this study fails to analyze state preferences, by ignoring their primary economic sources. This thesis here, in contrast, provides a comprehensive analysis focused on the primacy of the economic interests of domestic actors vis-à-vis refugees at the national level. Furthermore, it argues further that the interstate bargaining power of EU member states is determined by the outside options that they have available: namely being less attractive to refugees, closing their borders, or cooperating with the countries of origin.

In sum, the highlighted studies on the one hand provide empirical evidence regarding the explanation of the outcomes of the Schengen crisis, with a particular focus on the behavior of EU member states regarding responsibility sharing for refugees in relation to the migration pressure faced. Furthermore, these works have contributed also to a general theorization of the 2015 refugee issue in explaining it through the LI lens. On the other hand, they do not provide systematic and comprehensive empirical evidence regarding LI’s rational-theoretical postulations: namely state preferences and interstate bargaining power. In particular, they fail to identify the interests of domestic actors as leading to the witnessed EU member state behaviors toward refugees at the national level and to the forms of cooperation seen at the European one.

3.4 Summary of the Argument and Theoretical Gap

This study aims at explaining the effects that state preferences regarding the (non)acceptance of refugees at the national level have on the behavior of EU member states vis-à-vis cooperation on responsibility sharing for them at the European one. This leads, in the first instance, to the necessary investigation of the factors that explains EU member states’ behaviors diverging on the degree of acceptance of refugees (RQ_1), and thus of who or what informs state preferences. Scrutinizing the latter’s implications for the variation in cooperation seen on responsibility sharing for refugees at the EU-wide level then, in a second step, allows us to address RQ_2 . Therefore, the theoretical argument advanced is that EU member state behaviors toward

responsibility sharing for refugees are explainable as the result of the effects that state preferences have on them, in line with the primary economic interests of domestic actors.

To these ends LI's rational-theoretical paradigm has been applied, and compared to the two other prominent EU integration theories (NF and PF). The choice of such a theory is innovative for three reasons. First, it allows us to identify the nature of the interests of domestic actors regarding refugees at the national level. Then, it explains their effects on the variation of cooperation that EU member states show toward the responsibility sharing for refugees at the EU-wide level. This means filling the current theoretical gap regarding the normative interests as well as moral obligations that states might have in participating in responsibility-sharing schemes, as underlined by the literature review on Asylum Studies. Conversely, this study provides a rational framework of primary economic state preferences vis-à-vis refugees, with these playing a crucial role in this specific policy field. Furthermore, especially the empirical evidence notes the key relevance of secondary ideational national preferences too. Compared to the other two EU integration theories, then, the choice of LI to underpin this thesis allows systematic analysis of the sources of the interests that domestic actors have with regard to refugees.

Second, drawing on LI leads to a more sophisticated understanding of cooperation at the EU-wide level, and more nuanced explanation of outcomes: that is, the variation in behavior. It thus fills a second theoretical gap in Refugee and Asylum Studies by going beyond their explanation of cooperation in this policy field as being the result of restrictive state preferences towards refugees (Guiraudon 2000; 2003). By contrast, this study dissects that variation in cooperation by including here as well cooperative or noncooperative patterns of behavior among EU member states during the negotiation process at the EU-wide level. Compared to NF's emphasizing of the role of the Commission, LI advances instead a rational paradigm for bargaining power among EU member states in the Council—where they take the Decisions regarding cooperation on responsibility sharing for refugees at the EU-wide level. Therefore, the national interests of the individual EU member states are translated into Decisions within the Council.

Third, this thesis builds its argument across both of the levels of inquiry here: national and EU. It provides a comprehensive, systematic, and in-depth analysis of the behavior of EU member states at the national level, thus with regard to the degree of acceptance of refugees as well as with concern to the variation in cooperation at the EU-wide level on responsibility sharing for refugees. Meanwhile, the recent literature regarding how the EU member states have addressed the refugee issue at both the national and EU-wide levels has only provided

explanations regarding outcomes. There is no empirical evidence offered on rational domestic interests vis-à-vis refugees. Instead, those interests are excluded for the reason that asylum policy is closely connected to the sovereignty of the state—thus the sources of state preferences can only be geopolitical per this line of thinking (Schimmelfennig 2018b). Again, they might be formed in relation to the internal pressure that the electorate exercises and the relative threat of right-wing parties' rise in the context of the high number of asylum seekers and PCNIP arriving on the EU's shores (Zaun 2018)—particularly as a result of the events of 2015 and beyond. In contrast, this study argues that the interests of domestic actors are formed rationally and do matter for the degree of acceptance of refugees at the national level. In addition, it advances the argument that cooperation among EU member states on responsibility sharing for refugees at the EU-wide level varies in relation to their preferences at the national one.

This chapter has delineated the scientific debate regarding the behavior of member states at both the national and EU-wide level regarding cooperation in a specific policy field, namely that of asylum. In order to elucidate in detail the theoretical postulations of the argument that this study advances, it is important to fully elaborate what LI's theoretical framework is. This represents the aim of the next chapter.

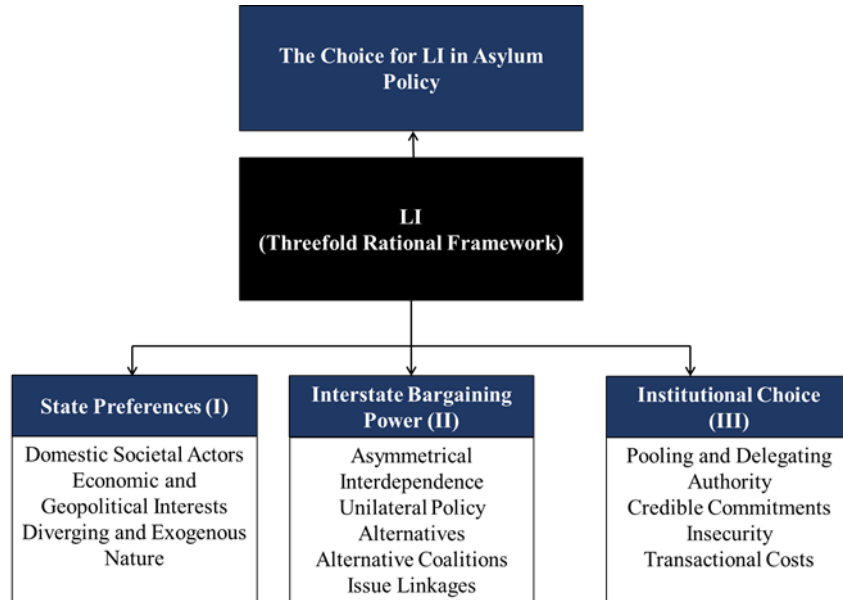
4 Rational Theory of State Preferences, Interdependence, and State Behavior

This chapter outlines the theoretical grounds of this study (see Figure 5 below), as underpinning the empirical case studies on Italy, Hungary, and Germany. In order to provide a comprehensive analysis, it has opted for following the theoretical arguments of LI—as theorized by Andrew Moravcsik. The chapter summarizes, then, LI’s rational-theoretical assumptions, according to which member state behaviors at the EU-wide level reflect economic interdependence based on the cost-benefit calculations of domestic actors and the strategies that they use in order to achieve their goals (Moravcsik 1993). LI’s threefold framework consists, as noted, of state preferences, bargaining power, as well as institutional choice (Moravcsik 1998). A detailed explanation of the core concepts relating to each part—namely domestic actors, policy interdependence, as well as the pooling or delegating of authority—follows. The chapter concludes with the deduction of theoretical implications to be applied in addressing the study’s two RQs.

First identified are the domestic actors, the sources of their interests, their convergence or divergence, as well as their exogenous position vis-à-vis EU integration (Schimmelfennig 2018b). It is argued that the diverse nature of state preferences over time, regarding issues, as well as across states is the result of the issue-specific nature of the interests of domestic actors (Moravcsik 2018). Then it is examined how interstate bargaining power, based on the heterogeneous nature of state preferences, highlights the intensity of the latter. Investigation of the possible substantive bargains whereupon governments might agree to cooperate follows (Moravcsik 1998, 51). According to the intergovernmentalist approach in the European context, EU member states—through the constellation of their domestic preferences—enter into bargaining negotiations at the supranational level with the aim to achieve an agreement that strengthens their respective bargaining power as an individual state (Pollack 2005, 361). Bargaining power depends further on asymmetrical interdependence; concretely, on the distribution of information as well as on the unequal gains across states (Schimmelfennig 2004, 77).

In a third part, it is then outlined how institutional choice postulates that states pool or delegate authority to a supranational institution to the extent that this allows them to impose on other governments established agreements to reduce future uncertainty relating to the behavior of other states, achieve credible commitments, as well as to dominate domestic opposition (Moravcsik 1998, 73). The chapter thus summarizes the theoretical assumptions regarding the three constitutional parts of LI’s rational framework, and underlines the salience of this theory—with a special focus on the field of asylum policy.

Figure 5. Chapter 4—Theory of State Preferences, Interdependence and State Behavior



Source: Author’s own depiction.

4.1 Liberal Intergovernmentalism

LI represents a “baseline theory” (Moravcsik and Schimmelfennig 2018, 64) in the field of European Integration Studies used to explain the EU integration process, particularly in the early 1990s. It advances the argument that integration at the EU-wide level occurs as the result of the aforementioned threefold rational framework of state preferences, interstate bargaining, and institutional choice (see Figure 6 below).

Figure 6. Rational Framework of International Cooperation

Level	State preferences	Interstate bargaining	Institutional choice
Independent variables	What are the sources of national state preferences?	What explains the efficiency and distributional outcomes?	What explains the transfer of sovereignty to international institutions?
	Economic & geopolitical Interests	Asymmetrical interdependence or supranational entrepreneurship	Federalism Centralized technocratic management Credible commitments?
Outcomes	Underlying national preferences	Agreements on substance	Delegation or pooling authority to international institutions

Source: Moravcsik (1998, 24).

The first of these three levels assumes that the core actors in society are the multiple different interest groups that seek to achieve their own goals. Therefore, it is a bottom-up theory according to which the interests of domestic actors are formed prior to subsequent political endeavor. Furthermore, it postulates that state preferences are exogenous and issue-specific; therefore, they do indeed vary across issue, time, and country (Moravcsik 1998, 27,35).

Interstate bargaining explains the integration process as being the result of the distribution of gains among EU member states in relation to the preferred agreements arrived at during the negotiation process. This implies that not only state preferences are issue-specific but also bargaining power too (Schimmelfennig 2013).

Institutional choice, meanwhile, argues that the national governments drive integration at the EU-wide level through their pooling or delegating of authority, done with the aim of pursuing credible commitments in relation to the distributional gains obtained during the negotiation process (Pollack 2005; Schimmelfennig and Rittberger 2006). The European integration process has thus been defined in the terms presented below:

EU integration can best be understood as a series of rational choices made by national leaders. These choices responded to constraints and opportunities stemming from the economic interests of powerful domestic constituents, the relative power of each state in the international system, and the role of institutions in bolstering the credibility of interstate commitments (Moravcsik 1998, 18).

4.1.1 State Preferences

The state preferences perspective argues, on the basis of LIRT, that individuals and private interest groups represent the core societal actors, being ones who act with the aim to achieve their own respective goals (Moravcsik 1997). This leads to the maximization of envisaged benefits through cooperation at the international level, and thus to the promotion of those policies that further their interests (Milner 1997). Therefore, the pressure resulting from the constellation of interests of domestic actors, who are embedded in domestic institutions, is what informs state preferences (Moravcsik 1993, 481). This means that, on the one hand, the state at the national level serves as a “transmission belt” through which the interests and the power of societal actors are translated into domestic policy (Moravcsik 1993, 484). On the other, at the international level, the state represents the main mechanism at the disposal of interest groups vis-à-vis influencing international cooperation. As a consequence, states in a globalized world promote particular interest groups over others—thus they are issue-specific.

The question that arises, then, is what does “state preferences” mean exactly? They are defined as “an ordered and weighted set of values” (Moravcsik 1998, 24) related to the results

of cooperation at the international level between states. Furthermore they differ from strategies that are the endeavors that actors used in order to achieve the preferred outcomes (Frieden 1999, 41).

The core concept that serves to explain the formation of state preferences on the basis of the underlying interests of domestic actors is “issue-specific interdependence” (Moravcsik 1997). The key assumption here is that the configuration of patterns of state preferences determines states’ behavior (Moravcsik 2001, 5–6). The specific relationship established between state preferences and the behavior of states has been translated into the concept of “policy interdependence” (Moravcsik 2010, 239). The latter has been defined as “a set of costs and benefits when dominant social groups try to realize the proper preferences” (Moravcsik 1997, 520), which represents national goals.

In order to have a more comprehensive understanding of policy interdependence, it is important to focus first on the concept of “interdependence.” The latter has been defined as the “mutual dependence” that can mostly emerge under conditions of interaction between states at the international level, or alternatively between societal actors at the domestic one (Keohane and Nye 1977, 8). Keohane and Nye (1977) argue that the concept of interdependence refers not only to situations arising under conditions of mutual benefit but also to those inducing costs too. Therefore, on the one side interdependence generates costs—as the result of the restriction of autonomy—while on the other it is relatively difficult to evaluate if those costs might be exceeded by the benefits gained—as emerging from the relations existing between actors or states.

With regard to the relationship established between costs and benefits, it is important to underline, first, the joint gains or joint losses that might arise for domestic actors, for states, or for the parties involved (Keohane and Nye 1977, 9–10). Second, the distribution of relative gains also plays a relevant role here. In this context, the common denominator between the concept of interdependence and the theoretical assumptions of LIRT is policy interdependence. In sum, the set of costs and benefits emerging from economic interdependence is what determine state preferences, as domestic actors seek to maximize their own gains (Moravcsik 1993, 480). In this context, states will behave rationally at the EU-wide level given the pressure exercised by domestic interest groups aiming to realize their own distinct interests.

4.1.1.1 Economic interests

According to the empirical evidence regarding the formation process of state preferences in several policy fields regarding EU integration (Copsey and Haughton 2009; Freeman 2006;

Moravcsik 1998), the underlying primary interests that determine them are economic. The economic interests of domestic actors thus represent the major source of state preferences. Governments might use economic cooperation in order to shape patterns of economic-policy externalities, originating from the further interaction between states in the economic field (Moravcsik 1998, 36). The patterns of national economic interests correspond to the commercial economic interests of powerful manufacturers. Furthermore, state preferences reflect patterns of issue-specific interdependence (Moravcsik 2018; Moravcsik and Nicolaïdis 1999, 61). Again, in economic terms, interdependence constitutes the most important determinant of state policy. In other words, states with effective unilateral policies oppose cooperation—as compared to those unable to shape pattern of externalities, who cooperate instead. Accordingly, it is postulated that state behavior at the national level is determined by the patterns of economic state preferences—being the result of the achievement of interests by domestic groups.

With regard to the *ex ante* identification of the primary economic interests that states might have regarding accepting refugees at the national level, the scientific literature is poor as of now. In contrast, there are empirical *ex post* studies regarding refugees' integration process, which show also the impacts on the labor market in the host countries that result from the acceptance of refugees at the national level (Bakewell 2000; Bascom 1998; Foged and Peri 2016; Jacobsen 1996). Accordingly refugees have positive *ex post* effects on the increase of the labor supply, especially in sectors where less complex tasks must be completed (Foged and Peri 2016, 8). Furthermore refugees might also help meet the demand for labor, especially in the agricultural sector (Bakewell 2000; Bascom 1998; Jacobsen 2002, 584–86) as well as with regard to the development of entrepreneurship (Momin 2017, 62).

Additional quantitative studies relating to the impact of refugees on the national labor market of host economies, especially in Turkey, show that their acceptance led to the increase of the labor supply particularly in the informal sectors such as agriculture (Ceritoglu et al. 2017; Del Carpio and Wagner 2015; Kavak 2016). Therefore, the indicators relating to the national labor market are crucial for the identification of the primary economic interests that lead to the formation of state preferences *vis-à-vis* the (non)acceptance of refugees at the national level. In particular, the unemployment rate (Dullien 2016), the demand for labor and related issues such as demographic challenges (Fuchs, Kubis, and Schneider 2016) will contribute to the *ex ante* delineation of the IVs informing the primary economic interests with regard to refugees.

4.1.1.2 Geopolitical Interests

Secondary sources of state preferences are the geopolitical interests of domestic actors meanwhile, as measured by the following indicators (Moravcsik 1998, 29–32):

- “political-military goals leading to the cooperation between states characterized by having the same goals;
- the common interest in ensuring the prestige of the EU as a regional power at the international level;
- the elimination of intra-European conflicts resulting from the dominance of individual states, for example leveling up with Germany in the aftermath of WWII;
- the intensity of European ideology that leads to confrontation between the Europeanized federalist societies compared to the nationalistic ones.”

Therefore, state behavior at the national level can be further determined by the patterns of geopolitical state preferences as the result of the pursuit of related interests by domestic groups. In particular, European ideology is addressed by LIRT—focusing on the core concept of “social identity.” This embodies the preferences of domestic actors with regard to the production and distribution of public goods (Moravcsik 1997, 525). The concept of social identity is closely connected to that of “national identity,” and is operationalized by a series of indicators: namely the respect for human rights, the compliance of societal actors with political institutions, as well as the nature and legitimate distribution of social and economic rights (Moravcsik 2001). Therefore the operationalization of these concepts will contribute to the depiction of the ideological interests of EU member states vis-à-vis refugees at the national level.

4.1.2 Interstate Bargaining Power

Interstate bargaining represents the second rational level explaining EU member states’ behavior toward further integration in a given policy field. Therefore, it embodies the negotiation process at the EU-wide level regarding a determined agreement. In other words, EU member states aim to bargain at the interstate level by placing themselves in those positions that allow them to achieve their proper interests.

The question here, then, is: Under what conditions do states bargain at the interstate level? According to LI, the EU member states bargain under the following three core conditions (Moravcsik 1993, 498; 1998, 60):

- *“unanimity voting procedure*: EU member states bargain at the interstate level on whether the agreement is supposed to take place through the unanimity voting procedure and without the possibility of being economically sanctioned;
- *low transaction costs*: the process of obtaining information regarding the preferences and positions of other EU member states, as well as the implied policy implications for the most relevant interests;
- *asymmetrical interdependence*: this determines the relative power that each member state has during an agreement in relation to its best alternative policy.”

The abovementioned circumstances under which interstate bargaining occurs at the EU-wide level lead to the following three variables being the ones influencing the degree of the respective negotiating power that a given EU member state has (Moravcsik 1993, 499; 1998, 63):

- i. “the threat of unilateral policy alternatives or the threats of nonagreement;
- ii. the alternative coalitions or threats of exclusion;
- iii. the potential for compromise and linkage.”

According to Moravcsik (1993; 1998), the first variable determining the power of EU member states during the negotiation process is the unilateral policy alternatives that they have. This means that member states cooperate at the EU-wide level in a determined policy field per whether the benefits produced by doing so are more attractive and preferable compared to those generated by pursuing their best alternative policy. Thus their bargaining power will be determined by the threat of nonagreement, which at the heart of the negotiation process will be figured out through the veto power or the exiting from the agreement in question.

In this manner, EU member states for whom benefits obtained by unilateral policy alternatives are more attractive compared to those deriving from cooperation will have greater bargaining power, while the outcome seen regarding cooperation will tend toward nonagreement. By contrast, EU member states with poor alternative policy choices prefer to reach a compromise by providing more concessions (see Table 2 below). Hence it is assumed that member state behavior at the EU-wide level is determined by the bargaining power existing in relation to

asymmetrical interdependence, being the result of the unilateral policy alternatives available and the threat of nonagreement.

Table 2: **Bargaining Power in Relation to Unilateral Alternative Policy**

Unilateral policy alternatives	Bargaining power (Threat of nonagreement)	Outcomes (Compared to the status quo)
More attractive	Greater	Nonagreement
Less attractive	Lesser	Agreement

Source: Author’s own depiction, based on Moravcsik (1993, 499–500; 1998, 63–64).

Moravcsik (1993; 1998) lists two further variables determining the bargaining power existing during the negotiation process are the alternative coalitions in place and the threat of exclusion respectively. In particular, member states with access to valid alternative coalitions situated either inside or outside the EU can exercise greater bargaining power and will compromise less regarding the terms of the proposed agreement. Member states with potential alternative coalitions available will do the same on both counts. By contrast, EU member states whose most probable alternative is the threat of exclusion will have less bargaining power and will be more likely to compromise, since the policy externalities determined by a coalition are greater compared to those determined by an individual member state in this case (see Table 3 below). Thus member state behavior at the EU-wide level is determined by the bargaining power existing vis-à-vis asymmetrical interdependence, being the result of the availability of alternative coalitions and the threat of exclusion respectively.

Table 3: **Bargaining Power in Relation to Alternative Coalitions**

Alternative coalitions	Bargaining power	Threat of exclusion by agreement	Outcomes (Compared to the status quo)
Present	Greater	Lesser	Less compromise on agreement
Absent	Lesser	Greater	Greater compromise on agreement

Source: Author’s own depiction, based on Moravcsik (1993, 502–3; Moravcsik 1998, 64–65).

Issue linkages represent another variable determining the bargaining power of member states at the EU-wide level according to LI’s theoretical paradigm. Linkages (defined alternatively as package deals) concern those issues where state preferences are asymmetrical, thus their intensity varies particularly in those areas where gains are maximized as compared to in other areas (Moravcsik 1993). Furthermore, in EU negotiations linkages should take place in those issue areas where the following three conditions are met (Moravcsik 1998, 65):

- “gain and losses are internalized by the same domestic actor;
- benefits are concentrated and costs concern unstructured domestic groups e.g. the taxpayer;
- the distribution of costs at the national level is uncertain, as the result of possible delay regarding the implementation of a determined policy field.”

EU member states with high government capacity tend to profit from issue linkages by facing low costs per capita, as the result of their asymmetrical preferences. Member states whose national preferences are harmonic do not see any kind of impact from issue linkages on the outcomes of the agreement (see Table 4 below). Accordingly state behavior at the EU-wide level is determined by the bargaining power existing vis-à-vis asymmetrical interdependence, being the result of issue linkages and side-payments. The latter refer to “policymakers’ granting compensation—through direct monetary payments or material concessions on other issues—in an attempt to encourage concessions on a given issue” (Friman 1993, 388).

Table 4: **Bargaining Power in Relation to Issue Linkages**

Uncertainty	Bargaining power	Outcomes
Existing	Weaker	Greater concessions
Lacking	Stronger	Issue linkages

Source: Author’s own depiction, based on Moravcsik (1993, 505–6; Moravcsik 1998, 65).

With regard to the research interest of this study, the underlying intergovernmental bargaining theory implies that cooperation among EU member states on responsibility sharing for refugees is explainable as the result of state preferences. Furthermore, the outcomes of the negotiation

process with regard to the RS specifically are determined by the unilateral policy alternatives that states have at hand compared to the status quo, the alternative coalitions available instead, as well as by the issue linkages.

4.1.3 Institutional Choice

Institutional choice represents the third stage of the LI framework aimed at explaining the behavior of member states at the EU-wide level. The core concept here that is the common denominator between state behavior and the European institutions is national sovereignty. The limits of the latter are represented by the pooling or delegating of authority (Moravcsik 1998, 67). This leads to two consequences: On the one hand, EU member states can take Decisions through other procedures—for example QMV. On the other, the EU institutions have the possibility to take autonomous Decisions that do not require the acquiescence of the national governments.

In this context, the question that arises is: What explains the delegating or pooling of authority from the national to the EU-wide level? In this regard, two motivations drive states to pool or delegate authority. First, the increasing efficiency that EU member states obtain through the bargaining process, especially in relation to the reduction of transaction costs as well as with concern to potentially offsetting future uncertainty. Second, the increasing autonomy of the most relevant domestic actors from the EU institutions, leading to the increasing autonomy of member states at the national level.

On these matters, according to LI the following three conditions need to be highlighted (Moravcsik 1998, 68):

- *the federalist ideology* that is correlated to the concept of “sovereignty.” This implies the following consequence: the stronger the federalist belief in a country, the more authority is pooled or delegated. Therefore, such behavior varies across countries rather than issues. Furthermore, domestic actors have a key role in the formation of state preferences. This means that the degree of delegating or pooling of authority depends on the positions that domestic interest groups assume. Thus the stronger European ideology is among domestic actors, the more likely the delegation or pooling of authority;
- *the centralized technocratic coordination and planning* relating to the necessity that modern economies have to be efficient, possible through the centralization of

expertise and information to a single authority. This implies the variation in institutional choice across issue rather than country;

- *the credible commitments* that enable states to promote further integration and prevent the control of individual governments at the EU-wide level, as well as of opposing domestic actors at the national one. The ability of states to delegate or pool authority depends on whether costs are uncertain, and the possibility of opposing interest groups creating conflicts genuine. In this way, governments precommit to a set of norms, rules, and decision-making procedures through agreements that do not have a clear and detailed form or plan.

In addition, it is relevant to underline also the negative consequences of pooling or delegating authority (Moravcsik 1998, 73–75):

- first, pooling or delegating authority might also increase the noncooperation and lead to the mobilization of domestic actors who are not involved in a determined decision. The former occurs as the result of the questionable legitimacy of the supranational institution as well as of the costly and risky decisions that a government has to take on whether to pool or delegate authority with the aim to exercise unilateral control. Notwithstanding this, international institutions, based on their ideology, are able to mobilize a large number of groups in favor of single actions and reduce the political costs for unpopular policies. Thus, they might increase the reputation of governments affected by the noncompliance of some of their members in determined fields;
- second, pooling or delegating authority might lead to the government being outvoted. Therefore, a government is more likely to pool or delegate authority with the aim to coordinate the behavior of other states via unilateral actions. This means that the choice will vary across issue and country, and will occur in those areas with strong joint gains, low distributional conflicts, and high uncertainty. With regard to domestic actors and their positions on pooling and delegating, their interests will inform the level of credibility seen. Thus, the domestic actors whose interests benefit most from future compliance with the common rules will support the choice to pool or delegate authority. In sum, pooling and delegating authority will vary in both nature and extent. This means that the implementation of those rules that ensure autonomy and neutrality beyond opposition at the national level is required.

4.2 Liberal Intergovernmentalism's Observable Implications in Asylum Policy

LI has dominated the academic debate relating to the EU integration process for a decade now, especially in the aftermath of the creation of the European Political Union with the entry into force of the MT. As noted throughout the chapter, LI rationally explains the behavior of EU member states regarding the integration seen in a determined policy field by emphasizing the primacy of economic interests. A comprehensive analytical process is engaged in to dissect this, starting with the formation of state preferences at the national level, proceeding with the asymmetrical interdependence at the EU-wide level, and concluding with the formation of common institutions (Moravcsik 1993; 1998; 2018).

This thesis aims at explaining the behavior of EU member states regarding the (non)acceptance of refugees at the national level and the responsibility sharing for them at the European one during the crucial year 2015. Thus, it argues on the basis of LI that the behavior of EU member states is determined at two levels: First, domestic actors exercise pressure relating to the acceptance or not of refugees at the national one on the basis of their own interests in this regard. Second, the constellation of the created national preferences leads to member states' asymmetrical interdependence, inducing them to further negotiate vis-à-vis cooperation on the EU refugee regime.

As a consequence, the argument presented contrasts, first, NF's view—according to which the different behaviors of EU member states toward the refugee issue is explained as the result of the weak interest of transnational actors in cooperating in this policy field, as well as being due to a lack of supranational capacity (Schimmelfennig 2018a). Second, the perspective introduced counters PF's explanation too—according to which the behavior of EU member states toward refugees is explained in reference to the politicization of identity by populist parties at home (Börzel 2016; Börzel and Risse 2018; Schimmelfennig 2018a). Third, it contests the argument of those studies that do not take into consideration the centrality of economic interests of domestic actors (Schimmelfennig 2018b)—with them preferring instead to cite populist parties corresponding effects on electorate's preferences and migration pressure (Biermann et al. 2019; Zaun 2018).

Presenting this thesis's unique argument started with scrutiny of the formation of state preferences then concluded with examination of the negotiation process regarding the RS, based on the introduction of the concept of responsibility sharing for refugees as the result of the stalled negotiation process over D IV R. This means that institutional choice is not included in the theoretical argument because the negotiations related to the determination of a mechanism related to the responsibility sharing was ongoing during the research process. As a consequence,

it is not possible to draw conclusions about what might lead to the institutional choice seen; this represents an interesting task for future research instead. Furthermore, the Commission has proposed the creation of the EUAA with the aim to increase the competencies of the EASO regarding refugee arrivals (EU Commission 2016).

Why choose LI to address theoretically the research interests of this study? First, LI provides an analytical framework with a rational basis for explaining member state behaviors regarding the responsibility sharing for refugees. With regard to the first level of inquiry, namely the formation of state preferences, LI assumes that they are issue-specific (Moravcsik 2018). This means that they reflect the specific interests of domestic actors with regard to integration in a determined policy field. Examining these necessitates identifying their sources in relation to the economic interests vis-à-vis refugees that key actors in society (namely interest groups) have. The achievement of these interests designates the patterns of state preferences, thus the behavior of a given EU member state regarding the degree of acceptance of refugees. Therefore, LI provides a rational and comprehensive explanation that differ from the normative one of the other two EU integration theories.

Second, LI explains the outcomes of cooperation at the heart of the EU decision-making institutions on the basis of the intensity of state preferences, as leading to asymmetrical interdependence (Moravcsik 1993). Therefore, not only state preferences but also the bargaining power of states is issue-specific (Schimmelfennig and Rittberger 2006, 81). Scrutinizing this means to identify the distributional gains that determine the behaviors of EU member states vis-à-vis the (dis)agreement with the RS.

Third, LI posits that EU member states prefer to transfer sovereignty to the EU-wide level on the basis of that choice being driven by the credible commitments and preoccupations they have relating to the complaints likely faced in future regarding the obtained gains (Pollack 2005). This level is, as noted, not included within the analytical framework that follows in chapters 6, 7, and 8 respectively.

In sum, this chapter has delineated the chosen LI theoretical framework that allows investigation of the demand for integration that states have—their preferences—in the field of asylum policy, as well as of the supply—relating to the outcomes of cooperation originating at the EU-wide level as the result of asymmetrical interdependence. This has two implications for the research proposal of this study. First, the degree of acceptance of refugees at the national level is determined by the centrality of the primary economic interests and the further ideational ones that domestic actors have with regard to refugees. Second, the intensity of those interests is what affects EU member states' bargaining power during the negotiation process relating to the responsibility sharing for refugees by determining the pros or cons faced in choosing

cooperation. I now turn in the next chapter to the hypotheses deriving from LI's theoretical paradigm, and their applicability to the research interests of this study.

5 Research Design and Methodology

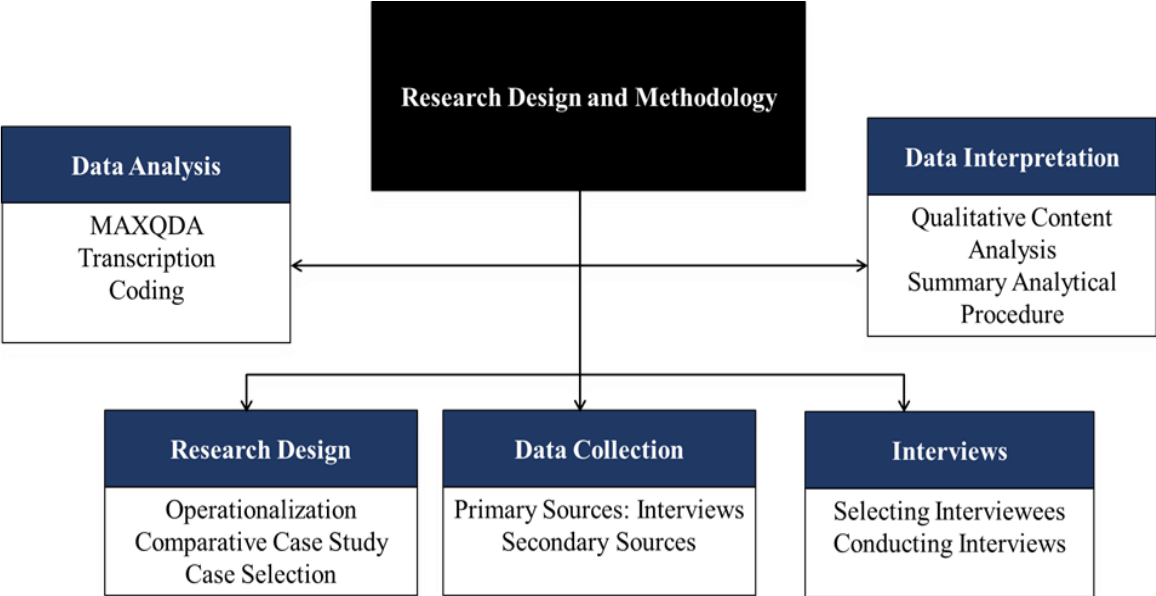
This study advances the argument that EU member state behaviors regarding the (non)acceptance of refugees at the national level and with concern to the responsibility sharing for them at the European one are explained as the result of the primary economic interests of domestic actors and the latter's corresponding intensity respectively. Outlining the disaggregation of this argument, its further operationalization, as well as the research design represents the aim of this chapter, organized into five sections (see Figure 7 below). First, light is shed on the qualitative nature of this study in identifying the causal effects of state preferences on the variation in cooperation among member states witnessed at the EU-wide level regarding the 2015 refugee issue and beyond. In particular, it presents the two IVs deductively derived from LI: primary economic interests and secondary ideational ones respectively. They explain systematically the formation of state preferences regarding the degree of acceptance of refugees.

Additionally, taking a comparative approach and the reasons for case selection are addressed. The former concerns both levels of analysis: across cases as well as within them. The latter explains the choice for a most-likely research design according to the migration pressure faced. Therefore the selection of cases has been made in reference to EU member states with high migration pressure in 2015, leading to the variation in the two DVs that emerge: On the one hand, the degree of acceptance of refugees at the national level (DV₁). On the other, cooperation on the RS based on the principle of responsibility sharing for refugees at the EU-wide level (DV₂). As a consequence, the following case studies are selected for examination: Italy, Hungary, and Germany. These three cases suit the desire to maximize the variation examined regarding both DVs.

Second, the focus is on the data-collection process. The empirical centerpiece is the interviews conducted during field trips in the year 2019 in all three of Italy, Hungary, and Germany. The choice of interview partners—experts from domestic groups in the field of asylum and migration—will be explained as well. Additionally, the secondary sources will be introduced that have enriched the empirical material collected via personal interviews. Third, the chapter hones in on those interviews with regard to their nature (semi-structured) and that of the interviewees (experts). Finally, the dynamic relating to the guide for the interviews and the recording of each is discussed. Fourth, the technical side of the data-analysis process will be explained. In particular, the use of the software MAXQDA for the analysis is clarified. This procedure is elucidated in detail, contributing to the clarification of the steps necessary for performing qualitative analysis.

Fifth, the analytical procedure used is delineated: that is, qualitative content analysis. It consists of the coding procedure as well as the extraction of the most relevant parts from the empirical material that contribute further to the validity and the objective interpretation of the data. In this study, qualitative content analysis has allowed for the empirical and systematic construction of the patterns of state preferences at the national level and their corresponding causal effects on the behavior of EU member states at the European one.

Figure 7. Chapter 5—Research Design and Methodology



Source: Author’s own depiction.

5.1 Qualitative Research Design

This study aims at drawing causal inference from the data (King, Keohane, and Verba 1994, 76) regarding the impact of the degree of acceptance of refugees at the national level on the variation seen in EU member states’ behavior vis-à-vis responsibility sharing for refugees at the European one. This implies an analysis pursued at two levels:

- first, the state preferences formed as the result of the primary economic interests regarding refugees, leading to the degree of their acceptance at the domestic level. In this regard, the secondary ideational interests emphasized by the empirical material contribute further to the delineation of those preferences;

- second, the causal effects from those preferences' intensity on the degree of cooperation witnessed at the EU-wide level regarding the RS in particular, and the principle of responsibility sharing for refugees more generally.

In this context, it is relevant to ask: Why is this analysis performed qualitatively? As mentioned above, this study draws a causal inference between state preferences and EU member states' behavior regarding responsibility sharing for refugees. The empirical significance of inference is “[the] difference between the systematic components of observations made when the explanatory variable takes one value and the systematic component of comparable observations when the explanatory variable takes on another value” (King, Keohane, and Verba 1994, 81–82). For this study, this means that such causal inference is represented by the variation seen in member state behaviors vis-à-vis cooperation on the RS, as relating to primary economic interests at home and being further supported by secondary ideational ones too. The logic of inference has the following three core aspects to it (King, Keohane, and Verba 2010, 113):

- *the evaluation of the theory* by deducing observable implications that can be checked against empirical reality;
- *the maximization of leverage* through the gathering of such information that allows explaining many observed implications, as well as the reduction of bias;
- *the identification of uncertainty* with regard to research findings, even if it cannot be eliminated entirely.

As a consequence, the demands made here with regard to the research interests of this thesis are as follows:

- the deduction of variables and hypotheses from LI. This means that primary economic interests and secondary ideational ones with regard to refugees at the national level, in line with LI's theoretical argument, represent the causes of the variation in behavior witnessed among EU member states vis-à-vis the acceptance of refugees at the national level (DV₁). Furthermore, their causal effects explain the diverse behaviors of EU member states toward the responsibility sharing for refugees at the EU-wide level (DV₂). Therefore, the demand for labor, the corresponding outside options available, and the migration pressure faced are the three IVs that have been identified and drawn on for the development of the hypotheses aimed at explaining both DV₁ and DV₂ respectively;

- careful case selection and choice of interviewees, as backed up by secondary sources. The case-selection process refers to a most-likely research design related to EU member states with high migration pressure during the crucial year 2015 whose behaviors vary with regard to both DV₁ and DV₂. In order to provide reliable results, interviewees who are experts in the field of asylum and migration were carefully selected in line with the information provided by secondary sources;
- reflection on potential biases in the selection process that lead to the variation seen in both DV₁ and DV₂. In this regard, this study maximizes the variation examined in both DVs.

The study aims at asserting the internal validity of the data regarding different explanatory factors relating to the RQs, allowing in-depth analysis of the corresponding outcomes regarding EU member state behaviors toward the responsibility sharing for refugees. This leads to the variation in the DVs being context-dependent. A qualitative research design is hence appropriate for this study; a quantitative one does not put forward cases that provide variation in the DV, thus being unsuitable for addressing the RQs tackled here (Mahoney and Goertz 2006, 239).

5.1.1 Hypotheses and Operationalization

A series of hypotheses are now developed in line with LI's theoretical argument, ones that refer to the outcomes of the integration process in specific EU policy fields: namely economic ones, and particularly common trade, agricultural, as well as monetary policies. In this regard it is relevant to underline again that domestic actors are, per the present thesis and in line with LI, the economic interests groups that control the integration process in a specific policy field (Schimmelfennig and Rittberger 2006). This viewpoint is contrary to NF's own perspective, which emphasizes instead the relevance of the EU institutions—and especially of the Commission (Moravcsik 1993, 475).

By contrast, empirical evidence from a systematic rational analysis of the formation of state preferences as well as of the degree of cooperation in the EU asylum policy field has not been put forward yet. Therefore, I develop precise hypotheses supporting comprehensive analysis and helping strengthen the validity of the argument that this study advances. They are developed by identifying the IVs that led to the variation in EU member state behaviors regarding the degree of acceptance of refugees and cooperation on the RS respectively.

Regarding the decisive primary economic interests and the secondary ideational ones, two hypotheses follow:

H₁: The stronger the demand for labor in a country and the weaker the outside options, the more likely the state will accept refugees.

H₂: The stronger the European ideology in a country, the more likely the state will accept refugees.²⁸

Regarding the degree of an EU member state's cooperation on the RS, the following three hypotheses are developed:

H_{3A}: The more attractive the unilateral policy alternatives a country has are, the less likely the state will bargain on the new agreement.

H_{3B}: The more easily a country can form alternative coalitions, the less likely it is that the state will compromise on its own position.

H_{3C}: The more asymmetrical the national preferences of an EU member state are, the more likely there are issue linkages.

5.1.1.1 Dependent Variables

The study has, as noted, two DVs:

- the variation in the acceptance of refugees at the domestic level (DV₁);
- the variation in cooperation on the RS, based on the responsibility sharing for refugees at the EU-wide level (DV₂).

DV₁ is measured by the degree of refugees' acceptance at the national level, based on the empirical evidence offered mainly by the interviews, and varies from formal acceptance, to nonacceptance, to the voluntary acceptance of refugees. DV₂ is measured by the degree of commitment expressed to the RS, that via the respective EU member states' favorable or opposing vote on it at the heart of the Council; their positions vary from noncooperative to cooperative (see Table 5 below). It is important to highlight that one EU member state (Finland)

²⁸No empirical evidence was found either in the interviews or in the literature for these geopolitical interests having political-military sources. Furthermore, only European ideology was stressed as an additional explanatory factor.

abstained during the voting process on the RS, but it was supportive right after the conclusion of the decision-making procedure as well as compliant with the relocation of refugees from Italy and Greece per the quotas (Wahlbeck 2019, 309). Therefore, Finland’s behavior does not represent a third pattern of cooperation.²⁹

Table 5: Variation in DV₁ and DV₂

Measurement	Dependent Variables		
	Variation		
Degree of acceptance of refugees at the national level (DV ₁)	Formal acceptance	Nonacceptance	Voluntary acceptance
Degree of cooperation at the EU-wide level (DV ₂)	Noncooperative		Cooperative

Source: Author’s own depiction.

5.1.1.2 Independent Variables

Following on from the hypotheses, the IVs are: the demand for labor, the available outside options, the degree of European ideology, and the migration pressure faced. How are these different explanatory factors measured?

The demand for labor is determined by the unemployment rate. It indicates the number unemployed persons between 15 to 74 years old compared to the active population—that is, the labor force.³⁰ For this, the LFS was consulted that provides the data at the common level and enables comparison between EU member states—particularly across the case studies in the crucial year of 2015. Additional data are provided also by the individual EU member states in reference to the youth unemployment rate and the job vacancy rate for example. These statistics are insufficiently reported to Eurostat, or different measurement criteria are included at the national level for the age groups and/or the sectors to which they refer.

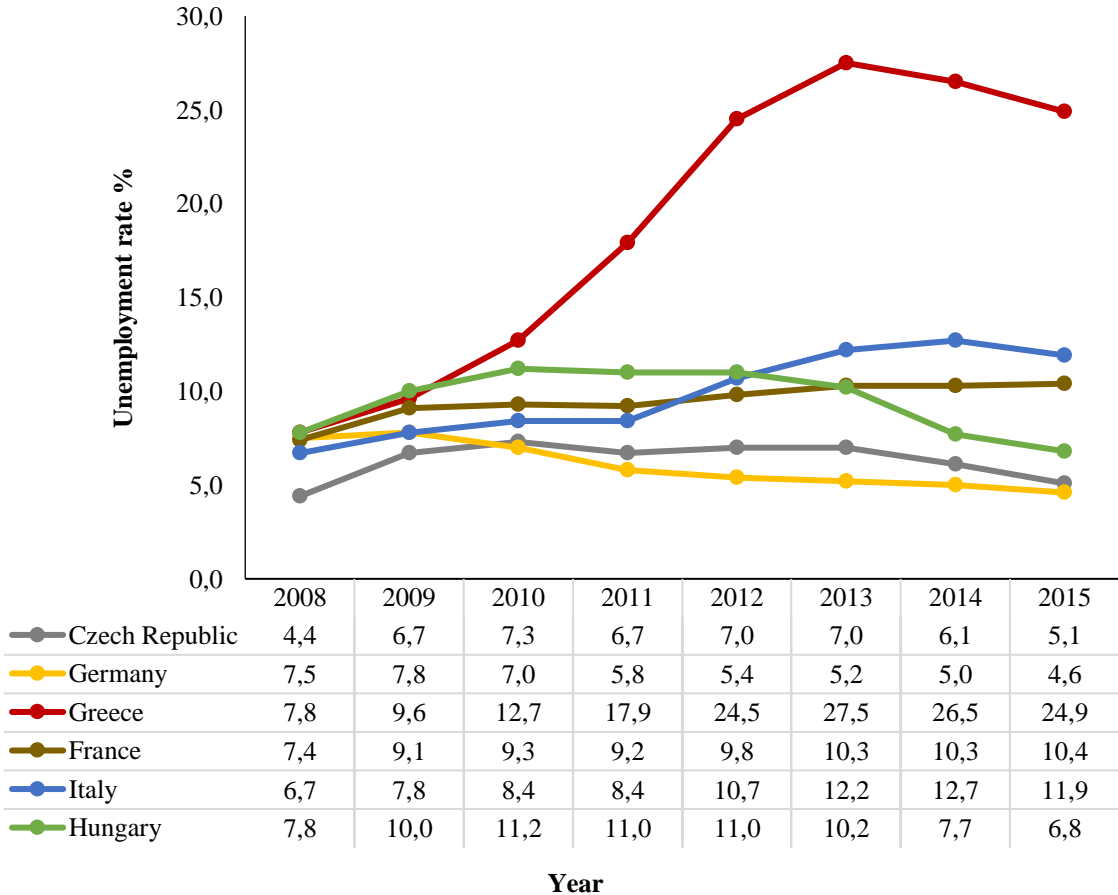
When assessing the economic preferences of the countries under study, the years since the global financial crisis of 2008 are taken into account. Together with the Eurozone crisis in 2012, that earlier crisis constituted a turning point in the economy of many countries. Developments

²⁹Two other member states (Denmark, the UK) did not participate in the voting procedure, and therefore were not included in the RS, because they contributed through additional programs such as resettlement and financial aid for Syria and other third countries Šelo Šabić (2017, 5).

³⁰The definition of the unemployment rate provided by Eurostat refers to the criteria established by the ILO. See: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Glossary:Unemployment> (accessed March 13, 2020).

since then are illustrative, therefore, for the three case studies of Italy, Hungary, and Germany respectively. In addition, other EU member states characterized by low, medium, and high unemployment rates in the critical year of 2015 are also illustrated in Figure 8. They are the Czech Republic, France, and Greece respectively.

Figure 8. Unemployment Rate in the EU in 2008–2015



Source: Author’s own depiction, based on Eurostat data regarding unemployment rate in the EU in 2008–2015.

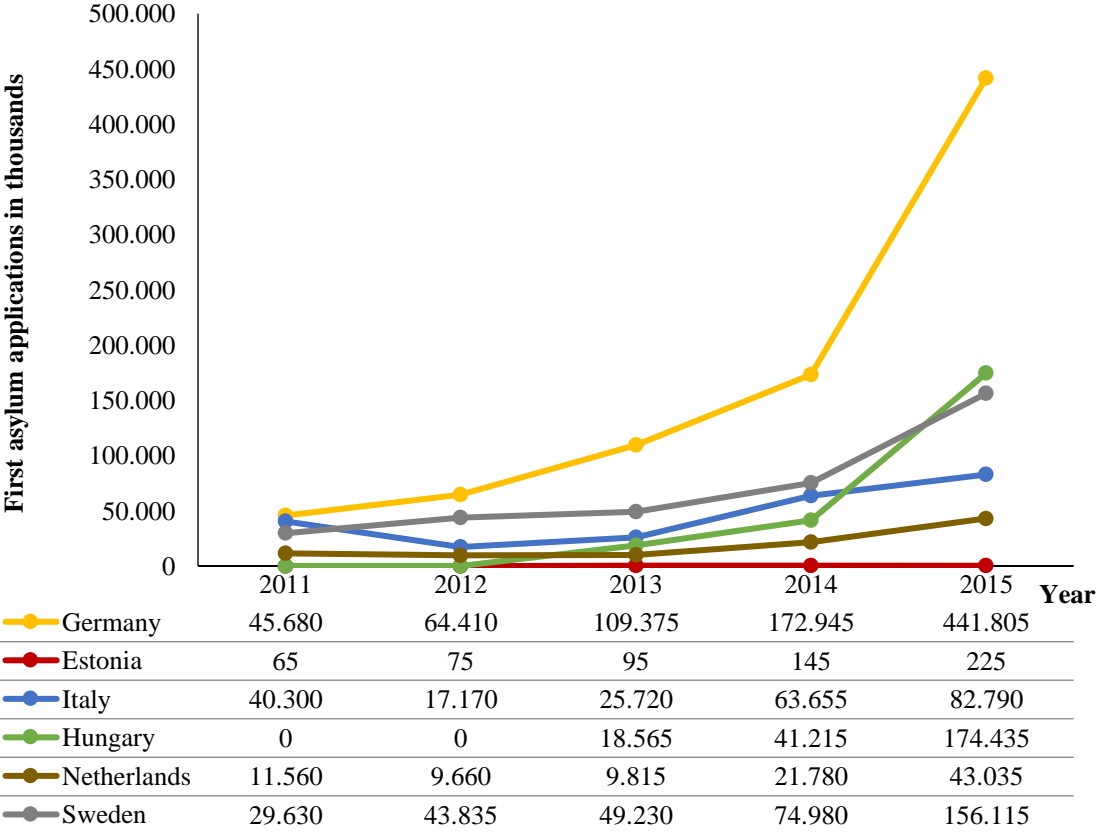
The outside options are measured through determined labor-quota programs that member states stipulate internally or with third countries. This is done with the aim to satisfy the demand for labor compared to refugee numbers within the required period of time. In this regard, the data are provided mainly at the national level and through the analysis of interviews and official documents vis-à-vis the individual case studies.

The European ideology has as core indicators the degree of compliance with national, European, as well as international agreements aimed at protecting refugee status, the right to asylum, the responsibility to examine an asylum application, as well as the perception of public opinion on refugees. The variation in compliance, as suggested by the empirical evidence from

the interviews, is measured in relation to the respect for the definition of “refugee” according to the 1951 Geneva Convention, the national constitution and the right to asylum, as well as D III R. Public opinion is measured regarding the desire to help refugees. Eurobarometer provides this data.

The migration pressure is operationalized through two streams of data. The first is the estimate of the absolute numbers of first asylum applications lodged in EU member states between 2011 and 2015, as captured by Eurostat (see Figure 9 below).³¹

Figure 9. First Asylum Applications in the EU in 2011–2015



Source: Author’s own depiction, based on Eurostat data regarding the first asylum applications in the EU in 2011–2015.

Likewise, the Arab Spring in 2011 upended the EU’s experience with migration movements. Therefore the time frame examined includes the years between 2011 and 2015, given that the migration pressure relating to the arrival by sea of PCNIP corresponds to the start of both the Arab Spring and the civil war in Syria in 2011.

³¹Other EU member states (besides the selected case studies) with low, moderate, and high migration pressure respectively are included in Figure 9 in order to illustrate the different values of the variables. They are Estonia, the Netherlands, and Sweden.

The second data stream is that related to arrivals by sea, as concerning some of the case studies and provided by the individual EU member states—particularly those geographically placed along the EU’s external borders.

5.1.2 Case-Study Methodology

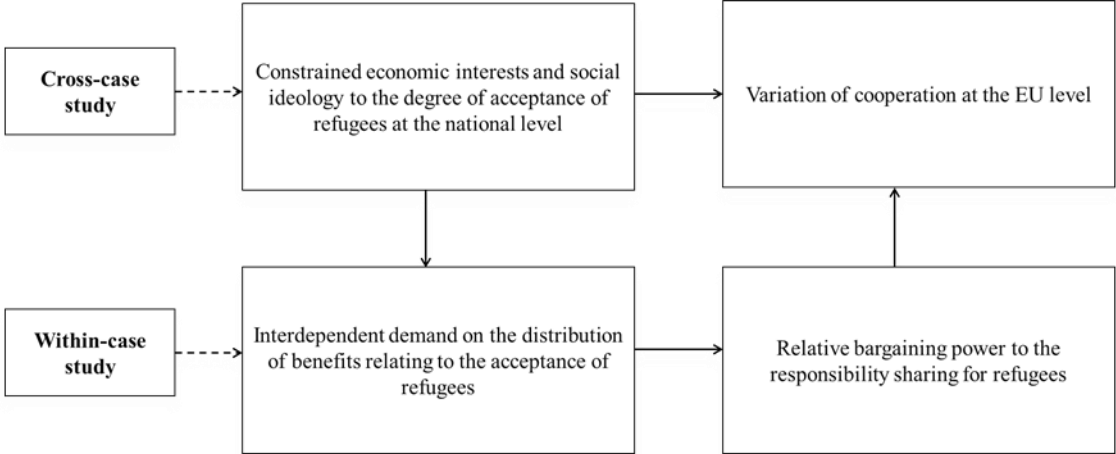
The second aspect necessary to be addressed during the research-design process is the methodology used to explain the observations leading to the identification of causal inference (King, Keohane, and Verba 1994, 117). Thus the question that arises is: Why has a comparative approach been chosen? This thesis is based on the “intensive study of a determined unit with the purpose of understanding a larger class of (similar) units” (Gerring 2004, 342). Furthermore observations can be chosen in order to ensure maximum variation regarding the DVs (King, Keohane, and Verba 1994, 141). This necessitates a systematic, in-depth case-study design that aims at reducing selection bias, meaning maximizing the distribution of outcomes regarding the diverging behaviors of EU member states.

With regard to typology, this thesis is a theory-guided case study characterized by a clear conceptualization—with a special focus on determined theoretical assumptions (Levy 2008, 4). Therefore, following LI, it traces, first, the patterns of state preferences based on the primary economic interests and the secondary ideational ones that domestic actors have regarding refugees. Second, it explains the outcomes regarding the variation in EU member state cooperation on the RS according to the bargaining power that they have—as determined by the intensity of state preferences. Furthermore, precise hypotheses are developed regarding the formation process of those preferences and the bargaining power on EU asylum policy respectively. These hypotheses are thus inductively added to LI’s theoretical postulations in a new specific issue area.

Looking at the level of analysis, this is a cross-case study because it compares three EU member states in order to explain the overall causal effects of state preferences at the national level on member state behavior regarding responsibility sharing for refugees at the EU one (see Figure 10 below). Additionally it is also a within-case study that aims to explain that it is constrained domestic interests—economic-based, yet further ideologically strengthened—which lead to the diverse behaviors of EU member states on the acceptance of refugees. Thus

it posits why the patterns of state preferences relating to the selected three EU member states are formed in the ways that they are.

Figure 10. Levels of Empirical Analysis



Source: Author’s own depiction.

In sum, the comparative-case-study approach is the most suitable Social Sciences method for this study for the following reasons. First, it allows for the identification of the relevant economic as well as ideological interests that inform patterns of state preferences vis-à-vis the degree of acceptance of refugees. In addition, it allows us to obtain the internal validity that aim at measuring the indicators related to the core concepts of our theoretical model (Bennett 2004, 34). Second, it contributes to the further development of LI theory as the result of the identification of the relevant IVs and their context in explaining the outcomes regarding member state behaviors in the EU asylum policy field. This leads to the better evaluation of LI’s theoretical postulations, as well as to the specification of plausible causal effects.

However this approach is also characterized by its disadvantages: on the one hand, the potential bias from selecting observations on the basis of those combinations between independent and the dependent variables that lead to the confirmation of the preferred hypotheses for the researcher (King, Keohane, and Verba 1994, 128). On the other, the lack of representativeness of the research findings regarding different populations that might not be included in the observations (George and Bennett 2005, 30). Selection bias has been minimized in this thesis by the two chosen DVs varying significantly. Nevertheless critiques regarding the small number of cases studies—which makes generalization beyond the cases themselves difficult—are still valid. All the same, the study puts forward an LI-based explanation of asylum policy whose results could tested for other cases in future. There is reason to believe that the

identified causal inferences will also hold for the remaining EU countries, as the three case studies featuring here were chosen to maximize variance.

5.1.3 Case Selection

The case selection, characterized by small-N cases, is extremely relevant in relation to the population whose results can be generalized regarding the variation in the variables as well as their purposive selection procedure (Seawright and Gerring 2008, 294–96). In this context, the following question is addressed: Why are the EU member states Italy, Hungary, and Germany selected here?

In this regard, this study has applied a most-similar technique according to which the selection of cases is based on the identification of seemingly similar cases for who there are shared explanatory factors despite the different outcomes seen in the DV (Gerring 2010, 668). This means for the present study that the selection focused on EU member states with the same characteristics: that is, high migration pressure in 2015—as measured on the basis of the absolute numbers of first asylum applications lodged in the respective EU member states in that year (see Table 6 below).³²

Table 6: Distribution of Case Studies across the Level of Migration Pressure in 2015

	Migration pressure in 2015		
	High	Moderate	Low
EU member state	Italy, Germany, Sweden, Hungary, France, UK, Austria	Netherlands, Finland, Belgium, Denmark, Spain, Bulgaria, Greece ³³	Czech Republic, Romania, Slovenia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Croatia, Cyprus, Malta, Luxembourg, Portugal, Slovakia, Poland

Source: Author’s own depiction.

The high migration pressure faced leads to the further classification of Italy, Hungary, and Germany into three categories of countries: namely FEC, TC, and DC ones. As a consequence,

³²High migration pressure is measured via the absolute numbers of first asylum applications lodged in the respective EU member states compared to the overall asylum applications that include also the repeated ones in order to capture the diverging values of the DVs.

³³Greece is categorized as a country with moderate migration pressure given that it registered low numbers of first asylum applications in the year 2015 (only 11,370) as compared to the number of arrivals by sea of PCNIP (856,723). For more information, see respectively <https://s.gwdg.de/WSzB9y> and <https://s.gwdg.de/Qc5oxB> (accessed July 2018). The same logic is applied to Spain, an EU member state geographically positioned on the EU’s external borders. However it registered neither high numbers of first asylum applications nor high numbers of arrivals by sea of PCNIP in 2015.

these three countries’ degree of acceptance of refugees at the national level and of cooperation on the responsibility sharing for refugees at the European one vary (see Table 7 below).

Table 7: Case Selection for EU Member States with High Migration Pressure

EU member states (high migration pressure)	Selection criteria		Variation in degree of cooperation at the EU-wide level
	Variation in country status	Variation in degree of acceptance of refugees	
Austria	DC	High	Moderate
Germany	DC	Extremely high	Strong
Hungary	TC	Extremely low	Weak
Italy	FEC	Moderate	Strong
Sweden	DC	High	Moderate
UK	DC	High	Moderate

Source: Author’s own depiction.

To fulfill this study’s goal, the maximization of the values relating to the patterns of acceptance of refugees as well as of cooperation on the RS is required. Therefore, EU member states whose behaviors have most varied regarding the acceptance of refugees at the domestic level and with concern to cooperation at the EU-wide one represent the most interesting cases. They are Italy, Hungary, and Germany. In addition, this study analyzes the bargaining power of member states within the EU refugee regime. The case selection made regarding also high migration pressure supports the choice of these three countries, who mostly bargained during the RS negotiation process in 2015.

By contrast, Austria, Sweden, and UK—despite the high migration pressure they faced in relation to the absolute numbers of lodged first asylum applications in 2015—engaged in fairly similar behaviors regardless. As a consequence, examining those countries would not allow us to understand deeply the diverse member state behaviors toward the responsibility sharing for refugees at the EU-wide level.

5.2 Data Collection

Data were collected from two core sources: namely expert interviews and yearly reports published at both the national and EU-wide levels, especially regarding the measurement of statistical indicators, communication by the EU institutions, as well as press releases. Such use of diverse sources by different authors is recognized as triangulation, and serves as a validity

tool (Flick 2004). The primary and most relevant sources used are in depth-interviews (39 in total), as conducted in the three country cases (Italy, Hungary, and Germany). The domestic institutions with whom the interviews took place are ministries, trade unions, and employers’ organizations in different sectors of the national economies, as well as NGOs with a special focus on refugee protection and integration. The 39 interviews were conducted with experts in the field of asylum and migration who occupy high-up positions in these respective national institutions; they were conducted during field trips that took place in the first few months of 2019 (see Table 8 below).³⁴

Table 8: **Data Gathering Process**

Period of time	Location
02.25.2019 – 03.06.2019	Budapest (Hungary)
03.07.2019 – 03.18.2019	Rome (Italy)
03.26.2019 – 04.02.2019	Berlin, Hannover (Germany)

Source: Author’s own depiction.

The field research started in Hungary, specifically in Budapest—where all interviews regarding this country were conducted. This allowed the researcher to have access to relevant data. In particular, in Hungary it was both necessary and extremely illuminating to have the possibility to interview also academic staff of different universities. Their respective scientific contributions led to a comprehensive analysis of Hungary’s preferences on refugees during the crucial year 2015.

In Italy, data collection was particularly interesting because it allowed the conducting of interviews able to explain the Italian state’s behavior vis-à-vis responsibility sharing for refugees in the crucial year 2015. Light was also shed on the following years too, given the change of government. Furthermore, the interviewed experts provided several reports and studies that were undertaken by themselves. This allowed the author to have access to some data that otherwise have not been published.

In Germany, the interviews were particularly relevant because they provided access to detailed knowledge relating to the German state’s voluntary acceptance of refugees toward the end of summer 2015. Furthermore, the interviewed experts provided information also on

³⁴The complete list of interview partners and the guideline expert interview are given in the Appendix.

comparisons to other countries. Thus they highlighted relevant perspectives regarding comparisons between the three selected EU member states here.

5.2.1 Primary Sources

As mentioned above, the primary sources called on are the following:

- the 39 interviews conducted in the three countries that are compared in the qualitative research design of this study;
- the written and video interviews of some of the policymakers, especially regarding the negotiation process at the EU-wide level over approval for the RS in September 2015.

In order to provide a comprehensive analysis and collect as much relevant information as possible, the interviewed domestic actors were categorized into three groups: EIGs, ministries, and NGIGs. In addition, interviews were conducted with researchers as well as academic staff given the sensitivity of the refugee issue—especially in Italy and Hungary. This contributed to the further access to selected data and information. The multiplicity of interviewed actors contributed to the clarity of EU member state preferences regarding refugees at the national level but also to a more comprehensive understanding of their intersection at the EU-wide one too.

The second category of primary sources were used to delineate clearly the positions that the member states assume regarding cooperation at the EU-wide level on responsibility sharing for refugees. Yearly reports and legal texts relating to the governmental decrees issued by individual EU member states were scrutinized as well, to contrast the refugee issue's handling especially between 2015 and 2017. On the one side, this concerns particularly Hungary given its decision to build a fence in summer 2015 along its border with Serbia—having a key impact on its (noncooperative) behavior toward responsibility sharing for refugees. On the other, it concerns also Italy—which issued Law 142/2015 aimed at addressing efficiently the relocation of refugees at the national level.

5.2.2 Secondary Sources

The secondary sources represent a series of public documents, as well as annual reports provided by domestic actors and international organizations working in the field of asylum. Statistical data relating to the indicators for national labor markets and official documents concerning the refugee regimes in the EU member states of interest (Italy, Hungary, and Germany) were also drawn on, as provided by the governmental institutions that have a key

role in asylum policy at the national level. Other documents used include studies prepared and published by domestic private interest groups of particular relevance to the integration of refugees in the respective societies.

Political parties' manifestos represent additional sources contributing to understanding how the interests of domestic actors were translated into policies by the respective governments. However relevant ones were not available for all the analyzed EU member states because some political parties did not include relevant information regarding the refugee issue in their own political manifestos. This is explained as the result of the instantaneity of increasing refugee inflows in the EU in 2015.

Annual reports provided by international agencies specialized in the field of asylum or international organizations in the field of migration contributed particularly in the further consolidation of information-gathering—especially in Hungary, where most parts of the data or information related to the refugee issue, particularly in 2015, are published only in the Hungarian language. In this regard it is important to underline also studies and reports published by NGOs that analyze topics of extreme importance for the further explanation of state preferences on refugees. An example hereof is the phenomenon of the *caporalate* in Italy (more on this in due course).

The annual reports of the Commission, its proposals, as well as the Decisions of the Council were systematically consulted in order to outline clearly the relationship between the national and EU-wide levels concerning the refugee issue. Visual data forms were also regularly consulted, such as the individual websites of the national ministries as well as of the European institutions. In particular, Eurostat provided statistical data relating to both economic indicators and migration pressure—such as the LFS, further to that on first asylum applications lodged in the EU and in the individual member states respectively, the nationalities of asylum seekers, their age, gender, and similar.

Finally, it is important to stress the particular relevance of the scientific articles and studies provided by professors and scientific staff at some of the universities in the case-study countries. These texts further clarified and contributed to a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics underpinning asylum policy at the national level in the three countries studies, and the role of interest groups herein.

5.3 Interviews as Primary Sources

The interviews, conducted during the field trips between February and April 2019, constitute the primary sources used in this study. Therefore it is relevant to establish the typology of these

interviews, whose features allowed for the gathering of the required information related to the two RQs. Relevant also is the selection process for the interviewees, which will be discussed in the next section. The criteria that were used here thus determine the quality of the empirical data obtained.

In this study, semi-structured interviews were conducted; they represent the most used data-collection tool within qualitative research (Qu and Dumay 2011). The questions asked—which I had already prepared ahead of time—were chosen with the aim to gain systematic information through elaborated answers. Among them were ones on a series of different issues, contributing to the quality of the conversations and the process of gathering all information relevant for the research. Moreover, semi-structured interviews give the opportunity to construct—together with the interviewee—a series of key events and experiences of relevant impact on the issue(s) that are being addressed by the researcher’s questions (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree 2006, 316).

The agenda of the semi-structured interviews was organized beforehand. The questions were, as noted, also prepared in advance according to a protocol focused on the key issues associated with the economic and social explanatory factors leading to the witnessed behavior of the three EU member states at the national level. Other questions were asked with the aim to understand further the cooperation of the respective member states at the EU-wide level. Additional questions came up spontaneously during the interviews that were addressed to and by the experts. This led to informal post-interview conversations (beyond the official interview duration of 60 to 90 minutes), which contributed to the provision of further information regarding the refugee issue.

Important also were the raised questions that the experts answered in relation to the other two countries besides their own, with the aim to provide more detailed comparison between them. For example the cooperation between Italy and Germany—as the result of the secondary movement of refugees from a FEC (Italy) or TC (Hungary) to a DC (Germany)—was particularly discussed. This information was extremely important to help further understand the dynamics of the migration pressure faced, as well as to grasp more deeply the unique contexts at the national level. In sum, the semi-structured interviews—focused on specific questions aimed at providing the required information for this research—represented the right typology of primary sources to use. Such an external view also works as a double-checking of the official national narrative.

5.3.1 Selecting Interviewees

As the theoretical foundations of this thesis emphasize the key role of domestic interest groups, holding expert interviews with representatives of the latter was a straightforward decision to take. Expert interviews represent a typical qualitative tool that provides objective information during the data-collection process. The qualitative-research literature distinguishes between three types of expert interviews (Bogner and Menz 2009, 7):

- *the exploratory expert interview* with an orientation function;
- *the systemizing expert interview* that contributes to the goal that the knowledge of the experts has;
- *and the theory-generating interview* that includes both the goal of the specific knowledge of the expert as well as the derived interpretation and action.

In this context, the question that arises is: Who is an expert? Such an individual is a person “who possess special knowledge of a social phenomenon which the interviewer is interested in, and expert interviews as a specific method for collecting data about this social phenomenon” (Gläser and Laudel 2009, 117). This means that the interviewee plays a key role in the conduction process of the expert interview as such.

In the current study, in accordance with the two RQs, the relevant interest groups were, first, identified in the three countries studied. Experts from these respective groups provided the required information and explained their institutional positions relating to the effect on the behaviors of the respective EU member states regarding the acceptance or not of refugees. Second, I prepared a list of all experts with specific knowledge in the field of asylum and migration among the most relevant economic domestic interest groups in Italy, Hungary, and Germany. Third, I discussed precise questions with these experts, who besides their own specific knowledge in the field have been also involved in the decision-making process at the national level vis-à-vis asylum policy.

The information collected through the expert interviews in Hungary was particularly relevant regarding the delineation of the economic interests that independently led to the nonacceptance of refugees. Usually, there is selective access to this information, and their public diffusion is low. Furthermore, the experts provided me with English translations of Hungarian laws as well as with studies related to Hungarian asylum policy becoming increasingly restrictive during summer 2015. In Italy, the information obtained from experts was crucial for developing a deeper understanding of the relevance of the informality of the Italian economy to the refugee

issue; those spoken with provided me with access to important studies in this regard too. In Germany, I was able to gather information that allowed me during the analytical process to make a clear differentiation between the rational and the humanitarian explanations for the German state's chosen behavior with the voluntary acceptance of refugees toward the end of summer 2015.

The conduction of expert interviews presents also challenges. First, the key difficulty that was observed concerns confidentiality. The refugee issue represents a very sensitive and highly politicized topic in the EU. As a consequence, several experts are confronted with the prejudices of others or with continuous institutional pressure. This makes them skeptical about providing and sharing information with the interviewer. In particular, in Hungary several experts explicitly asked for total anonymity after having signed a data-protection form signaling their acceptance to be interviewed. In Italy, too, some experts initially demonstrated skepticism about the possibility of interview material being made public or whether it may be released even under determined conditions of total anonymity, high confidentiality, and made the request to be contacted in the case of direct quotes being cited in the research. In this study the identities of the interviewees are thus not revealed, only the type of domestic interest group. However, the interviewed experts in the three selected EU member states established a professional relationship with myself characterized by the core required criteria for ensuring the quality of the statements made: namely trustworthiness, openness, and cooperative professional behavior (Steinke 2004, 185).

Second, it is important to underline the role played by the self-confidence of the interviewer. In other words, I had to assure the experts of my role as a researcher and the aim of questions being to understand the decision-making process vis-à-vis refugee flows at the national level—rather than to pass judgement thereon. Third, it was sometimes challenging to identify appropriate contacts because of government turnover or the institutional positions of administrative staff in the field of asylum continuously shifting—such as was the case in Germany. Notwithstanding these respective challenges presented in the selection process regarding interviewees, it is important to stress the willingness of the latter to provide me with further contacts and to schedule interviews with relevant experts in the field of asylum at very short notice.

5.3.2 Conducting Interviews

The 39 semi-structured interviews addressed two core questions: First, what explains the degree of acceptance of refugees seen at the national level in the crucial year 2015? In this regard, of

special focus was the performance of the national labor market and the indicators regarding the extent to which refugees might represent a rational choice. Second, what explains the variation in cooperation among the national governments on responsibility sharing for refugees at the EU-wide level? The focus here was on the effects of the varying acceptance of refugees, and the identification of other explanatory factors.

In order to gather as much relevant information as possible, two key organizational steps were taken. First, the selection of interviewees—who were invited via email to participate—and the preparation of questions, which were sent to them after their agreement to talk had been received. Second, the field trips to Hungary, Italy, and Germany (in that order). The interviews were recorded in line with the consent of the interviewees, or typed by hand in those cases where they preferred not to be. Of all 39 of the interviews conducted between February and April 2019, 31 were recorded in the physical presence of the interviewee, two took place over the telephone, three were transcribed, and one was conducted via Skype.

5.4 Data Analysis

The process of data analysis in qualitative research refers to the “classification and interpretation of materials in order to describe and explore issues in a field as well as structures or processes in practice” (Flick 2014, 5). Thus, this represents a three-step process (Flick 2014, 5–6):

- it describes a determined phenomenon aimed at providing possible comparisons between cases by underlining the commonalities and differences characterizing them;
- it explains the conditions under which the commonalities and differences between states can be verified;
- based on the empirical material collected by the researcher, it may contribute to the development of a theory potentially relevant for the research proposal.

In the present study, the core data represent the interviews. Thus the most relevant pre-step regarding their analysis is transcription, necessary to provide the text version of the recorded material (Poland 1995). Transcription represents a very time-consuming process in qualitative research, thus it is recommended to use computer software. This contributes to the organization of data, their categorization, as well as the extrapolation of information of interest (Creswell 2014, 195). In this regard, one of the most used computer software programs is MAXQDA

(Wiedemann 2013)—thus being selected for this study too. That choice for MAXQDA rests on four of its key strengths (Kuckartz 2010):

- *flexibility*: a characteristic that gives the researcher the possibility to organize the data as well as to introduce changes in the coding system or in the text memos;
- *openness*: this facilitates not only the individual research but also particularly the cooperation in-group;
- *the transparency and accessibility of data*: this makes it possible to work with larger datasets through the very good structure of the software, which allows the researcher to provide at any stage information concerning the coding procedure as well as to be transparent regarding the different parts of the project under analysis;
- *technological simplicity*: as the consequence of high technical standards, MAXQDA is user-friendly and understandable for researchers.

5.5 Interpreting and Summarizing the Data

The use of MAXQDA was particularly relevant not only for the transcription of interviews but also for the coding process. The latter consists of using a word—usually termed a “code”—in order to represent a concept, a category, or a process (Forman and Damschroder 2007, 48). In particular, the empirical material derived from the interviews was coded in this study. That data was also associated with the core concepts of LI, with the aim to organize them and to shed light on the interconnections between the theory and the empirical material. Therefore, “attaching codes to data and generating concepts have important functions in enabling us rigorously to review what our data are saying” (Coffey and Atkinson 1996, 27).

Since this thesis pursues a case-study approach focused on the comparison of EU member state behaviors vis-à-vis responsibility sharing for refugees across three countries, a selective coding procedure was used. The data thus are analyzed via qualitative content analysis, which consists of three types of analytical procedure: summary, explication, and structuring (Mayring 2002, 115). The type applied in this study is the first of these, because it allows extracting the most relevant content parts of the text interviews in order to identify the deductively derived IVs in line with LI theory. This leads, then, to ensuring as much as possible the validation of and the objectivity in the interpretation of the results.

Content analysis was crucial for the systematic categorization of the economic and ideational IVs leading to the determination of state preferences vis-à-vis the acceptance of refugees in this study. Furthermore, such an approach contributed to explanation of EU member state behaviors

regarding responsibility sharing for refugees at the EU-wide level. The delineation of the research design of this study, as achieved in this chapter, allowed the operationalization of the theoretical argument that it advances. In particular, the formulation of the hypotheses, the measurement of both DVs and IVs, as well as the outlining of the data lay the foundations for the analytical part. This will be evident in the next three chapters 6, 7, and 8, each referring to one of the chosen case studies: namely Italy, Hungary, and Germany respectively.

6 Explaining the Italian State's Behavior toward Refugees: Formal Acceptance and Cooperation on Responsibility Sharing

This thesis argues that EU member state behaviors toward the cooperation onto the responsibility sharing for refugees at the EU-wide level reflect the impact of state preferences regarding refugees, as determined by the primary economic interests of the domestic actors and the secondary ideological ones. Therefore, the analysis of this chapter consists of two parts (see Figure 11 below). First, I look into the formation of Italian state preferences relating to the variation seen in the acceptance of refugees at the national level (RQ₁). Second, I analyze the degree of bargaining power behind the Italian state's agreement with the RS based on the principle of responsibility sharing for PCNIP at the EU-wide level (RQ₂).

Assuming rational behavior by the Italian government, its state preferences are the first step to explaining the formal acceptance of refugees seen particularly in the biennium 2014–2015.³⁵ Their core sources, in line with LI theory, are the primary economic interests—usually commercial—that domestic actors might have, further to secondary ideological ones too—denoting the European ideology focused on the concept of “social identity,” further relating to national identity (Moravcsik 1998). However further empirical evidence is provided for additional determinants of the national state preference for the formal acceptance of refugees in Italy too.

Primary economic state preferences vis-à-vis refugees in Italy are determined by the contrasting interests of two key sectors: namely industry and agriculture. In addition, an aging population and the current retirement system represent two further influences on the economic interests that determined the formal acceptance of refugees in the biennium 2014–2015 in the country. Ideology represents the secondary source of Italian state preferences explaining the formal acceptance of refugees in the biennium 2014–2015. In particular, it concerns the dispute between the pro-European domestic interest groups based on the European values of respecting human rights (Cuttitta 2018; Musarò 2017) and the Eurosceptic societal groups focused on the exploitation of the refugee issue to increase their own political capital (Castelli Gattinara 2017; Gianfreda 2018).

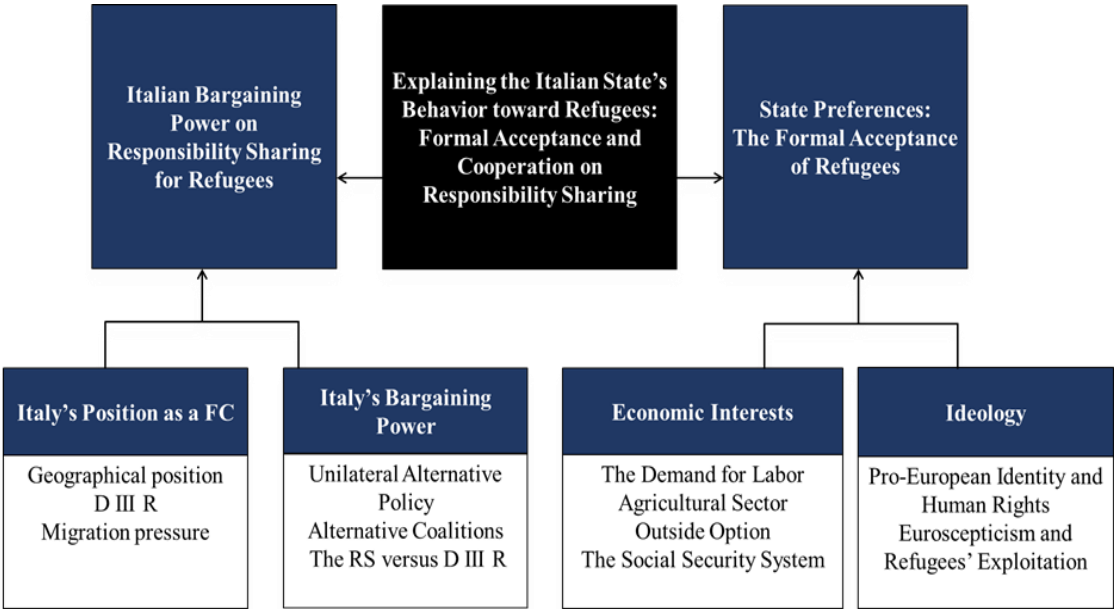
Bargaining power on the RS corresponds to the second stage of the rational behavior of the Italian government regarding responsibility sharing for refugees. The IV that will be at the center of the second part of the analysis is the migration pressure³⁶ that Italy continuously faces

³⁵The formation of state preferences refers here particularly to the biennium 2014–2015 given that Italy, being a FEC, faced inflows of PCNIP before the crucial year of 2015 as compared to Hungary and Germany.

³⁶The data that measure the migration pressure in Italy, being a FEC, are the following: first, the arrivals by sea of PCNIP. Second, the number of first asylum applications that have been lodged in Italy per se. This division is

as the result of the country’s geographical position and compliance with Article 13 (1) of D III R. Furthermore, the migration pressure faced and the impact it has on Italian bargaining power are analyzed in comparison to the unilateral policies and the alternative coalitions that the country has available in this regard. Therefore I am able to explain the position of the Italian government at the heart of the Council, with the country agreeing with the RS and promoting further cooperation in the field of asylum at the EU-wide level while also refusing the status quo presented by D III R.

Figure 11. Chapter 6—Explaining the Italian State’s Behavior toward Refugees: Formal Acceptance and Cooperation on Responsibility Sharing



Source: Author’s own depiction.

6.1 State Preferences: The Italian Government’s Argument for Formally Accepting Refugees

The primary economic interests of domestic actors and their secondary ideological ones represent the sources of Italian national preferences vis-à-vis refugees. They are what led to the formal acceptance of refugees by the Italian state particularly in the biennium 2014–2015. I trace the processes involved here through the empirical evidence obtained from the interviewing of relevant experts within domestic interest groups in the field of asylum and migration, from

related to the categorization of Italy as a FEC, thus being two typologies of the same IV: that is, the migration pressure faced.

the secondary scientific literature, as well as from the national economic and social indicators related to the refugee issue.

The core economic interests were mainly constituted by the diverging demand for labor depending on the sector, followed by the implications of an aging demographic and the need to revitalize the country's retirement system. These were the key determinants of the formal acceptance of refugees in Italy. In this regard, it is important to underline that the formal acceptance of refugees reflects the primary economic interests of domestic actors particularly in the industrial sector. The latter were against the acceptance of refugees in the biennium 2014–2015 given the country's high unemployment rate—especially youth unemployment rate—at the time, as a consequence of the 2008 global and European financial crises.

By contrast, the accepted refugees were an additional and welcome source of labor in the agricultural sector meanwhile. In this sector, the labor demand was high—especially regarding fruit and vegetable harvesting, in southern Italy particularly (Corrado et al. 2018; Dines and Rigo 2015). In this regard, the legislative mechanism used to fill the gaps in this workforce was the “Decreto Flussi” (Flows Decree) up until 2013. It instituted a seasonal quota instrument of non-EU migrants to be allowed into the country to work in three sectors: namely agricultural, tourism, and hotels.

The quotas for the entry of labor migrants³⁷ to Italy were strongly reduced as the result of the global and European financial crises, following the lack of attractiveness in terms of occupation of the Italian labor market as well as the lack of internal interest in performing unskilled labor (ISMU 2016). In particular, a clear cut in the labor migration quotas foreseen by the Flows Decree was registered from 2011 (Bonizzoni 2018, 53) regarding not only the seasonal workforce but also—and foremost—the nonseasonal one (Recchia 2020, 99). As a consequence, this lack of an official and regularized migration mechanism soon led to a shortage in labor in the agricultural sector (Dines and Rigo 2015, 165). In the sense of the theoretical model, the Flows Decree is an outside option that Italy could have resorted to instead of accepting refugees. However with the Flows Decree suspended, the agricultural sector had a strong interest in accepting at least some refugees.

Ideology is, as noted, the secondary source of state preferences and strengthens further the formal acceptance of refugees in Italy. Similar to economic interests, ideational state preferences underline the divergence of respective social interests with regard to refugees. On the one hand, Italy's European ideology is inspired by the notion of humanitarianism, the

³⁷The term “migrant” in this study indicates third-country nationals coming from outside Europe. Included in this category are also refugees.

respecting of human rights, and the preservation of the right to asylum—highlighting compliance with national, European, and international conventions. This European ideology is what created the patterns of acceptance witnessed toward refugees. On the other hand, Eurosceptic societal actors whose interests are the exploitation of the migration issue and the diffusion of the common perception of refugees as a threat to national security as the result of the lack of EU solidarity contributed to the refusal of refugees and the distrust of the EU. Therefore the formal-acceptance patterns in state preferences vis-à-vis refugees are shaped by the conflict between competing European ideology and Euroscepticism within Italian society. In sum, it is argued that Italy's formally acceptance of refugees resulted from constrained economic interests in the refugees as labor force and ideological dispute between European values and Euroscepticism.

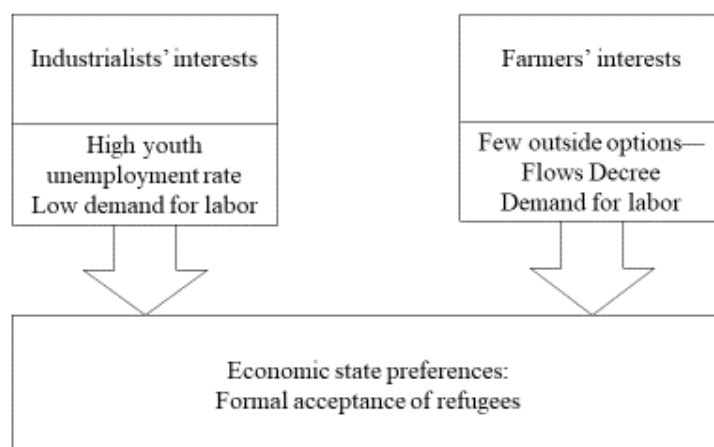
6.1.1 Economic Interests

The demand for labor represents the first variable in the patterns of Italian national preferences on the formal acceptance of refugees in the biennium 2014–2015. The economic global recession that affected also the EU, and particularly its southern member states, changed the preferences of domestic actors vis-à-vis migration as an additional source for meeting the needs of the labor market. In the following I seek to validate or refute H_1 , as proposed in chapter 5:

H₁: The stronger the demand for labor forces in a country and the weaker the outside options, the more likely the state will accept refugees.

It is argued that Italian economic state preferences are formed by the dominant interests of industrialist groups, who focused on the priorities of the national labor market—and especially concerned about the youth unemployment rate—rather than on the acceptance of refugees as an additional source of labor. By contrast, refugees were an attractive source thereof in another sector of the Italian economy: that is, the agricultural one (see Figure 12 below).

Figure 12. **Italian Economic Interests**



Source: Author's own depiction, based on the interviews and the labor market data.

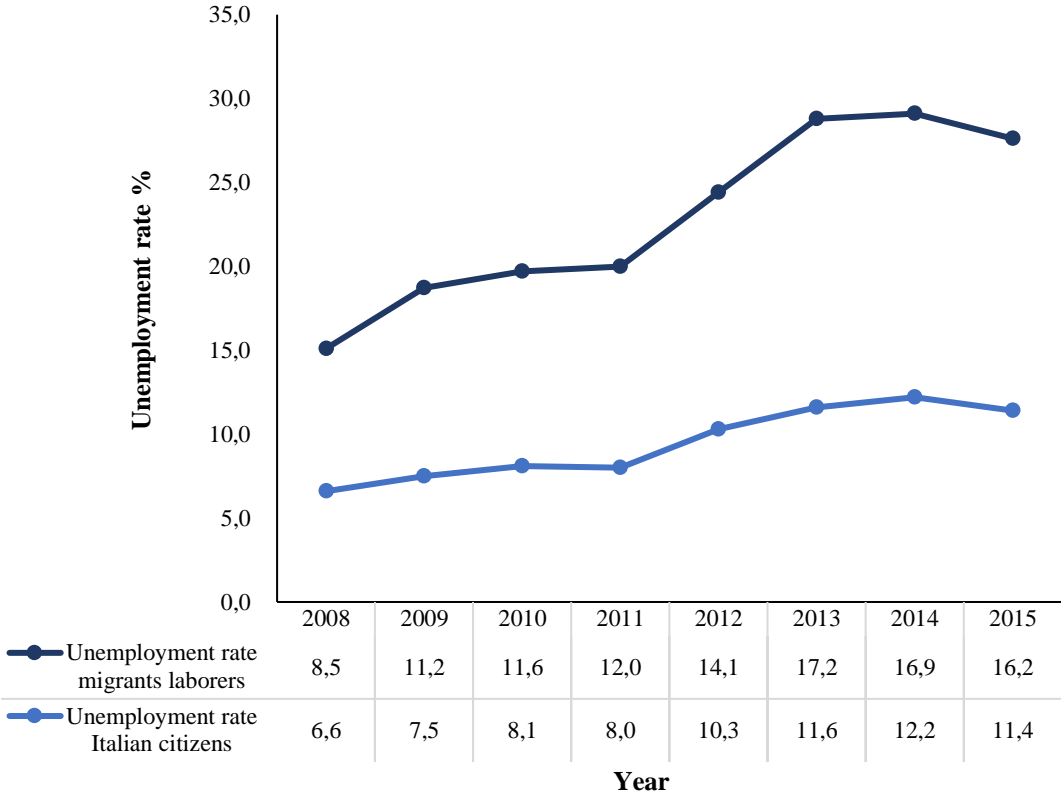
Illegal migration represented historically a readily available source for meeting the needs of the labor market in Italy as well as in the southern EU member states during the mid-1990s, and later on up until the “great recession”³⁸ in 2008 and beyond (Reyneri 1998; Reyneri and Fullin 2008). In particular, illegal labor migration in Italy refers to those persons who are not granted legal authorization to seek employment or a work permit, including here asylum seekers (Ambrosetti and Papparuso 2018; Ambrosini 2016; Sempredon, Marzorati, and Garrapa 2017; Venturini and Villosio 2018). The increasing demand for labor in specific sectors such as family and care services, construction, as well as agriculture was determined by the refusal of a young and qualified native labor supply to perform unqualified jobs (Reyneri and Fullin 2008). As a consequence, migrants have been an attractive and additional source of labor in those sectors where only low skills are required (Ambrosini 2013, 184; Bonizzoni 2018, 55; Reyneri 2007).

The core impact of the great recession in Italy would be the rise of the unemployment rate among not only young workers but also older ones too (Di Quirico 2010, 15). Conversely, the unemployment rate going up as a core consequence of the great recession affected also labor migration. In fact, quantitative studies have shown that labor migrants—ones coming especially from non-EU countries, North Africa, and Asia—were those most affected by the high unemployment rate compared to the native population (Bonifazi and Marini 2014; Venturini and Villosio 2018, 2349). In this regard, ISTAT's data referring to the increasing upward trend

³⁸In this study, this term will be used as a synonym for the 2008 financial global crisis.

in the unemployment rate regarding both Italian citizens and migrant laborers confirm the same conclusions (see Figure 13 below).³⁹

Figure 13. Unemployment Rate of Italian Citizens and Migrant Laborers in Italy in 2008–2015



Source: Author’s own depiction, based on ISTAT data in 2008–2015.

Despite the economy’s unreliable performance as a result of the great recession, the Italian labor market nevertheless had to face another influential phenomenon too: that is, the increased inflows of PCNIP. This sparked a great debate among domestic actors on the acceptance of refugees. In particular, the interviewed economic interest groups in Italy expressed their skepticism about accepting refugees being the appropriate course of action. In this regard, the youth unemployment rate represents the core explanatory factor leading to their restrictive position regarding the demand for labor that might be rationally met by refugees. Furthermore,

³⁹ISTAT data refer to the age group of 15 to 74 years old for both of these categories: namely Italians and labor migrants. Give the comparison regarding the unemployment rate between the native and the migration population, ISTAT is chosen as the relevant database to use (the only one that might facilitate comparison at the national level) compared to Eurostat. This is the reason for possible variation in the data regarding the Italian unemployment rate reported in chapter 5. Furthermore, the data are provided for all levels of education. For further information, see: http://dati.istat.it/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=DCCV_TAXDISOCCU1# (accessed November 29, 2019).

it is relevant to underline that the youth unemployment rate considerably increased in Italy due to the great recession compared to the overall rate thereof (Arico and Stein 2012, 286).

“Whether we need migrants must be looked at very carefully, and I also consider it a risky element in a country where there is 40 percent youth unemployment.”

Expert, EIG 3

“Consider that we have a south with an average youth unemployment rate of 30 percent (this is the average figure but in reality it is much higher), so we have such high pockets of national unemployment that frankly the idea of having to make up for the problem with migrants is not there.”

Expert, EIG 2

As mentioned above, the skeptical position of industrialist interests groups on the acceptance of refugees is due particularly to the increase of the youth unemployment rate throughout the post-2008 years.

“But frankly, we too are relying on strengthening the school system, the information system, and the vocational education system in order to give residents, Italian citizens, those who are in Italy, the opportunity to develop the skills to respond. That is to say, I hardly know that companies are planning labor forces’ entry systematically (for example every five years, certainly when they need to), but they are aiming to raise youth unemployment and so on. Therefore, to raise the rate of preparation of Italian workers.”

Expert, EIG 2

The unemployment rate among young people⁴⁰ in Italy (the age group of 15 to 24 years old), fluctuated from 21.2 percent to 35.3 percent in the period 2008–2012 and from 40 to 42 percent in the biennium 2013–2014—before decreasing moderately in 2015, with the reached value of 40.3 percent (see Figure 14 below).⁴¹

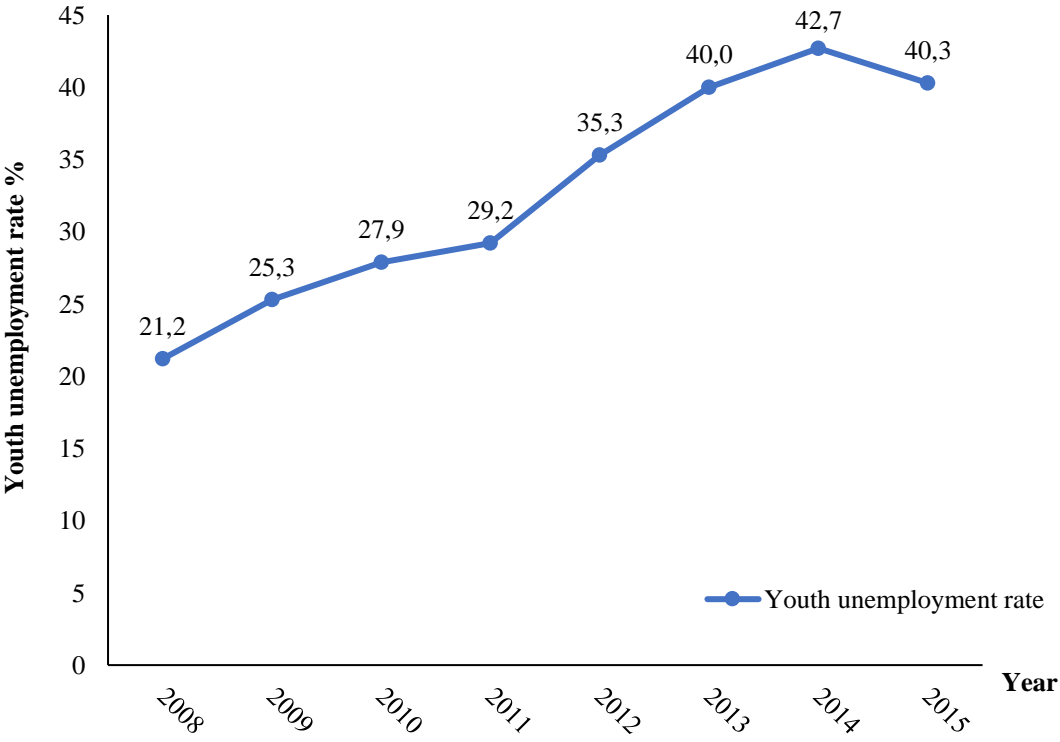
Therefore, given the high unemployment levels among labor migrants—especially post–great recession—and the high youth unemployment rate, the key interests of domestic economic

⁴⁰The youth unemployment rate, according to ISTAT, is measured as the percentage ratio of unemployed people aged 15–24 to the total number of employed and unemployed (labor force) of the same age group.

⁴¹The data on the youth unemployment rate in Italy in 2008–2015 refer to the total number of unemployed across all qualification levels for the age group 15–24 years old. ISTAT’s database provides more detailed information than was offered by the interviewed experts from the economic domestic interest groups. For further information, see: http://dati.istat.it/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=DCCV_TAXDISOCCU1# (accessed November 29, 2019).

groups in the biennium 2014–2015 were the reform of the national labor market and its innovation rather than the acceptance of refugees.

Figure 14. Youth Unemployment Rate in Italy in 2008–2015



Source: Author’s own depiction, based on ISTAT data in 2008–2015.

This position is lent further force by the General Confederation of Italian Industry (Confindustria), which has suggested continuously the government focus on the priorities of country rather than on the refugee issue—despite the relevance the latter had in the long term, as will be explained below.

“At the moment it is not immigration that can solve our problems. First of all, we need to give the Italians back their jobs. It may be a bit selfish, but let’s start to give a future back to our young people.”

Giorgio Squinzi, President of Confindustria, September 16, 2015⁴²

⁴²The quoted interviews that are not anonymous in this thesis are public and were extrapolated from newspapers and press releases of the respective ministries. Furthermore, the journalists that have interviewed the policy makers or published these interviews are quoted for transparency. This is the reason why there are double quotations. For further information, see Borrilo (2015) at: <https://s.gwdg.de/uvzPIq> (accessed February 25, 2020).

Meanwhile the new Italian government, led by Matteo Renzi since late February 2014, would underline the necessity of reforming the labor market, being materialized through the approval of the Jobs Act blueprint (Picot and Tassinari 2015). It aimed at reforming the national labor market with a special focus on the reduction of job precariousness and of the unemployment rate (Cirillo, Fana, and Guarascio 2017, 212). More specifically, the Jobs Act—through the eight LDs approved in the biennium 2014–2016—was designed to intervene in the reformation of the following (Pritoni and Sacchi 2019, 188–89):

- social safety nets, meaning unemployment benefits and redundancy funds;
- the reorganization of active policies through the creation of a national agency able to prepare the guidelines for national labor policy;
- the regulation of job contracts, aimed at facilitating new hiring through open-ended contracts as well as the transformation from temporary to permanent employment;
- the reorganization of the balance between professional and family life through the introduction of a minimum legal wage.

In particular, the introduction of open-ended contracts represents the measure that might best help reduce youth unemployment, especially in the medium-term (Sacchi and Vesan 2015), as it “replaces compulsory reinstatement for unfair dismissal with a gradually increasing compensation whose range is defined by the law over three years” (Rutherford and Frangi 2018, 443). Furthermore, within open-ended contracts were included also apprenticeships in order to support further the dual-apprenticeships model as well as to reduce training activities (Eichhorst, Marx, and Wehner 2017; Vesan 2016). The Jobs Act was particularly supported by economic industrialist interest groups compared to by the trade unions, who were very critical (Tullia Galanti and Sacchi 2019, 492).

“[It] is a step in the right direction [...]. The problem is to regain the confidence that is missing and to affect the 44 percent youth unemployment. Confidence must be rebuilt through deep and incisive structural reforms, which the country desperately needs.”

Giorgio Squinzi, President of Confindustria, October 10, 2014⁴³

⁴³For further information, see: https://st.ilssole24ore.com/art/notizie/2014-10-10/jobs-act-blindato-renzi-ipotesi-fiducia-anche-camera-094415_PRN.shtml (accessed September 25, 2020).

In addition, the Renzi government was particularly backed by Confindustria president Giorgio Squinzi for the leadership that the country demonstrated at the EU-wide level too.

“Italy is demonstrating leadership (referring to Stability and Growth Programme) and authority, asking for a season of investment, but with seriousness, in compliance with the rules and commitments made. A merit that should be recognized to you Mr. Prime Minister and your government.”

Giorgio Squinzi, President of Confindustria, November 3, 2014⁴⁴

The youth unemployment rate is not the only explanatory factor for the disagreement of industrialist groups with the acceptance of refugees. Additionally, PCNIP’s low-skilled profile as well as lack of Italian-language ability in the biennium 2014–2015 made them less attractive for the labor market. In particular, the three core nationalities of refugees arriving in Italy were Syrian (24.9 percent), Eritrean (20.2 percent), and Malian (5.8 percent) in 2014 compared to Eritrean (25.5 percent), Nigerian (14.5 percent), and Somalian (8.1 percent) in 2015 (ISMU 2017).

“The knowledge of the language for a company is the condition sine qua non. If a migrant enters a factory and can’t read the sign that says ‘No Entry,’ or ‘Watch Out for the Hoist,’ or ‘Mind the Wires’ maybe he goes there, and may even endanger his own life. The responsibility of the employer is total. Therefore any good-hearted person, entrepreneur, does not expose himself to such a risk because it is a gigantic risk.”

Expert, EIG 2

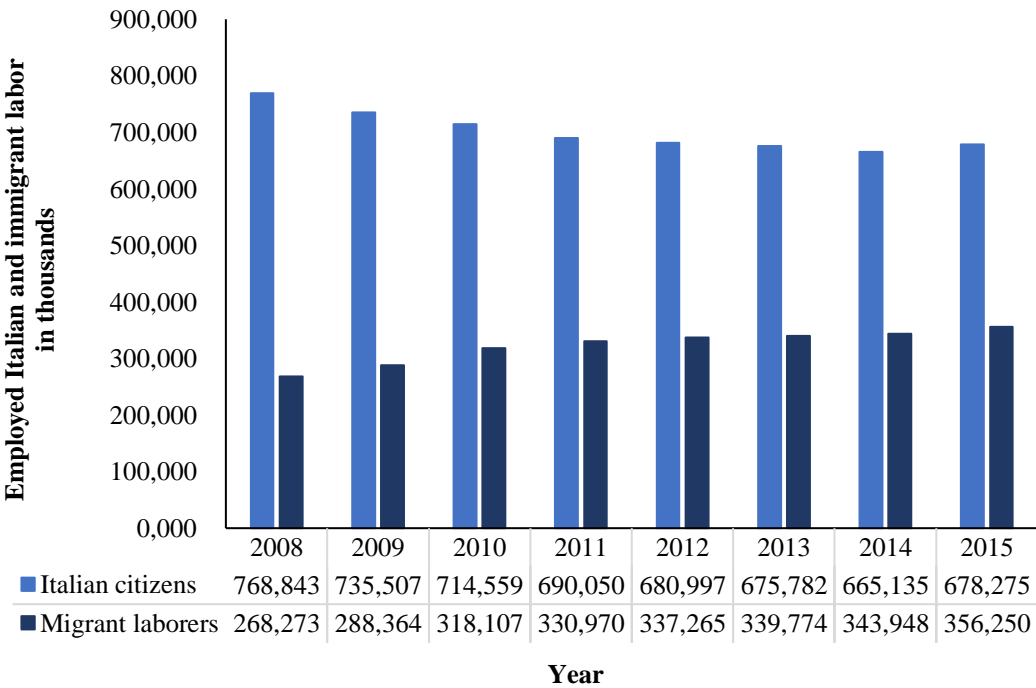
In sum, it is shown on the one side that industrial domestic actors have had a restrictive position toward the acceptance of refugees because of their first priority: that is, tackling the high youth unemployment rate. On the other, it is demonstrated that the Jobs Act represented the core action taken by the Italian government under Renzi to address the reform of the labor market so as to reduce the youth unemployment rate. Therefore the Jobs Act represents the government action that gave form to the restrictive economic preferences of industrial domestic actors vis-à-vis refugees.

⁴⁴For further information, see: https://www.corriere.it/notizie-ultima-ora/Economia/Stabilita-Squinzi-introduce-significativa-discontinuita-passato/03-11-2014/1-A_015078101.shtml (accessed September 25, 2020).

6.1.1.1 The Agricultural Sector

Despite the high unemployment rate at the domestic level in Italy, migration has still represented a viable alternative for the labor market as the result of the increasing foreign population residing in the country (Reyneri and Fullin 2008). Migrants have been an additional way to meet the demand for labor especially in the agricultural sector (Ambrosini 2013; Bonizzoni 2018; Reyneri 2007). As shown below (see Figure 15 below), the increasing numbers of employed migrant laborers are contrasted by the decreasing numbers of employed Italians in the agricultural sector in the two post–great recession biennia of 2008–2009 and 2011–2012 respectively⁴⁵.

Figure 15. Italian and Migrant Laborers in Agriculture in 2008–2015



Source: Author’s own depiction, based on (De Leo and Vanino 2019, 24).

This means that agriculture has become the sector seeing a significant increase as well as concentration of labor migration. With regard to the nationality of those employed in the agricultural sector, the three most prominent countries of origin are Romania, Morocco, and India. In particular, the number of employed Indian and Senegalese migrants in the agricultural sector increased by 118.7 percent and 164.2 percent respectively between 2008 and 2017 (De Leo and Vanino 2019, 26).

⁴⁵The data related to employed Italian citizens and immigrants in the agricultural sector are provided by INPS, as reported in the study of Macri (2019).

In the aftermath of the Arab Spring, refugees and asylum seekers were an additional source of labor especially in the agricultural sector—that in southern Italy particularly, being the region characterized most by illegal hiring (Corrado et al. 2018; Corrado and Perrotta 2012; Rigo and Dines 2017, 96; Seifert and Valente 2018, 5). However, official data on the exact extent of labor migration vis-à-vis having a work permit or not, as well as systematic empirical literature, are in this regard lacking. The interviewed experts within domestic interest groups confirmed also the illegal employment of refugees in agriculture or in those sectors where fewer labor skills are needed.

“It is no coincidence that they end up working in agriculture or construction, especially after 2011, where there is no need for the skilled worker—or that they specialize in a short time of period.”

Expert, NGIG 3

“In fact they are abandoned, and end up doing more or less illegal work—especially in agriculture, even if they have a regular status.”

Expert, EIG 1

The core reasons for the illegal employment of refugees are the lack of official measures for their integration into the labor market (Korac 2003; Ortensi 2015, 187) and the great recession respectively (Reyneri 2010). The impact of the first is particularly emphasized by the fact that once they have left the reception centers, refugees and asylum seekers have difficulties to find a job and often easily become prey to lawlessness.

“Whoever tells you that there are no integration measures is telling you the right thing. This means that the integration normative discipline of asylum in Italy is derived from the EU [...]. In Italy there are no rules governing the integration system besides one article of LD 251/2007 introduced in 2014, with the transposition of the policy directive that establishes the elaboration every two years of a national integration plan for the beneficiaries of international protection; the first plan was launched in September 2017.”

Expert, NGIG 1

“Asylum seekers in Italy, even when a title or state is recognized, are then abandoned. Therefore, there is no integration policy in favor of asylum seekers, not even for immigrants.”

Expert, EIG 1

In particular, the illegal employment of refugees in the agricultural sector post–Arab Spring has other causes too: namely the north-south divide that characterizes the Italian economy (Finotelli 2009; Finotelli and Sciortino 2009) and the uncertain juridical status of these individuals (Perrotta 2015, 200). As a consequence, where the unemployment rate is not extremely high, such as in the northern part of Italy, refugees have more access to the labor market—and thus better opportunities to integrate into society. Conversely, where the unemployment rate is extremely high—meaning in the south of the country, where refugees first arrive first—integration does not take place, especially after those concerned leave the reception accommodation centers.

“If there is no work, not even for Italians in the territories of, for example, Calabria, Sicily, or Campania, those people who leave the reception system after a year, a year and a half, or two years do not receive a job placement.”

Expert, Ministry 2

“The big challenge is that refugees in the south have no job opportunities, while in the center-north objectively the opportunities and possibilities are much greater.”

Expert, NGIG 1

The illegal employment of foreign labor, including refugees, in the agricultural sector and the exploitation that accompanies it represent well-known phenomenon in the Italian economy: the “*caporalato*” (Perrotta 2014; Pisacane 2017). In this regard, several studies have analyzed the tough working conditions that labor migrants and refugees are subjected to (Corrado and Perrotta 2012; Perrotta 2015; Perrotta and Sacchetto 2014). For example the workday of the farmhand varies from being between 10 to 12 hours long, while payment is in the region of EUR 25 to 30 per day (Perrotta 2015, 197). The “*caporali*” are intermediaries who recruit immigrants, refugees, as well as migrants to work in the agricultural sector, mainly during the fruit-harvesting seasons (Dines and Rigo 2015; De Martino 2018).⁴⁶ Furthermore they

⁴⁶Several NGOs have published reports on migrant labor in the agricultural sector, with a special focus on the *caporalato* phenomenon. Caritas published in 2018 its second Presidium Report titled “Vite Sottocosto,” which features in and informs the present study particularly.

cooperate with agricultural entrepreneurs and offer them in a restricted period the labor that they need, as well as organizing accommodation, the transportation of the farmworkers, and recruiting them at extremely advantageous prices (Perrotta and Sacchetto 2014). The interviewed experts emphasized also the availability of refugees as an additional, illegally hired workforce in agriculture, which represents the sector with the highest incidence of the black economy—with the total value added as the result of illegality estimated at between 16.3 and 17.8 percent in the biennium 2014–2015 (Istat 2019).

“According to you, if I need 50 people to pick my tomatoes tomorrow, I’ll wait for the Flows Decree, the seasonal one? It is impossible. I ask the employment center—that probably takes weeks—but, in the meantime, my products go bad. Tomorrow I need to have the people, and tomorrow the *caporali* will get them for me, bring them to me, transport them, give them somewhere to sleep, give them something to eat, and give them to me at a very low price.”

Agriculture entrepreneurs’ interviews, provided by Expert, EIG 1

In this context, the Italian government undertook two key measures in 2015 relating to the integration of refugees and the correlating illegal employment of migrant labor in the agricultural sector respectively. First, it issued two LDs: Law 18/2014⁴⁷ aimed at introducing a two-year national plan for the socioeconomic integration of refugees based on LD 251/2007,⁴⁸ and LD 142/2015⁴⁹ that was approved in August 2015 and which entered into force in September 2015 regulating the decentralization of the national refugee system and PCNIP’s socioeconomic integration. Of particular relevance for the labor-market integration of PCNIP is Article 22 (1) of the latter. It provides that “people lodging an asylum application in Italian territory have the right to work following 60 days passing from the presentation of the asylum application” (Legislative Decree 142/2015 2015, 9). Notwithstanding the six months validity

⁴⁷See Article 29 (3) of LD No. 18/2014, which establishes the grounds for a biennial national plan aimed at designing the measures for the socioeconomic integration of beneficiaries of international protection at the heart of national coordination within the Ministry of Interior. It represents the implementation of Directive 2011/95/EU on Standards for the Qualification and Status of Third-country Nationals or Stateless Persons as Beneficiaries of International Protection, a Uniform Status for Refugees or Persons Eligible for Subsidiary Protection, and the Content of the Protection Granted.

⁴⁸See Article 25 of LD 251/2007, which recognizes the same treatment relating to the possibilities of employment, self-employment, vocational training, and on-the-job training. It represents the implementation of Directive 2004/83/EC on Minimum Standards for the Qualification and Status of Third-country Nationals or Stateless Persons as Refugees or as Persons Who otherwise Need International Protection, and the Content of the Protection Granted.

⁴⁹It represents the implementation of Directive 2013/33/EU, Laying Down Standards for the Reception of Applicants for International Protection, and Directive 2013/32/EU on Common Procedures for Granting and Withdrawing International-protection Status.

that the stay permit has and its possible extension until a decision on the asylum procedure has been taken, it might not be converted into a work permit (Martelloni 2020, 119).

“Law 142/2015 provides that even applicants for international protection who are not recognized can work after 60 days, contrary to the EU directive that gave us a window of up to nine months. Therefore we made a very brave choice, to admit that they after 60 days can carry out work activities. However if there is no work, it is very difficult. The other thing is that, in reality, if employers do not have a situation of documental regularity that is stable enough, it is difficult for them to invest in training people.”

Expert, Ministry 2

Second, the Council of Ministers approved a bill aimed at fighting the *caporalato* phenomenon in agriculture, which became eventually Law 199/2016. The legal innovations of the current law consist mainly of the introduction of criminal instruments related to the conditions of exploitation of workers and the exploitation of their state of need, as well as the establishment of several institutions aimed at monitoring the rights of the foreign labor force during seasonal harvesting (Stolfa 2017).

“With the bill that we approved today in the Council of Ministers, we are taking a crucial step forward in the fight against illegal work in agriculture. This is an organic intervention that reinforces the criminality rules and introduces necessary operational tools, such as the reception plan for seasonal workers. The objective is to protect the safety and dignity of workers and prevent further exploitation of labor, including foreign labor.”

Maurizio Martina, Minister of Agricultural Policies, November 13, 2015⁵⁰

In sum, it is argued that in the years following the Arab Spring the presence of refugees and asylum seekers in the Italian agricultural sector would steadily increase. This was related to the structure of the Italian labor market, and the characteristics of its supply of workers. Of relevance to this study is the demand for labor, at which I now take a closer look.

6.1.1.2 The Outside Options: The Flows Decree

The relationship between labor supply and demand in the agricultural sector in the biennium 2014–2015 had, as noted, direct consequences for the Italian state’s formal acceptance of

⁵⁰For further information, see Capparelli (2015) at: <https://s.gwdg.de/6a5zs2> (accessed November 12, 2020).

refugees. In this context, it is essential to understand the outside options that were available at the time. Seeking to satisfy the demand for labor in agriculture, tourism and hotels, the government relied on an immigrant quota system. The latter is based on two legislative mechanisms: namely the Planning Document and the Flows Decree of Law 40/1998, both enacted by the President of the Council of the Ministers. The Planning Document aimed to configure the immigrant quotas potentially necessary for the upcoming three years. The government has enacted only three Planning Documents: in 1998, 2001, and 2004/2005 respectively.

The second and most relevant mechanism for the present study is the Flows Decree that foresees the entry of third-country nationals coming from outside the EU member states as contingents for labor in determined sectors of the economy, mainly agriculture and tourism. Jobs are divided into three categories: subordinate, autonomous, and seasonal. In addition, the Flows Decree gives priority access to the labor market for third-country nationals whose governments have established cooperation or an agreement with the Italian government. With regard to the agricultural sector, the highest quota according to the Flows Decree was the one granted in 2010—with 98,000 entries to take up a seasonal job and another 170,000 for subordinate jobs recorded in that year (Sanguinetti 2019, 29).

In the aftermath of the Arab Spring the immigrant quotas supposed to meet the demand for labor (with concern to both seasonal and nonseasonal as well as self-employed jobs) stipulated by the Flows Decree would be drastically reduced however (see table 9 below).

Table 9: The Migrant Quotas Provided by the Flows Decree in Italy in 2011–2015

Year	Seasonal	Nonseasonal and self-employed	Total
2011	60,000	0	60,000
2012	35,000	13,850	52,850 ⁵¹
2013	30,000	17,850	47,850
2014	15,000	17,850	32,850
2015	13,000	17,850	30,800

Source: Author's own depiction, based on the Ministry of the Interior data in 2011–2015.

⁵¹The total number of the provided quotas in year 2012 includes 4,000 additional ones that are planned for people that have pursued a training or an education program abroad. This is the reason of the small variation of the total quotas in year 2012 compared to the sum of the seasonal and nonseasonal as well as self-employed quotas for the same year as presented in Table 9.

This reduction was principally due to the unfavorable situation then facing the Italian labor market, in particular regarding the high unemployment rate occurring as a result of the great recession (Bonizzoni 2018; ISMU 2016). As shown above, the seasonal quotas that are provided especially for the agricultural sector, also for tourism were reduced especially in the biennium 2014–2015—allowing the entrance of only 15,000 and 13,000 labor migrants in the two years respectively.

Likewise, the migration pressure—referring to arrivals by sea on the Italian coast, as well as the number of first asylum applications lodged in the country—inversely increased (Rigo and Dines 2017, 97). As a consequence, the reduction of the seasonal-job quotas would be contrasted by significantly increased migration pressure from the early part of the last decade onward (Ambrosetti and Paparusso 2018). Therefore, the nonfulfillment of the demand for labor as the result of the decreased migration quotas stipulated by the Flows Decree after 2011 would lead to the illegal employment of refugees especially in the agricultural sector (Dines and Rigo 2015, 165).

“If you go to areas like Rosarno (in Calabria) or Puglia, among those who work in agriculture you will not only find illegal immigrants; you will also find asylum seekers who have no alternatives.”

Expert, EIG 1

In this regard, as mentioned above, the Italian government approved in November 2015 a specific bill targeting the *caporalato* that transformed into Law 199/2016, designed to counter the illegal exploitation especially of migrant labor (Lintner and Elsen 2020, 359). Furthermore the government approved also Law 142/2015 aimed at distributing refugees through a quota system throughout national territory (Ambrosini 2019) and at promoting their integration into the labor market. The latter is encapsulated in its Article 22 that foresees the right of asylum seekers to begin working 60 days after the initial registration of their asylum application; the article also seeks to reduce the risks of these individuals facing conditions of vulnerability (Acocella and Turchi 2020).

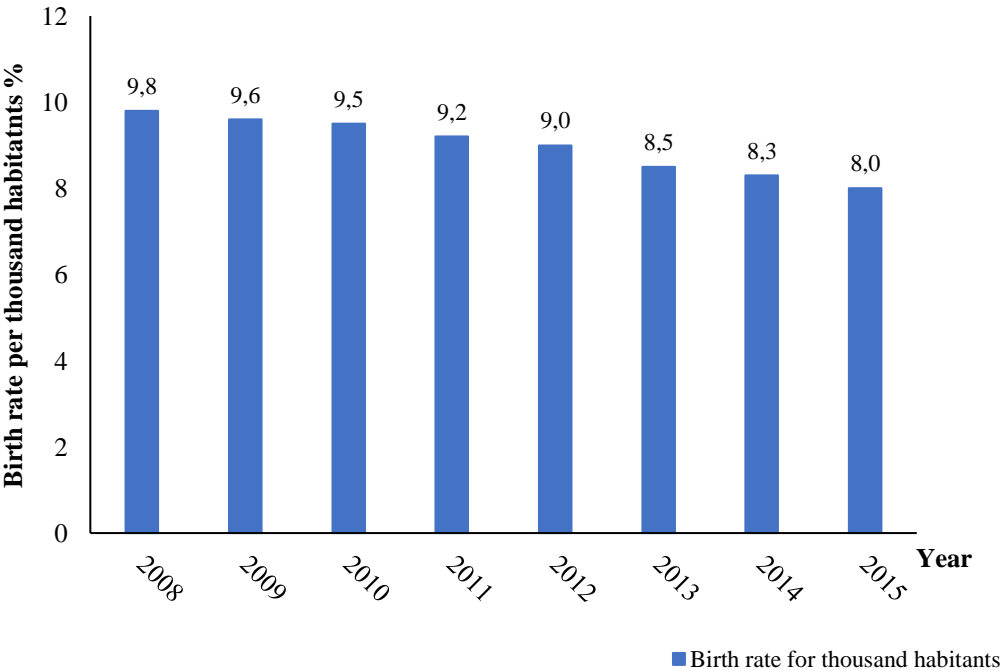
Therefore, in the Italian case, the assumption relating to outside options that is addressed by H_1 seems plausible. Taking into account the perspective of the main economic interest groups in Italy, the formal acceptance of refugees mirrors the diverging stances of the industrial and agricultural sectors on these individuals. The preference of the industrial sector—that is, tackling the high youth unemployment rate—was satisfied through the implementation of the Jobs Act, as initiated and realized by the Renzi government. By contrast, the agricultural sector

welcomed refugees as a substitute for the formerly available satisfactory seasonal-labor quotas. As a consequence, the Italian state’s preferences vis-à-vis refugees can be said to be the result of the diverse economic interests of domestic actors in two key sectors: industry and agriculture.

6.1.1.3 The Social Security System

Italy is a country with an aging demographic, a trend that has persisted since the mid-1990s, was strengthened during the great recession, and will continue into the future too (Reynaud and Miccoli 2019). Empirical studies have shown that the core factors leading to an aging population are a low birth rate, a drop in fertility, the prolongation of life expectancy, and the emigration especially of young Italians mainly to the UK, Germany, and Switzerland (Focarelli and Zanghieri 2006; Gesano and Strozza 2011). The impact of the country’s low birth rate per thousand habitants on Italy’s demography is confirmed also by ISTAT data (see Figure 16 below).⁵²

Figure 16. Birth Rate in Italy in 2008–2015



Source: Author’s own depiction, based on ISTAT data in 2008–2015.

⁵²For further information, see: <https://s.gwdg.de/8rdnoW> (accessed November 15, 2019).

The birth rate—indicating the number of live births per 1,000 population per year—in Italy has continuously decreased since the great recession. This historical decrease in children born in Italy reached an all-time low of 514,000 in 2013, furthering dropping the following year—with 509,000 newborn children registered in 2014. This led to a more open position on the part of domestic interest groups regarding the acceptance of refugees in the biennium 2014–2015, based on their positive contribution to the rejuvenation of the Italian demographic in the long term.

However according to the empirical evidence obtained from the interviews, the acceptance of refugees as a way to counter the country’s aging demographic played only a secondary role in that decision.

“Italians continue to lose parts of the population because they have fewer children. So it is clear that immigrants have various functions that rejuvenate the labor market; therefore, from a demographic point of view, they give very strong support.”

Expert, EIG 1

“The demographic factor is obviously fundamental, but is not only valid for Italy but for most of the advanced European countries and the world. So from that point of view it would certainly be rational for Italy to accept refugees—and for all the other countries that are observing an aging population.”

Expert, EIG 2

The emigration of young people (also women) represents another trend that has influenced the Italian demographic, especially in the triennium 2013–2015. The most relevant emigration countries for Italian citizens are, as noted, the UK, Germany, and Switzerland (see Table 10 below).

Table 10: **Emigration in Italy in 2013–2015**

Year	Emigration of Italian citizens (in thousands)
2013	82,000
2014	90,000
2015	100,000

Source: Author’s own depiction, based on ISTAT data in 2013–2015.

This is due to the better economic and professional conditions that other countries offer—particularly for women—compared to Italy, which suffers from slow economic growth (with a direct impact on the unemployment rate).

“Italy is a country with a very low birth rate [...] also because there is another phenomenon of which we are very concerned, ‘the flight of the bellies.’ Women prefer to have children in other countries where they have more guarantees, where they are less penalized, so the birth rate in our country is not because suddenly [Italian] women do not want to have children and foreigners do.”

Expert, EIG 3

An aging demographic has a direct impact on the performance of the social security system, particularly in Italy with its pay-as-you-go public one (Forni and Giordano 2001). The robustness of core demographic structures—especially the birth rate, as well as life expectancy and retirement age—are crucial for this type of social security system (Attias et al. 2016). The Italian one has been subject to a series of reforms aiming to introduce a contributive scheme ever since the early 1990s.

The two key reforms in this regard are the Dini Law of 1995 and the Fornero Law of 2011 (Borzaga 2016). The Dini Law introduced the notional defined contribution system that replaced the existing defined benefit one (Börsch-Supan 2005). The three core aims herewith were the stabilization of pension expenditure on GDP, the reduction of deformity in the labor market, and addressing the sustainability of the system itself (Franco and Sartor 2006). As a consequence, the most relevant impacts were the calculation of the pension according to the contributions that a person pays during their whole working life and the retirement age becoming more flexible (Jessoula and Raitano 2015). The Fornero Law, meanwhile, transformed the Italian national social security system into a contributive one (Attias et al. 2016, 204), and intervened in order to reduce the transitional period⁵³ and to increase the retirement age (Borzaga 2016, 16).

Demographic factors thus have a direct impact. In other words, a society with a larger proportion of young people has better prospects of funding its social security system. By contrast, an aging population—particularly in the medium- to long term—suffers in this regard (Mazzola et al. 2016). Thus the low birth rate and emigration that impacted Italy especially between 2013 and 2015 made it necessary to find alternative funding for the country’s social

⁵³The transitional period connected to the Dini Law reform was applied to all employees who had paid at least 18 years of contributions before the end of the year 1995 and employed by January 1, 2016 (Borzaga 2016, 8).

security system. In this respect, refugees (upon their regularization) can represent a valuable resource in the long run.

“In reality, in the medium- to long term we need immigrants because we are losing pieces of the population, the youngest ones—those who should actually produce, and maintain the oldest.”

Expert, EIG 1

According to official data, immigrants play an important role in the funding of the social security system in Italy (Leone Moressa 2017). In the biennium 2014–2015, third-country nationals residing in Italy paid through their social security contributions for the pensions of 620,000 and 640,000 people in the two years respectively (Leone Moressa 2014; 2015). In sum, the acceptance of refugees might represent an additional way to counter, especially in the longer term, the negatives associated with Italy’s demography and retirement system.

6.1.2 Ideology

Ideology represents the second dimension in the formation of national preferences that is emphasized in the empirical material derived from the interviews, as well as in the literature. According to LI theory, ideology represents the final variable of the secondary geopolitical interests that a state might have in relation to European integration (Moravcsik 1998). However, just as a reminder, I regard ideology independently of geopolitical interests in this thesis. This is due to the lack of clear geopolitical empirical evidence for the diverging patterns of EU member state preferences on the acceptance of refugees during the crucial year 2015 (Chapters 4 and 5).

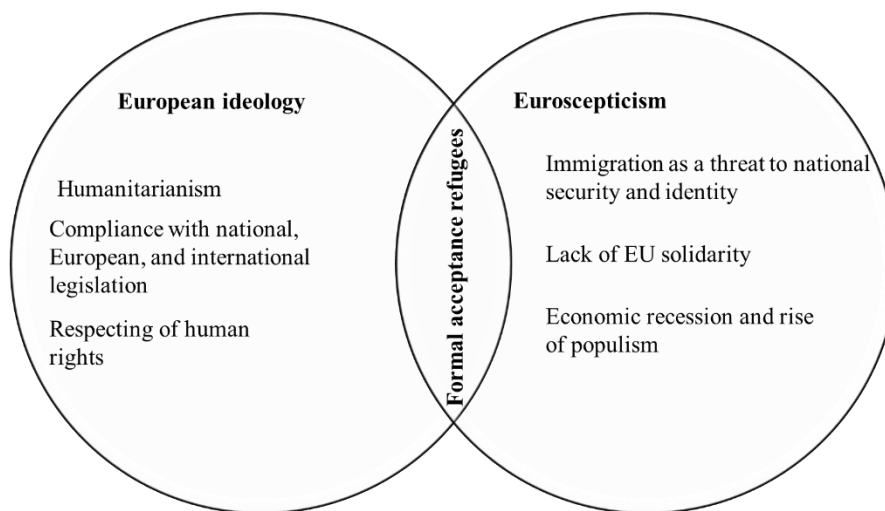
In the following, it is argued that Italian ideational state preferences vis-à-vis the formal acceptance of refugees (see Figure 17 below) are the result of the conflict between European ideology (Cuttitta 2018; Musarò 2017) and Euroscepticism (Castelli Gattinara 2017; Quaranta and Martini 2019).

These preferences are comprehensively analyzed in reference to the biennium 2014–2015, taking into consideration the continuous increase of refugee arrivals in the country in that period and the varying degrees of acceptance of these individuals. However, references to the years preceding the biennium 2014–2015 are also included due to the relevance they have—especially in the aftermath of the Arab Spring— and because of their impact on the formation of Italian ideational preferences regarding the acceptance of refugees. Here, H₂ is scrutinized.

H₂: *The stronger the European ideology in a country, the more likely the state will accept refugees.*

European ideology, according to the interviews, reflects the values of humanitarianism and the compliance with national, European, and especially international conventions based on the respecting of human rights and the protection of the right to asylum.

Figure 17. **Italian Ideational State Preferences**



Source: Author's own depiction, based on the interviews.

In the aftermath of the shipwrecks of October 3, 2013, where more than 300 persons lost their lives, and of October 11, 2013, the Enrico Letta government launched OMN.⁵⁴ This operation aimed at saving lives in the Mediterranean, despite it being of a military and security nature (Musarò 2017; Quaranta and Martini 2019, 134; Tazzioli 2016). This demonstrated the European *modus operandi* of the Italian government, based on the value of humanitarianism (Cuttitta 2018).

⁵⁴OMN was launched on October 31, 2013, by the Italian government, with the aim to save lives during the large flows of refugees crossing the Strait of Sicily. OMN remained operative until October 31, 2014, then substituted by Operation Triton, launched in cooperation with the EU and Frontex. For further information, see the "Report on International Protection in Italy 2015," available online at: https://www.interno.gov.it/sites/default/files/t31ede-rapp_prot_int_2015_-_rapporto.pdf (accessed June 25, 2016).

“As long as there were governments [referring to Letta and Renzi] more inclined to respect international conventions and recognize human rights, refugees were accepted.”

Expert, NGIG 2

By contrast, the Renzi government emphasized strongly the urgency to address the refugee issue at the EU-wide level given also the Italian presidency of the Council between July 1 and December 31, 2014 (Hill, Silvestri, and Cetin 2016; Stefania Panebianco 2019). As a consequence, the required European joint approach to the refugee issue—including dealing with its challenges and opportunities—was addressed as one of eight core themes during the Italian’s temporary presidency of the Council:

Given the particular pressure on the national asylum systems of some Member States, caused in part by mixed flows, the Presidency will continue its efforts to promote effective solidarity at the EU-wide level, particularly in emergency situations (Program of the Italian Presidency of the Council of the European Union 2014, 41).

“Italy’s acceptance of refugees is based on a clear humanitarian choice made in reference not only to national and European conventions, but above all to international ones such as the 1951 Geneva Convention.”

Expert, Ministry 1

Italian legislation thus recognizes the right to asylum, in line with the 1951 Geneva Convention. However the right to seek asylum does not correspond to the recognition of refugee status, which is closely connected to the personal conditions of asylum seekers and the proved inability to return to their home country because of persecution. The recognition of refugee status entered Italian legislation following the ratification of the 1951 Geneva Convention, and through Law 40/1990 the geographical limits on it were abolished. Article 10 (3) of the Italian Constitution⁵⁵ stipulates that:

The Italian legal system complies with the generally recognized rules of international law. The legal status of the foreigner is regulated by law in accordance with international rules and treaties. A foreigner who is prevented in his country from effectively exercising the democratic freedoms guaranteed by the Italian

⁵⁵For further information regarding the Article 10 of the Italian Constitution, see <https://www.senato.it/istituzione/la-costituzione/principi-fondamentali/articolo-10> (accessed November 15, 2019).

Constitution has the right of asylum in the territory of the Republic, according to the conditions established by law.

In addition, the acceptance of refugees by the Italian government in the biennium 2014–2015 reflects compliance with D III R, with its Article 13 (1) stipulating, as noted, that the initial EU member state where a person enters illegally has the responsibility to examine their asylum application. This upholding of EU legislation represents a second from of European ideology, being thus also a determinant of Italian ideational state preferences.

“If we save lives at sea, and then the people coming in are underneath [D III R], we have to get everyone.”

Expert, NGIG 3

The appearance of European ideology in Italian ideational state preferences is represented also by the Europeanization of the country in terms of the responsibilities it has as a founding EU member state, as expressed by its formal acceptance of refugees.

“Italy was a founding country of the EU in the sense of the responsibility [taken], so it was obviously a pro-European country that trusts the European functions related to the refugee issue; hence, their acceptance.”

Academic Expert, University la Sapienza

In this regard, addressing the refugee issue at the EU-wide level—that is, in cooperation with all member states—was the cornerstone of the governing Democratic Party’s rule (especially under Renzi’s leadership). This was further underlined in the next political national elections in 2018:

At the same time, we cannot give up defending—and must promote even more strongly—a core set of values: those of all the values to which all member states must adhere.

The rule of law and fundamental rights are the very essence of European identity.

This is why we demand that the disbursement of EU funds be conditional on respect for the rule of law, fundamental rights, and obligations of solidarity, as in the case of the relocation of asylum seekers (The Democratic Party’s political program 2018, 24).

As a responsible EU member state, therefore, the message conveyed by the Italian government in accepting refugees aimed at underlining the credibility and the reliability that the country enjoyed within the Union.

“The Renzi government wanted to say that Italy is a serious partner at the EU-wide level [...], he wanted to say that we can manage immigration well. In fact, no emergency measures of any kind were adopted. Usually even the management of the reception—done with the opening of large centers temporarily opened and then closed by previous governments—was carried out by declaring a state of emergency in Italy, for example Berlusconi has always done so.”

Expert, NGIG 3

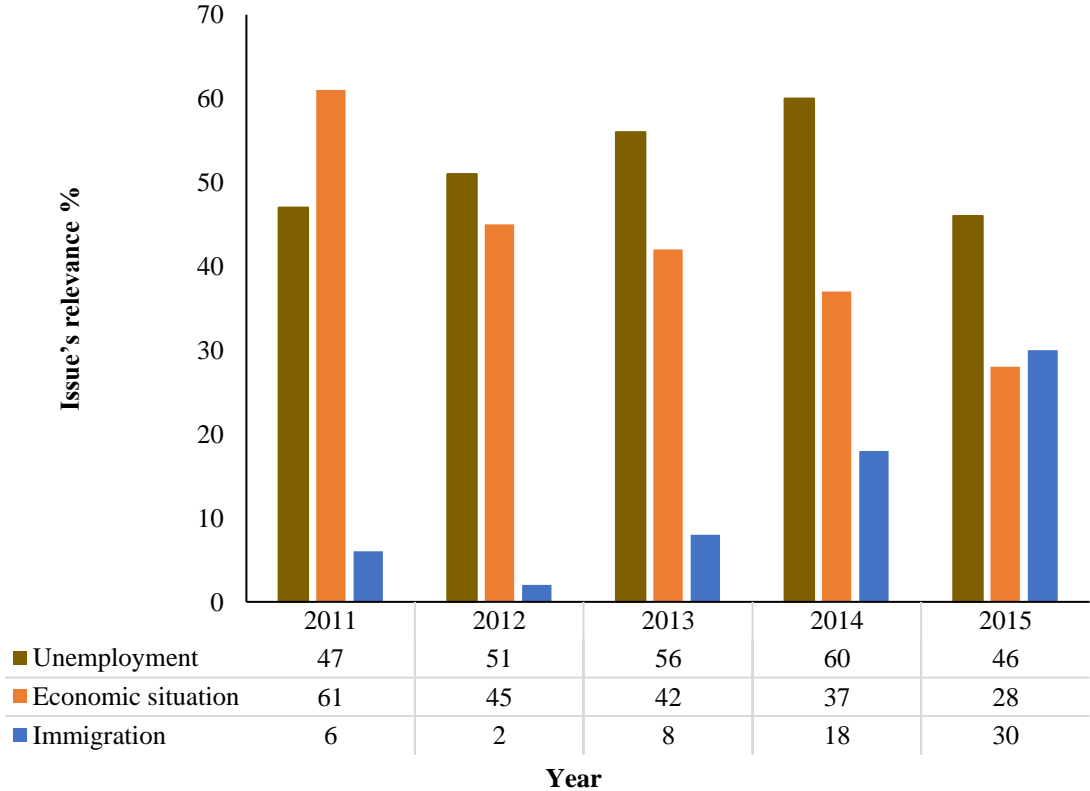
On the other hand, Euroscepticism also contributes to the formation of Italian ideational state preferences, as reflected in refugees’ formal acceptance. Euroscepticism has been defined as “the idea of contingent or qualified opposition, as well as incorporating outright and unqualified opposition, to the process of European integration” (Taggart 1998, 366). With regard to the refugee issue, empirical studies in different European countries as well as more generally in the EU have showed the impact of this issue on the increasingly anti-immigration attitudes witnessed in society and the growth of Euroscepticism (Evans and Mellon 2019; Stockemer et al. 2020). In particular the great recession and the Eurozone crisis, which preoccupied the EU from the beginning of 2010, and austerity policies would lead to the rise of populist political parties during the last decade (Pirro, Taggart, and van Kessel 2018). Euroscepticism, already present in Italian society as a result of the great recession (Nicoli 2017; Serricchio, Tsakatika, and Quaglia 2013), further increased following the continuous arrivals of refugees on the country’s coasts (Quaranta and Martini 2019). This led to the perception of refugees as a threat to public security, an impression that has been particularly powered by populist and far-right parties such as NL, Casa Pound, and Forza Nuova in the context of the refugee issue in 2015 (Castelli Gattinara 2017; Gianfreda 2018).

“Populist political parties have linked the issue of international protection to that of national security, and this is of concern because it has put the presence of refugees as a security risk back into the narrative.”

Expert, NGIG 1

In Italian public perception, according to Eurobarometer, immigration⁵⁶ represents furthermore one of the two most relevant concerns faced at the national level in the biennium 2014–2015 according to 18 percent of respondents in 2014 and 20 percent thereof in 2015 (see Figure 18 below).

Figure 18. Italian Public Opinion on the Two Most Relevant Issues Faced at the National Level in 2011–2015



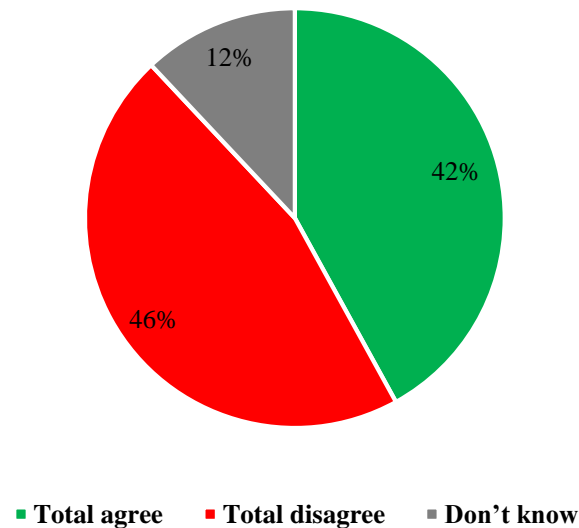
Source: Author’s own depiction, based on Standard Eurobarometer Autumn N. 76, 78, 80, 82, 84 in autumn 2011–2015.

With regard especially to the skepticism of the Italian public toward refugees, the data provided by Standard Eurobarometer Autumn N. 84 (see Figure 19 below) only for the year 2015 on (dis)agreement with helping refugees⁵⁷ show that opinion is clearly split. In this regard, the negative answers (46 percent) prevail over the positive ones (42 percent).

⁵⁶The question posed by Standard Eurobarometer (82) was: “What do you think are the two most important issues facing (OUR COUNTRY) at the moment?” For further information, see the Standard Eurobarometer Standard Eurobarometer Autumn N. 76, 78, 80, 82, 84 pursued in 2011–2015. Two answers are possible.

⁵⁷The question posed by Standard Eurobarometer (84) was: “To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements: (OUR COUNTRY) should help refugees?”

Figure 19. Italian Public Opinion on (Dis)agreement with Helping Refugees in 2015



Source: Author's own depiction, based on Standard Eurobarometer Autumn N. 84 in 2015.

Euroscepticism was further strengthened by the lack of the solidarity that the EU showed with Italy, despite have the ability to do that, especially in the biennium 2014–2015—characterized, as noted, by the heavy increase of refugee arrivals. This lack of shared responsibility furthered the nonacceptance of refugees and the increase of anti-immigration organizations within Italian society.

“Italy found itself having to face a totally disjointed migratory datum without any kind of European solidarity. Europe has behaved incorrectly, almost ridiculously, toward a country that tried to cope with such an emergency [...]. So when there are borderline situations, it's normal that there are counterreactions (anti-immigration feelings, populist parties' political capital increases) [...]. But in the end, rightly or wrongly, it interprets a basic feeling that it's difficult to say is completely wrong.”

Expert, EIG 2

“Italy has tried to give a welcome by asking for European solidarity, to which the EU was deaf—but not in terms of the Commission or the technical bodies, rather of the governments that are then represented in the Council. The EU was deaf to a request for solidarity that came at a hard time for Italy. It was suffering because of the refugee arrivals, which were difficult to manage for any one country alone [...].”

Expert, NGIG 2

Italian ideational state preferences are, as noted, formed as the result of the contrast between European ideology and Euroscepticism. The former underlines the respecting of human rights, the compliance with the principle of *non-refoulement* aimed at protecting the right to asylum, as well as solidarity with refugees (Cuttitta 2018; Musarò 2017). Conversely, the latter is guided by the securitization of the refugee issue, the rise of right-wing populist parties, and the exploitation of the refugee issue in this regard (Castelli Gattinara 2017; Gianfreda 2018). This led to the only formal acceptance of refugees within Italian society.

6.2 Interstate Bargaining Power

Interstate bargaining power represents the second part of the analysis. It aims at explaining the Italian state's behavior regarding cooperation on the responsibility sharing for refugees at the EU-wide level. In order to examine this process, the empirical evidence relating to the public positions of Italian state representatives who participated in the negotiation process, the data regarding the migration pressure faced, and the secondary literature in this regard have all been drawn on.

Migration pressure represents the explanatory factor for EU member state behaviors toward the responsibility sharing for refugees at the EU-wide level. The extent of it was determined by the high number of first asylum applications lodged in Italy in the biennium 2014–2015 as well as by the extensive arrivals by sea of PCNIP. Due to its geographical position along the EU's external borders and the permanently high migration pressure faced, Italy is categorized as a FEC. This underlines its cooperative position on the RS.

Bargaining power is determined in relation to the unilateral policy alternatives and the alternative coalitions that Italy had available in order to offset the acute migration pressure endured in the biennium 2014–2015. In this regard, the outcomes with regard to both alternatives led to cooperative Italian behavior on the RS. This is explained as the result of the benefits that the Italian government receives through the RS compared to upholding the status quo (that is, D III R), and the de facto support it enjoys from other EU member states—particularly Germany. In sum, it is argued that EU member states that are FECs facing permanently high migration pressure assume cooperative behavior toward the RS, based on the principle of responsibility sharing for refugees at the EU-wide level.

6.2.1 Italy's Position as a First-Entry Country

Economic interests and ideology, analyzed previously, are what determined the Italian state's preferences, which led to the formal acceptance of refugees in the country in the biennium

2014–2015. The continuous migrant flows arriving on the southern Italian coast, especially on the island of Lampedusa, reached a peak of 170,100 arrivals by sea in 2014 (Papavero 2015, 6). This called into question the CEAS and particularly D III R, as the only EU directive that determines the responsibility of EU member states to examine the application for international protection of a third-country national or stateless person. This required further cooperation to be provided by the member states regarding the responsibility sharing for PCNIP, by at the same time causing strong debates to arise within the EU institutions on how exactly to respond. Therefore the migration pressure faced represents the third IV aimed at explaining the behavior of the respective member states on the responsibility sharing for PCNIP at the EU-wide level, operationalized by identifying their positions either in favor or against cooperation on the RS.

Italy has been a country with high migration pressure as a result of its geographical position on the EU's external borders. In the early 1990s, Italy was essentially characterized by labor migration coming from other European countries as well as the United States (King 1993, 286).⁵⁸ Furthermore, immigrants coming from Eastern Europe and the former Yugoslavia in the aftermath of the CW (and the conflicts that ensued) also arrived in Italy. In particular, the arrivals by sea increased as the result of the fall of the communist regime in Yugoslavia in the early 1990s and the collapse of the financial system in Albania in 1997 (Bontempelli 2009; Finotelli and Sciortino 2009).

“In our country we had an immigration [wave] that started in the late 1990s and reached numbers comparable to those of countries such as Germany, France, and UK within 20 years, but with a completely different stratification however.”

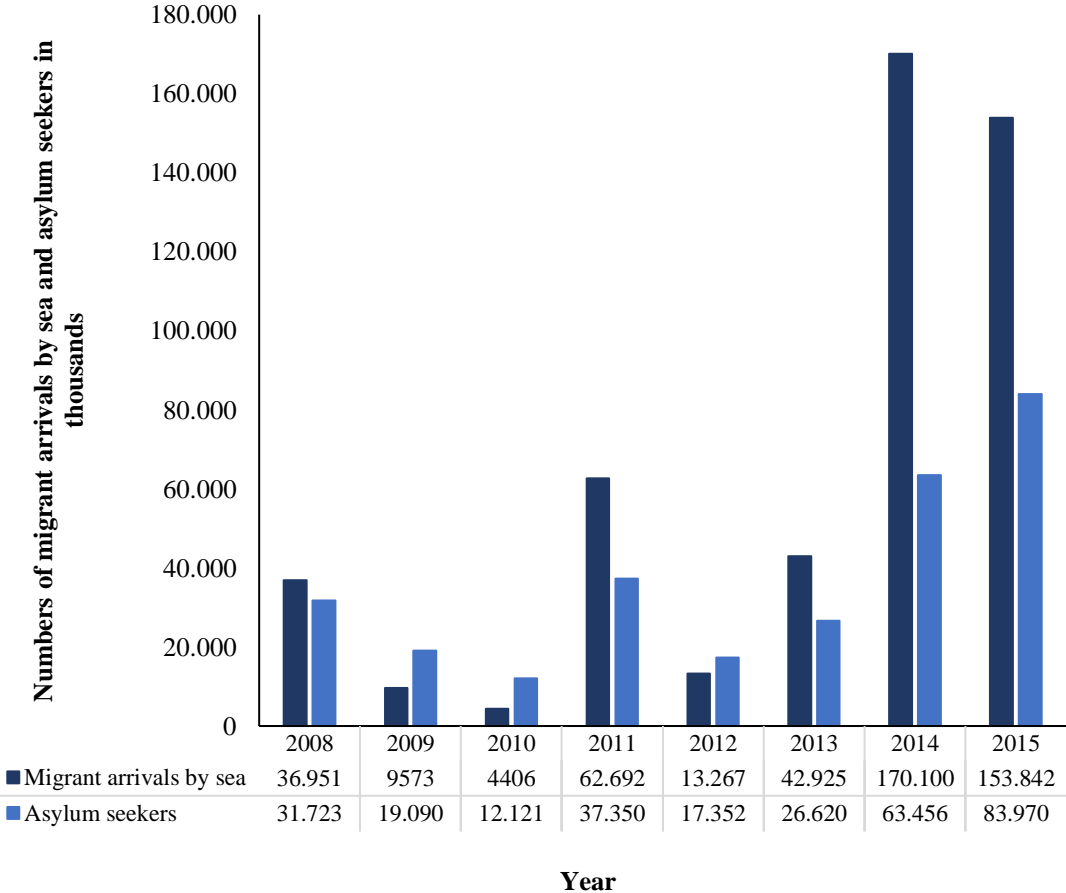
Expert, Ministry 2

Immigration from North Africa and the Horn of Africa had affected Italy already during the 1980s, when the first Tunisian fishermen came to Sicily (Einaudi 2007, 87). The presence of immigrants from Africa in Italy was further consolidated in the next decade, with new flows from Morocco. In this context, the foreign population in Italy continuously increased from one million regular migrant residents at the end of the 1990s (Natale and Strozza 1997) to more than five million 15 year later (Strozza 2016). In 2014–2015, the numbers of migrant arrivals

⁵⁸American immigrants in Italy whose data refer to the year 1992 represent the high skilled labor King (1993, 286).

by sea⁵⁹ in Italy via the Central Mediterranean route and of asylum seekers⁶⁰ increased significantly (see Figure 20 below).⁶¹

Figure 20. Arrivals by Sea and Asylum Seekers in Italy in 2011–2015



Source: Author’s own depiction, based on Fondazione ISMU’s use of the Ministry of Interior data in 2011–2015.

The continuous migration pressure on the country compelled the Italian government to call on the EU to take further involvement in the refugee issue. In particular, on May 12, 2014, a shipwreck occurred 40 km from the Libyan coast and 100 km from the southern tip of Lampedusa.⁶² In this tragedy, 200 refugees were rescued by the Italian navy while another 200

⁵⁹The term “migrant arrivals by sea” refer to all the PCNIP that came to Italy but who did not necessarily lodge an asylum application in the country. This definition is used in the same form as in the Ministry of Interior database for transparency.

⁶⁰The term “asylum seeker” refers, in the case of Italy, to all third-country nationals and stateless persons who have submitted for the first time the following international-protection applications: namely for refugee status, subsidiary protection, and humanitarian protection. These are recognized by Italian legislation, and have been harmonized also at the EU-wide level.

⁶¹For further information, see: <https://www.ismu.org/dati-sulle-migrazioni/#1533031926786-9a9062e2-45e1> (accessed March 11, 2020).

⁶²For further information, see: https://www.ansa.it/english/news/2014/05/12/new-migrant-boat-disaster-off-lampedusa_df5c4f84-680b-422a-afd3-510df8193216.html (accessed January 23, 2020).

are presumed to have lost their lives in the Mediterranean. In this context, the minister of the interior, Angelino Alfano, expressly asked for the assistance of the EU by accusing it at the same time of lacking solidarity.

“Europe is not helping us. There have been many deaths near Libya, our ships are there recovering the dead and rescuing the living: Europe is not helping us. Take charge of welcoming the living.”

Angelino Alfano, Minister of the Interior of Italy, May 12, 2014⁶³

As a consequence, the Commission at that time addressed the involvement of all member states by putting forward proposals for relocations from refugee camps outside the EU—as emphasized by EU Commissioner for Home Affairs Cecilia Malmström.

“If each state were to relocate even just a few thousand people, this would make a huge difference to hundreds of thousands of people in need and significantly reduce the pressure of migration flows in the Mediterranean.”

Cecilia Malmström, EU Commissioner for Home Affairs, May 12, 2014⁶⁴

Despite the continuous calls of the Italian government and of the EU institutions on the necessity to address the refugee issue at the EU-wide level, few answers aiming at a coordinated strategy arrived from the member states. The shipwreck that occurred on April 19, 2015, 60 km off the Libyan coast, where more than 700 hundred persons lost their lives,⁶⁵ put the refugee issue on the agenda of the Council meeting held from April 23, 2015. The 28 EU member states agreed to treat the refugee issue at the EU-wide level by suggesting a series of measures, among them strengthening EU operations in the Mediterranean, the fight against smugglers, the prevention of irregular migration, as well as the promotion of solidarity and responsibility among member states. The latter proposal included the possible creation of an emergency relocation scheme on a voluntary basis (EU Council 2015a).

These proposals were operationalized through a common action, the EUAM, launched on May 13, 2015. The core principle that addressed the migration pressure faced by the Italian

⁶³For further information, see La Repubblica (2014) “Immigrazione: Ue scioccata, chiede confronto a 28. Alfano: “L’Europa non ci aiuta.” Available online at: <https://s.gwdg.de/IIS8xE> (accessed February 11, 2020).

⁶⁴For further information, see https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/STATEMENT_14_155 (accessed February 11, 2020).

⁶⁵For further information, see: <https://s.gwdg.de/RpfNFm> (accessed January 23, 2020).

government as well as the other FECs (particularly Greece) was the responsibility sharing for PCNIP (EU Commission 2015a).

“The road Europe has set out on is the one I have been fighting for years.”

Angelino Alfano, Minister of the Interior, May 10, 2015⁶⁶

The EU member states had to negotiate at the heart of the Council on implementing the RS, a particularly difficult process. In this context, the questions that arise concern the Italian government’s behavior during that negotiation process. The next section will detail what explains Italy’s agreement with the RS and the country’s bargaining power during the related negotiation process.

6.2.2 Italy’s Bargaining Power

In those negotiations, the interstate bargaining power of the EU member states was determined by the distribution of benefits between them in relation to the principle of responsibility sharing for PCNIP. Thus the IV that explains their positions during the negotiations, as mentioned above, is the degree of migration pressure faced, with member states under higher such pressure gaining more from an agreement than those facing lighter migration pressure or even none at all. In the following, the position of Italy will be explained specifically in reference to H_{3A}.

H_{3A}: The more attractive the unilateral policy alternative a country has, the less likely the state will bargain with the new agreement.

The negotiations unfolded between member states that were interested in maintaining the status quo, that is D III R, and those that campaigned for a new agreement, namely the RS. In respect of D III R, being a FEC implies that Italy is responsible for accepting and registering PCNIP.

⁶⁶For further information, see Bei (2015) at: <https://www.interno.gov.it/it/stampa-e-comunicazione/interventi-e-interviste/interventi-e-interviste-raccolta-anni-precedenti/alfano-piano-libia> (accessed February 11, 2020).

“What regulates the flows in the Mediterranean is the Dublin Regulation. The Dublin Regulation was signed by Italy a few years ago, stipulating that a person can only ask for asylum when they set foot in an EU country [...]”

Expert, EIG 1

However the Italian government failed to register all of the increasing migrant arrivals by sea especially in the biennium 2014–2015, leading to the secondary movement of PCNIP to the northern EU member states (Börzel 2016; Zaun 2018). This caused further conflict at the EU-wide level, as well as regarding the finalization of a common agreement on responsibility sharing.

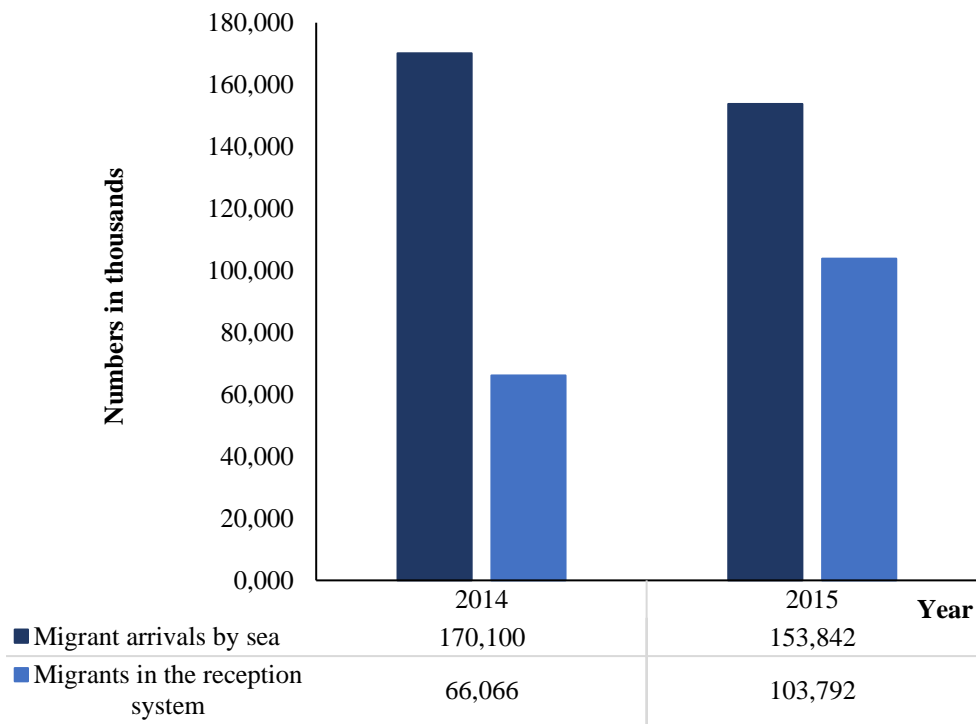
“If the Dublin procedure provided for the asylum application to be analyzed in the country of first entry, as we had done for three years, we let people through (keep in mind that the figure is quite trivial: 150,000 landings and 50,000 people in reception means that the other 100,000 had already gone to other countries) [...]”

Expert, Ministry 2

Data provided by the Ministry of Interior show that in the biennium 2014–2015, on the Italian coast arrived 170,100 and 153,842 migrants respectively across the two years. Of these, only 66,066 individuals in 2014 and 103,792 in 2015 were in the structures of the SIPROIMI (see Figure 21 below).⁶⁷

⁶⁷Security Decree 113/2018 of October 4, 2018, converted into Law 132/2018 on December 1, 2018, changed the Protection System for Asylum Seekers and Refugees to the SIPROIMI. The latter was strongly criticized for a series of restrictions introduced and with regard to the conditions encountered by the PCNIP welcomed in these centers. The most relevant ones were: the abolition of humanitarian protection, substituted by the permitted stay for particular reasons; the detention of asylum seekers for a maximum of 30 days at hotspots and border-crossing points, as well as in the centers of accommodation (the Extraordinary Reception Centers, Centri per Accoglienza Straordinaria, and the Centers for the Accommodation of Asylum Seekers, Centri di Accoglienza per Richiedenti Asilo); the extension of detention in the Returning Centers (Centri di Permanenza per il Rimpatrio) for a maximum of 180 days instead of the previous 90, also for asylum seekers; the withdrawal or refusal of international protection; and, the exclusion from the register of asylum seekers.

Figure 21. Comparison of Refugee Arrivals by Sea and Those Present in the Structures of the Reception System in Italy in 2014–2015



Source: Author’s own depiction, based on Fondazione ISMU’s use of Ministry of Interior data in 2014–2015.

Hence the promotion of further cooperation at the EU-wide level on the distribution of refugees through the RS was for Italy the preferred solution here compared to both maintaining the status quo (the FEC rule under D III R) and the unilateral policy alternative represented by the further travel of refugees to northern EU member states.

Prime Minister Renzi, during the EU Council meeting of June 25–26, 2015, emphasized the necessity to address the refugee issue at the EU-wide level. In this regard, it is relevant to underline that the benefits vis-à-vis unilateral policies that Italy had—that is, letting people move on to northern EU member states—were less attractive compared to those deriving from participation in the RS. More specifically, Italy was promised to receive EUR 500 toward the travel costs of every person relocated (Baptista 2018, 210) as well as the EU’s support on the refugee issue also in future. Renzi criticized at the same time those member states—particularly Hungary—that opposed the agreement to relocate 40,000 refugees from Italy and Greece according to a quota system.⁶⁸

⁶⁸For further information, see the declaration of Prime Minister Renzi at: <https://s.gwdg.de/hvcmWX> (accessed February 3, 2020).

By contrast, in the previous Council meeting that took place on April 23, 2015, the EU member states had committed, as noted, to providing the emergency relocation on a voluntary basis of refugees from the FECs.⁶⁹

“If you don’t agree on the distribution of the 40,000 migrants, you are not worthy to call yourselves Europe [...]. If this is your idea of Europe, keep it. Either there is solidarity, or you won’t waste our time.”

Matteo Renzi, Prime Minister, June 25, 2015⁷⁰

The clear choice of Italy to agree with the RS in the two implementing Decisions was further cemented in the Council meetings that took place on September 14 and 22, 2015. They implemented respectively the relocation of 40,000 and 120,000 PCNIP from Italy and Greece according to the consensus reached among EU member states during the Council meeting of July 20, 2015 (EU Council 2015a).

“Europe did not discuss, it decided. Europe decided in favor of Italy. It did not do it because it was good; it did it because we were right.”

Angelino Alfano, Minister of the Interior, September 23, 2015⁷¹

Interstate bargaining theory⁷² posits that the willingness to cooperate at the EU-wide level depends on the distribution of benefits in relation to those contrariwise that would be derived from the “best alternatives to the negotiated agreement,” differently named as the “outside option” (Moravcsik 1993, 500). This means that the more benefits that arise from unilateral policy alternatives, the less likely it is that a given EU member state will cooperate on the new agreement. Concerning the migration pressure faced, the benefits derived by the agreement represented by the RS were more attractive for Italy as a FEC than upholding the status quo represented by D III R; this was true as well for the unilateral policy alternative of not

⁶⁹For further information, see the declaration of former president of the Council Donald Tusk at: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2015/04/23/special-euco-statement/> (accessed February 3, 2020).

⁷⁰For further information, see D’Argenio (2015) at: <https://s.gwdg.de/8ke5SF> (accessed March 23, 2020).

⁷¹For further information, see <https://s.gwdg.de/thRUgX> (accessed February 11, 2020).

⁷²According to interstate bargaining theory, negotiations at the EU-wide level occur under the following three conditions: a unanimity voting procedure; low transaction costs; and, asymmetrical interdependence Moravcsik (1998, 60; 1993, 498). However the preferred decision-making procedure within the Council is a consensus-based one Lewis (2000). This was used also during the negotiation process vis-à-vis the RS, where the EU member states tried to come to the same cooperative position. This means that the risk of nonagreement can be assumed, as in the case of unanimity voting. By contrast only in its final stages, on September 22 and 24, 2015, was the RS surprisingly approved by QMV.

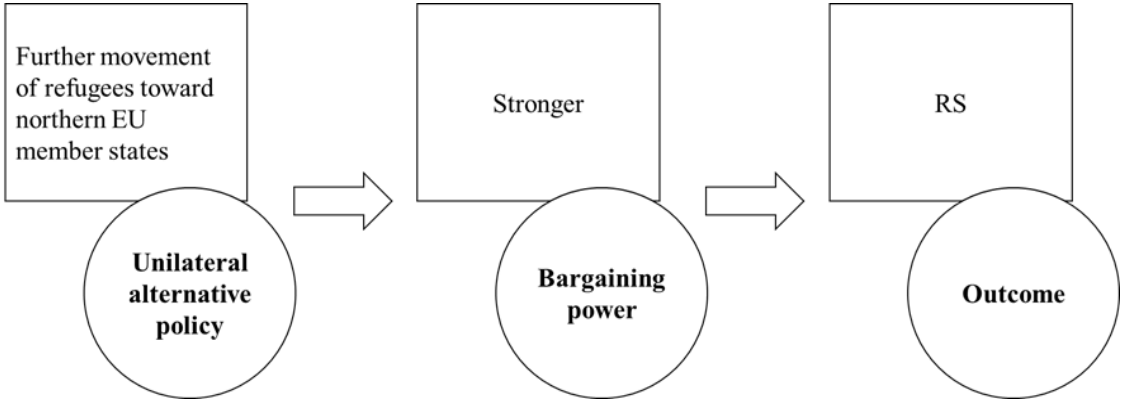
registering all migrant arrivals by sea and allowing their further travel to northern EU member states. The RS’s benefits were the reduction of the migration pressure faced through the responsibility sharing toward refugees, the covering of the costs of every refugee relocated, and close EU cooperation in future too.

“As far as Italy [can be] compared to other countries, [it] has objectively more difficulties in controlling its borders (it has thousands of kilometers of coast unlike many countries that have land borders, making it very complicated for Italy to control arrivals) [...]. Therefore, there are countries that have more interest in promoting a policy of shared responsibility.”

Expert, NGIG 1

This implies a greater Italian state preference for the agreement, thus choosing the RS over D III R, and stronger bargaining power given the unilateral policy alternatives—namely letting people go to the northern EU member states—that might lessen or alleviate altogether the migration pressure faced (see Figure 22 below).

Figure 22. Italian Bargaining Power in Relation to Unilateral Alternative Policy



Source: Author’s own depiction.

The Italian government preferred the RS compared to the unilateral policy alternatives as a result of the abovementioned benefits it receives from this new agreement. This means that the Italian government refuted both the FEC rule determined by D III R (because of the geographical position of the country) as well as the further movement of refugees toward Northern Europe (representing the unilateral policy alternative it had vis-à-vis countering the high migration pressure faced).

“The effort to welcome asylum seekers must be shared within the European framework, without being entrenched in the application of D III R—which requires asylum seekers to remain in the EU country of first entry, thus placing an unbearable burden on border countries”

Filippo Bubbico, Vice Minister of the Interior, August 30, 2015⁷³

The second determinant of bargaining power of EU member states is the potential benefits from existing alternative coalitions. Therefore, H_{3B} is of relevance here:

H_{3B} : The easier a country can form alternative coalitions, the less likely state will compromise on its own position.

The Italian government had no official alternative coalitions within or without the EU when negotiating over the RS. Therefore it would be theoretically expected that the Italian government had to compromise greatly and had less bargaining power, given the fact that it is a FEC. However, the empirical material reveals something different: Italy had de facto alternative coalitions in relation to the migration pressure faced, that is the support since spring 2015 of the largest member states such as Germany and the UK for addressing the refugee issue at the EU-wide level. In particular the German position strongly helped promote cooperation at the EU-wide level on responsibility sharing for refugees and in showing solidarity with the FECs.

“We are ready to assist Italy and Greece in the reception, registration, and implementation of the procedures. Also with massive staff support.”

Thomas de Maizière, Minister of the Interior of Germany, June 2, 2015⁷⁴

This strengthened the bargaining power of Italy during the whole negotiation process that led to the RS’s approval on September 22, 2015, which implied the fair distribution of PCNIP at the EU-wide level. Furthermore, the Italian government showed less compromise on the RS.

⁷³For further information, see Spagnolo (2015) at: <https://s.gwdg.de/gUCEou> (accessed February 11, 2020).

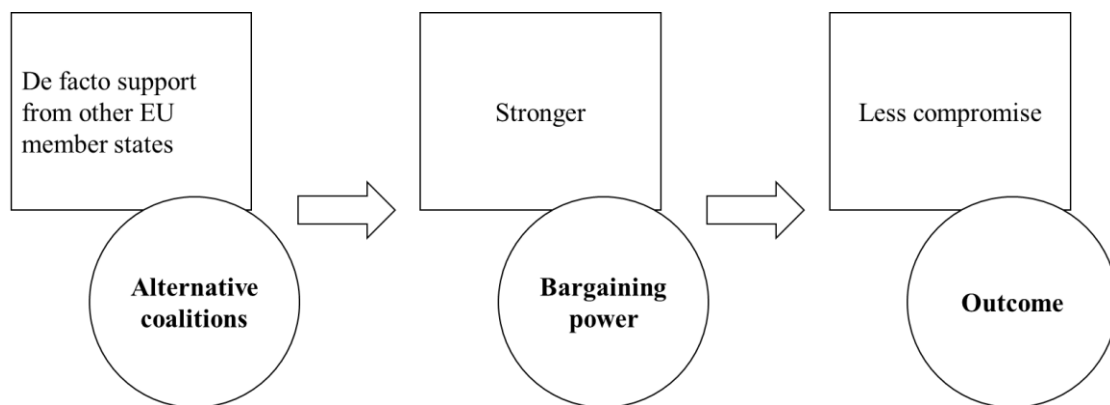
⁷⁴For further information, see “Press Release Ministry of Interior Germany (2015c) at: <https://www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/kurzmeldungen/DE/2015/05/g6-treffen-auf-schloss-moritzburg.html> (accessed February 11, 2020).

“If Europe chooses solidarity, good. If it doesn’t, we have Plan B ready. But it would first and foremost hurt Europe.”

Matteo Renzi, Prime Minister, June 14, 2015⁷⁵

Thus the empirical evidence offered by the Italian case meets the postulation of H_{3B}, as the result of the de facto alternative coalitions that the country had: namely the support of the largest EU member states. This explains why the support provided by other EU member states is defined as a de facto alternative coalition, because it is proven by the empirical evidence. As a consequence, Italy exercised strong bargaining power and lesser compromise vis-à-vis the RS (see Figure 23 below).

Figure 23. Italian Bargaining Power in Relation to Alternative Coalitions



Source: Author’s own depiction

Despite the proclamation of a concrete Plan B by Prime Minister Renzi during the Council meeting of June 15–16, 2015, several options were in fact discussed. They included possible agreements with Germany and France aimed at facilitating the distribution of refugees between themselves as well as the stipulation of a bilateral agreement with Libya vis-à-vis constructing refugee camps there (Galeazzi 2015). After having reached agreement regarding the RS, in fact, Italy initiated cooperation with Libya in order to control migration better. This led to a bilateral agreement known as the “Memorandum with Libya” signed in February 2017, with the aim to assist the Libyan coastguard fight illegal migration and smugglers (Baldwin-Edwards and Lutterbeck 2019). Conversely, the “Memorandum with Libya” was not declared during the Council meeting of June 2015. Furthermore given that, as noted, it was signed only in February 2017, it thus falls outside the scope of this thesis.

⁷⁵For further information, see Nielsen (2015) at: <https://euobserver.com/justice/129109> (accessed February 13, 2020).

H_{3c} relates to the bargaining power on issue linkages:

H_{3c}: The more asymmetrical the national preferences of an EU member state are, the more likely there are issue linkages.

This implies that EU member states whose national preferences on the responsibility sharing for PCNIP are asymmetrical—and that also in other policy fields, with greater benefits in some of those than in others—tend to make concessions. However, what the empirical evidence shows is that the negotiations on the RS took place in regard only to one individual issue—that is, the distribution of refugees at the EU-wide level in the biennium 2015–2017—without having implications for other areas of cooperation (Šelo Šabić 2017), alternate policy fields, and different benefits. Therefore *H_{3c}* cannot be applied at all to the analysis of any of the three EU member states making up the case studies of this thesis.

6.3 Summary of the Empirical Findings: The Italian Case Study

This chapter has provided analysis of the Italian state's behavior toward refugees at the national level and regarding its cooperation on responsibility sharing for them at the European one. In this regard, the following research findings have been identified. First, the contrasting interests of domestic actors in different sectors is what led to the formal acceptance of refugees at the national level. The determinants here were the demand for labor in the agricultural sector compared to the lack of interest in taking on migrant labor in the industrial sector respectively. Furthermore the lack of corresponding outside options in agriculture, underlined by the drastic reduction of the labor-migrant quota based on the Flows Decree (after 2011), strengthened further the availability of refugees as an additional labor resource.

Similarly, secondary ideational state preferences also informed the formal acceptance of refugees at the domestic level. This is explained by the following factors: on the one side, the European ideology encapsulated in values like the respecting of human rights, the compliance with the national, European, and international conventions aimed at protecting the right to asylum, as well as humanitarianism. On the other, Euroscepticism would start to grow in Italian society already during the great recession—and then increase afterward. Furthermore, the rise of right-wing political parties and the corresponding exploitation of the refugee issue would increase anti-immigrant sentiments in society.

Second, the effects of the formal-acceptance patterns underpinning state preferences are mirrored in the cooperative behavior of the Italian government on the RS. In particular, the

extensive migration pressure faced regarding the high number of first asylum applications lodged in the country, the arrivals by sea of PCNIP, and the country's geographical position on the EU's external borders led to the categorization of Italy as a FEC. Bargaining power has been analyzed in relation to the potential benefits derived from unilateral policy alternatives and from alternative coalitions compared to those benefits actually accruing from consenting to the new agreement (that is, the RS).

With regard to those unilateral policy alternatives, the Italian case shows that cooperation on the RS was determined by the benefits that it generated: namely the reduction of the migration pressure faced, the covering of the travel costs of each relocated refugee, as well as the close cooperation with the EU both now and in future. This led to Italy's refusal to maintain the status quo (that is, D III R). As for alternative coalitions, the Italian government showed less compromise on the RS than might have been theoretically expected given the circumstances faced. This is explainable by the de facto alternative coalitions that the country had available: namely the support received from other influential EU member states (particularly Germany and the UK).

In order to analyze state preferences on the (non)acceptance of refugees at the national level and those regarding cooperation on the responsibility sharing for them at the European one, it is important to examine other case studies too. This represents the aim of the next chapter then, which will focus on outlining and explaining the Hungarian state's behavior in these regards.

7 Explaining the Hungarian State's Behavior toward Refugees: Nonacceptance and Noncooperation on Responsibility Sharing

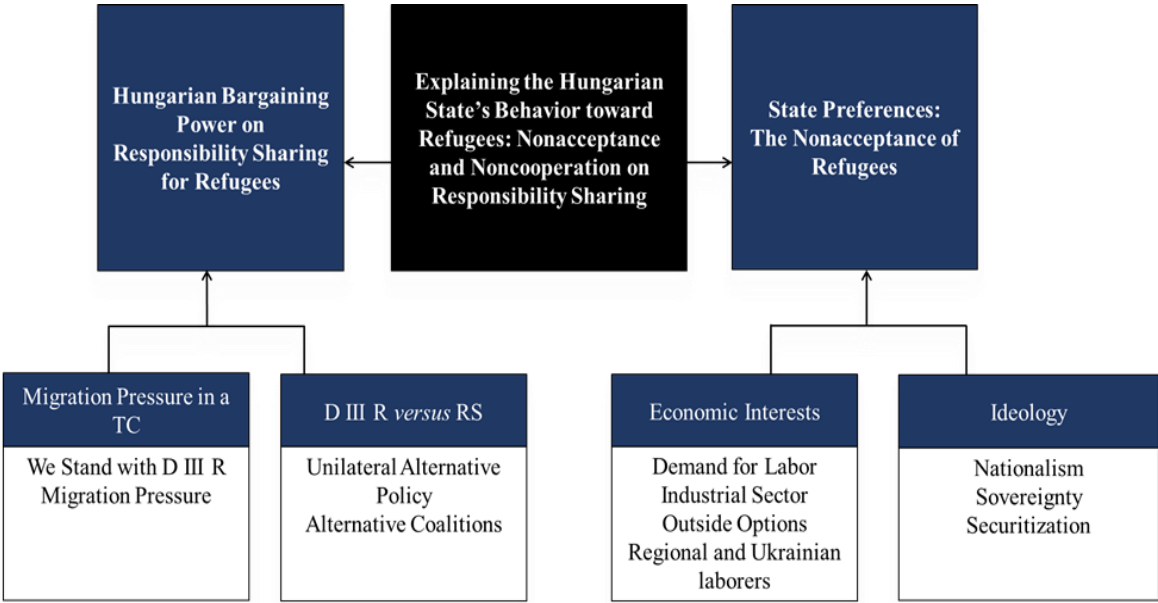
This study argues that the cooperation toward the responsibility sharing for refugees at the EU-wide level is explained as the result of the strength of the primary economic interests of domestic actors and secondary ideological ones that inform state preferences concerning refugees at the national level. Thus, this chapter will focus on the empirical analysis of another EU member state: Hungary (see Figure 24 below). More specifically, its two analytical parts concern, first, the formation of Hungarian state preferences with regard to the acceptance of refugees at the national level (RQ₁) and, second, the country's bargaining power on the RS based on the principle of cooperation vis-à-vis responsibility sharing for them at the European one (RQ₂). These two aspects will be examined in the context of the crucial year 2015 particularly.

Economic interests represent the first source of the Hungarian state's preferences, and reflect the interests of domestic actors toward refugees. In particular, the core aspect herein is the low unemployment rate leading to the demand for labor that was especially pressing in the industrial sector but also for SMEs. Of particular relevance for Hungarian state preferences and its nonacceptance of refugees were the outside options available. These refer to the regional and Ukrainian laborers preferred by Hungarian domestic interest groups, as well as by the government, over refugees. Ideological interests constitute the secondary determinant of the state preferences that resulted in the nonacceptance of refugees. In particular, they reflect the clear dominance of nationalistic social values that reject refugees over the European values, the latter particularly focused on forms of civil society volunteering aimed at helping refugees in the difficult summer of 2015.

Bargaining power is discussed in the second analytical part of the chapter. It refers to the noncooperative position of the Hungarian government on the RS introducing responsibility sharing for refugees at the EU-wide level. The core aspect determining Hungary's bargaining position is the migration pressure that the country has as a TC. Therefore the focus of the Hungarian government was on the maintenance of the status quo (that is, D III R) rather than on the new agreement (namely the RS). The bargaining power of the Hungarian government in the context of the Council has two core determinants: unilateral policy alternatives and alternative coalitions. The former refers to a series of measures—especially amendments of the Asylum Act—aimed at alleviating the migration pressure on the country and at making compliance with D III R more attractive. The latter include the alliance of Hungary with the Visegrad countries, who seek not to promote the RS at the heart of the Council. This sheds light

on the relevance of the voting procedure chosen for the implementation of the new agreement, and its influence on the overall outcome of the related negotiation process. The chapter’s structure is outlined below.

Figure 24. **Chapter 7—Explaining the Hungarian’s State Behavior toward Refugees: Nonacceptance and Noncooperation on Responsibility Sharing**



Source: Author’s own depiction.

7.1 State Preferences: The Hungarian Government’s Argument for Not Accepting Refugees

Hungarian national preferences regarding the nonacceptance of refugees in summer 2015 were, as noted, formed as the result of the primary economic interests of domestic actors and because of the latter’s secondary ideological ones too. This formation process is studied through the empirical evidence obtained during the field research in Hungary based on the conduction of several interviews with experts in the field of asylum and migration working among domestic interest groups, the secondary empirical literature, as well as on the labor market and social indicators relating to refugees. The primary economic interests regarding refugees are operationalized by the increased demand for labor that characterized the Hungarian economy in the biennium 2014–2015. The core yardsticks used for measurement here are the high employment and low unemployment rates, and the number of newly available jobs especially in the automotive industry, construction, as well as in manufacturing. Despite the high demand

for labor in Hungary, the government still did not accept refugees. The question that arises, then, is: Why?

In this regard, a second factor relating to those economic interests is relevant: namely the available outside options. The latter refer to the alternatives that domestic actors had compared to choosing to accept refugees. These options being viable means that they needed to be more attractive than the intake of refugees.

The outside options in this country case are the regional labor pool, especially the so-called ethnic Hungarians in the regional neighborhood, but also Ukrainian labor. In this context, Hungarian domestic interest groups were asked to weigh up the attractiveness of these outside options compared to refugees' acceptance. According to the empirical evidence obtained, knowledge of the Hungarian language and the underlying costs needed for the integration of refugees are the core elements explaining this choice of the former over the latter on the part of those domestic interest groups. This led, thus, to the nonacceptance of refugees in Hungary in the biennium 2014–2015.

The Hungarian state's preferences on refugees were also grounded, as noted, in secondary ideological interests. They concern the core conflict between three principles: nationalism, sovereignty, and migration's securitization. They clearly dominated over the European ideology in summer 2015. The latter was particularly expressed in volunteering activities by domestic actors and civil society aimed at assisting refugees.

Nationalism, understood as the preoccupation with one's own identity and cultural heritage, definitely has had its part to play in the nonacceptance of refugees in Hungarian society more generally. In this regard, the course of Hungarian history has been crucial for the formation of a particularly strong national identity. Focus on sovereignty, understood as the exercising of the state's authority in its own territory and with it the provision of national security, further reinforced the Hungarian government's choice to not accept refugees. This is due to the common social perception that refugees are persons who cross borders illegally, and thus they might put the security of domestic citizens at risk. Securitization reflects the threat that refugees presents in the mind of Hungarian society. They are identified with a series of phenomena closely connected to the security issue, such as crime, terrorism, and social instability. The direct correlation between refugees and the threat that they embody for Hungarian society has been demonstrated by a number of public opinion surveys (Messing and SÁgvári 2018; Simonovits 2016; Simonovits 2020). However, it is important to underline that the nonacceptance of refugees was also protested from the perspective of human rights and

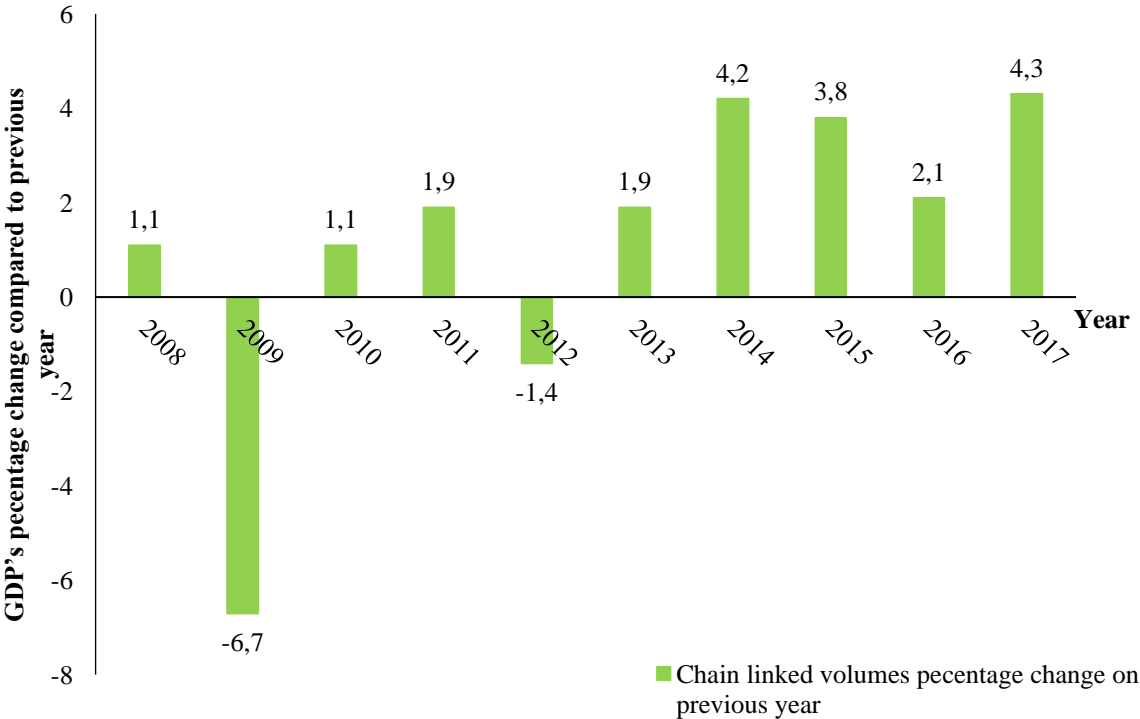
European values in the country. In particular, this was articulated by individual volunteers or through the NGOs that they worked for.

In sum, it is argued that the Hungarian state’s preferences were formed by harmonized primary economic interests based on the demand for labor being fully satisfied by alternative sources thereof—ones that are more attractive in nature to domestic actors. Additionally, those preferences reflect also the dominance of nationalistic ideology over a European identity. Detailed delineations of the Hungarian state’s preferences, as informing the nonacceptance of refugees, in relation to both the sources as well as the variables summarized above now follow.

7.1.1 Economic interests

The great recession strongly affected the Hungarian economy, especially regarding the stability and the purchasing power of the national currency (the forint). In particular, the accompanying decrease of national production as well as of consumption affected the Hungarian economy negatively (Cseres-Gergely and Scharle 2010). As a consequence, the country GDP’s declined by 6.7 percent in the biennium 2008–2009 (see Figure 25 below). The most affected sectors, ones characterized by the strong reduction in investments, were construction and manufacturing (Egedy 2012, 164).

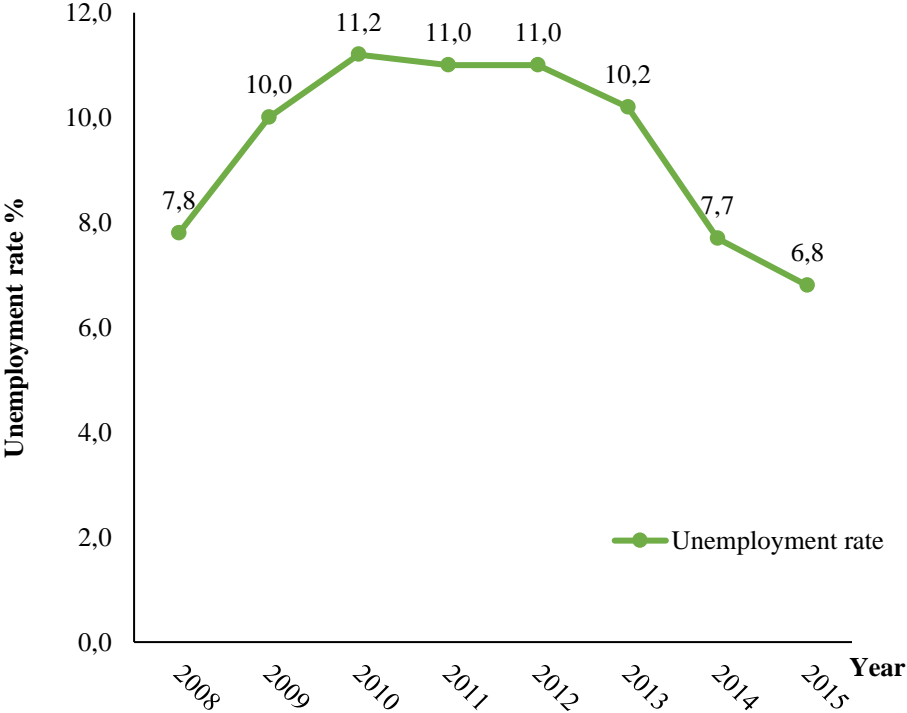
Figure 25. GDP’s Trend in Hungary in 2008–2017



Source: Author’s own depiction, based on Eurostat data in 2008–2015.

The unemployment rate represents the core indicator of how the labor market was affected by the great recession.⁷⁶ With regard to the age group of 15 to 74 years old, the unemployment rate increased from 7.8 percent in 2008 to 10 percent in 2009 (see Figure 26 below). The core branches within the industrial sector that registered a significant increase in the unemployment rate were particularly those concerning the manufacturing of transport equipment, electronics, rubber, and plastic products (Kiss 2012, 71).

Figure 26. Unemployment Rate in Hungary in 2008-2015



Source: Author’s own depiction, based on Eurostat data in 2008–2015.

In the aftermath of the great recession and with the change of government in 2010, a series of measures were undertaken to help the national economy recover as well as to improve further the labor market. Most of these actions occurred in the triennium 2010–2013. Specifically, the Hungarian government implemented the following measures regarding the national labor market (Matolcsy and Palotai 2018, 18):

⁷⁶Data relating to the unemployment rate in Hungary between 2008 and 2015 are provided by Eurostat, since the official national database does not provide any specification on the age group (15 to 74 years old) to which it refers.

- *the introduction of the flat-rate personal income tax*⁷⁷ in order to spur an increase in working capacity among those already employed;
- *the adoption of public works programs*⁷⁸ through the Job Protection Act that increased the demand for labor and created employment opportunities, particularly for the most vulnerable employees such as the unskilled or those in the agricultural sector;
- *the introduction of the family tax base allowance* that increases with the number of dependent children in the family was issued to tackle the demographic problems in the long run. It had also a moderate impact on the supply of labor.

Furthermore, the introduction of the so-called crises taxes establishing higher consumption levies for retail chains, telecommunications, and energy also contributed to restoring the fiscal balance (Kézdi 2012). As a consequence, Hungarian macroeconomic indicators further improved—especially regarding GDP’s trend evolution—after the application of these reforms, culminating in the biennium 2014–2015 (see Figure 25 above). GDP, as the data below demonstrate, ensued in the biennium 2010–2011. By contrast, between 2011 and 2012 it decreased as a consequence of the economic recession that hit the Eurozone. This translated into a downturn in GDP of -1.4 percent in 2012. In the triennium 2013–2015, Hungarian GDP registered a positive trend meanwhile, reaching its highest values in 2014 and 2015: 4.2 percent and 3.8 percent respectively.

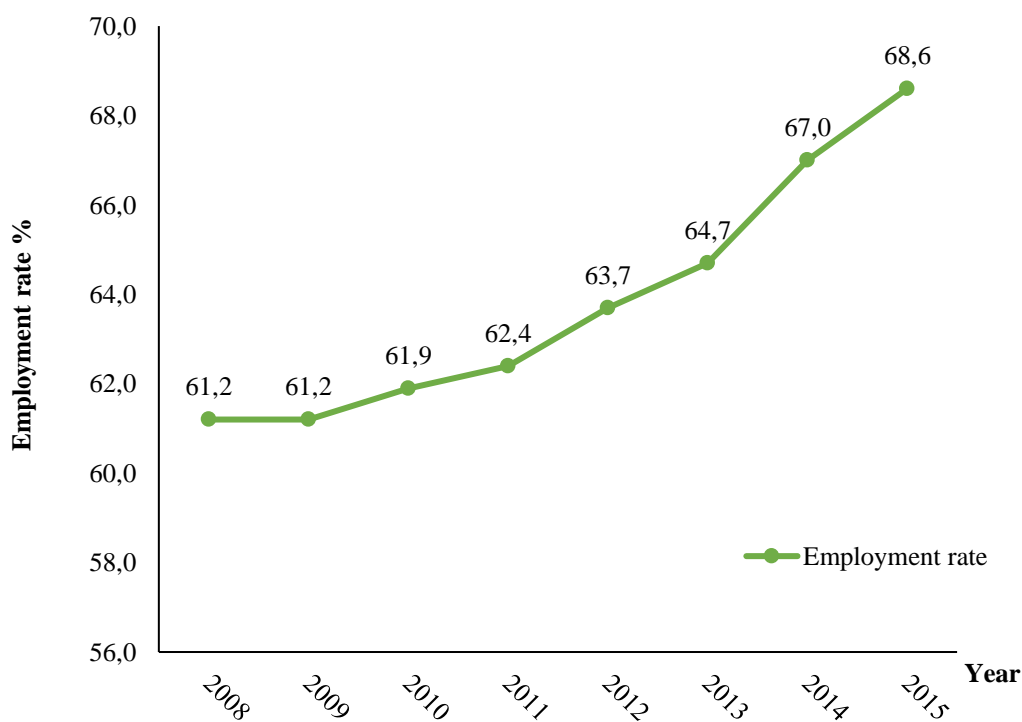
Besides the direct impact of the measures undertaken in the post-2008 period on the performance of the labor market, additional exogenous factors were also crucial to recovery: namely the increase of EU funds and the favorable international financial environment (Oblath 2016).

⁷⁷The flat-rate tax was introduced on January 1, 2011, with the aim to improve the performance of the national labor market, with it relating to the reduction of the tax wedge for workers as well as the increase of the employment rate.

⁷⁸The scheme known as “Pathway to Work” was devised for the category of people considered “long-term unemployed,” aimed at decreasing the overall unemployment rate in Hungary post–great recession Matolcsy and Palotai (2018).

The other indicator that registered a positive trend regarding the national labor market was the employment rate of those between 15 and 64 years old (see Figure 27 below).⁷⁹

Figure 27. **Employment Rate in Hungary in 2008–2015**



Source: Author's own depiction, based on Eurostat data in 2008–2015.

This rate increased particularly in the biennium 2010–2012. The employment rate reached its highest values in the biennium 2014–2015, at 67 percent and 68.6 percent respectively—the highest values ever registered. The increase of the employment rate during the post-2008 period reflects partially the result of the introduction of public works programs.

“In Hungary there is this public works system, referring to those who are channeled to public work. They are employed, they are considered not to be unemployed; those who are in the scheme, they are in employment.”

Academic Expert, Kopint-Tárki Institute for Economic Research

More specifically, participation of people in the public works programs increased from an annual average of 182,4 thousand in 2014 to 348 thousand in 2015, with the core areas involved

⁷⁹Data regarding the employment rate are provided by Eurostat, and refer to the age group between 15 and 64 years old as compared to the active population, in line with the definition provided by the ILO.

being the public sector, state-owned enterprises, as well as the nonprofit world (Bakó and Lakatos 2015, 22; Bakó and Lakatos 2016, 20).

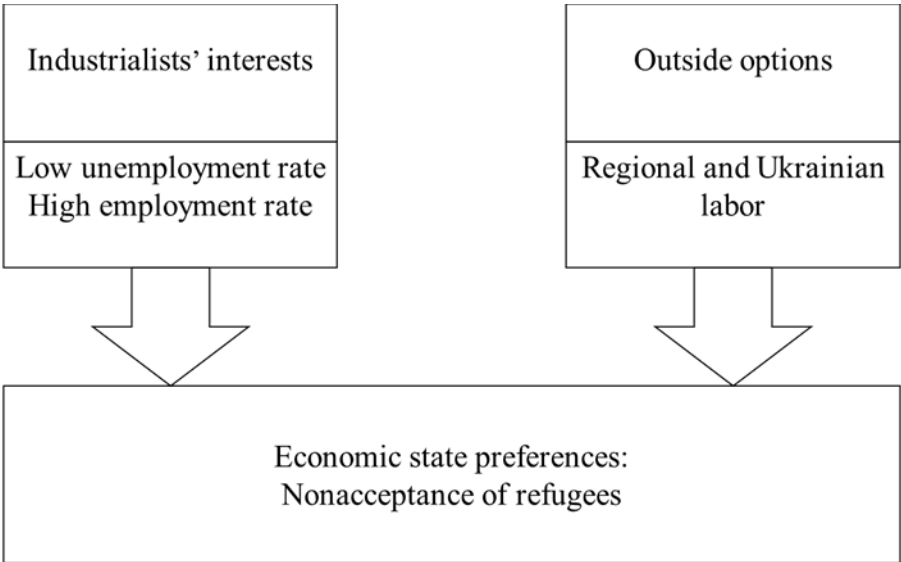
7.1.1.1 The Industrial Sector

In the following, Hungarian state preferences are now delineated with a focus on the nonacceptance of refugees as relating to the core IV of interest: that is, the demand for labor. Therefore, the validity of H₁ is scrutinized here:

H₁: The stronger the demand for labor forces in a country and the weaker the outside options, the more likely the acceptance of refugees.

According to the core argument, Hungarian state preferences reflect the primary economic interests of domestic actors. For the latter, regional labor was a more attractive option than accepting refugees (see Figure 28 below).

Figure 28. **Hungarian Economic Interests**



Source: Author’s own depiction, based on interviews and the labor market data.

The Hungarian labor market, as mentioned above, was characterized by a significant increase in the employment rate as well as the demand for labor particularly in the biennium 2014–2015. Among the core sectors that registered an increase in employment was the industrial one, with a special focus on manufacturing, construction, as well as electronics.

“In the electronics field there is a huge need for labor, because of the human capital movements within the EU market. Following the integration of Hungary into the EU, numerous qualified people left the country; with the further progress in technology, the need in this field became more relevant.”

Expert, Ministry 6

“There is a growing gap in manufacturing and construction industry as well. We can talk about low-skilled, medium-skilled and high-skilled workers. There is a growing gap in the customer-care sector.”

Expert, NGIG 5

More specifically, the industrial sector registered a 20 thousands increase regarding the number of available jobs, with them coming especially in the energy and automotive branches in 2014 (Bakó and Lakatos 2015, 24). The same trend characterized SMEs too. The automotive industry then registered an increase of 7.4 percent in new jobs available in 2015, while rubber, plastic, and nonmetallic mineral production registered an equivalent increase of 6.2 percent (Bakó and Lakatos 2016, 19).

“The automotive industry needs labor, and contributes significantly to GDP. Also, related industries such as electronics and manufacturing need labor too. Labor shortages are observed in the healthcare sector as well.”

Expert, EIG 8

The decrease in the unemployment rate is another indicator of the Hungarian labor market’s recovery post-2008. As illustrated in the previous section (see Figure 25 above), it decreased from 7.7 percent in 2014 to 6.8 percent in 2015 for those between 15 to 74 years old compared to previous years. Yet despite the demand for labor in key sectors of the economy, refugees did not represent an attractive alternative to help satisfy it. In this regard, the interviewed domestic actors listed two core arguments for why. First, the language barrier and the time that would be required for these individuals’ integration (as well as the economic costs relating to it).

“So, if you need employees in a labor market, then the choice is yours. You can invite these people through employment schemes; or you can invite refugees or let in asylum seekers, those recognized with refugee status, and then invest in them to get over their psychosocial problems, to get over their training and education problems, to get over them [needing to] learn the appropriate language, and then eventually [they would] grow.”

Expert, NGIG 6

Second, the limited capacities that the Hungarian asylum system has vis-à-vis the integration of refugees. This means restricted funding for language programs, housing, as well as for facilitating access to the labor market.

“The services that a recognized refugee would need at the moment e.g. accommodation, language course, kindergarten for the kids, and so on are disappearing. They could turn to the Hungarian social security system, which is weak at the moment and is not prepared to work with migrants and refugees because of the language barrier and lack of knowledge on how to work with asylum seekers. So, it is getting more and more problematic even if someone is recognized as a refugee. They will be in a very difficult situation, because the projects that used to be available until early 2015 are no longer available.”

Expert, NGIG 5

H₁, according to which the high demand for labor is a partial contributor to the acceptance of refugees at the national level, seems not to be valid in the Hungarian case then. This is explainable by the fact that despite the demand for labor in the country being high, domestic interest groups had little interest in accepting refugees. However it is important to understand whether Hungarian domestic interest groups had available outside options they considered more attractive than accepting refugees, in order to proceed with the complete analysis of H₁. In this context, it is relevant to ask how else the Hungarian government might fulfill the demand for labor. This question is now addressed.

7.1.1.2 The Outside Options: The Regional Labor Force

The reason why Hungary did not consider refugees to combat its labor shortages is closely connected to the regional labor force. Of relevance here is understanding labor migration in Hungary previously. According to the interviewed experts from all three types of interest groups, after the fall of the communist regime in 1989 and then throughout the 1990s so-called

ethnic Hungarians from neighboring countries would become the dominant group of labor immigrants in Hungary.

“So at the turn of the 1980s and 1990s it was mostly ethnic Hungarians who came over from Romania, and actually the Hungarian labor market could absorb these people pretty smoothly and pretty well.”

Expert, NGIG 6

In this regard, studies have shown that the ethnic Hungarians who entered Hungary during the 1990s came principally from Romania, Slovakia, Ukraine, and the former Yugoslavia. Furthermore, they gained access to the Hungarian social security system that promoted their socioeconomic integration process. This occurred together with the bureaucracy facilitating their acquisition of Hungarian citizenship within one year (Rusu 2011). By contrast, other studies show that ethnic Hungarians are still socially excluded—in the sense that they are considered foreigners (Fox 2003; 2007). Nevertheless, they still represent the most preferred labor-migration category for domestic actors (Hárs 2001).

Despite these ethnic Hungarians, regional labor migration continued to the country and even increased, particularly in 2008, given the new residence permit introduced by the Immigration Act that entered into force in 2007 (Çağlar and Gereöffy 2008; Gödri 2012; Gödri, Soltész, and Bodacz-Nagy 2014, 24). It is relevant to add here that regional labor migration is also partly characterized by illegality. This predominantly concerns labor migrants from Romania and Ukraine, who are employed in the Hungarian construction, agricultural, and textile sectors. Post-2008, however, the rate of labor migration coming from neighboring countries decreased as the result of the great recession’s earlier-outlined impact on the Hungarian economy (Çağlar and Gereöffy 2008).

Following the economic recovery of subsequent years, as mentioned above, the Hungarian labor market registered an increase in the demand for labor that reached one of its highest points in the biennium 2014–2015. In order to meet that demand, the Hungarian government promoted once again regional labor migration.

“There are hiring companies, for example, in Hungary. They are also present in Ukraine and in Serbia. Therefore, they try to recruit nowadays from abroad and directly.”

Expert, Governmental Agency 2

“The Hungarian government has promoted and enabled programs with private companies, multinational companies, and SMEs in order to satisfy the needs of the market. To this extent, our institution does play an important role because it shares data with the most relevant and biggest Hungarian companies—allowing them to borrow [members of the] workforce. A concrete example is the company Bosch, which will loan 10,000 workers to the Hungarian SMEs.”

Expert, Governmental Agency 1

In particular, the Hungarian government has promoted special programs aimed at attracting labor migrants from countries outside the EU—especially Serbia and Ukraine (Eröss, Kovály, and Tátrai 2016; Hárs 2018, 154). According to data provided by the National Labor Office, newly issued work permits increased from 4,671 to 5,245⁸⁰ in the biennium 2014–2015. Still, these numbers are not particularly high given the introduction of short-term work permits, the authorization to take employment without a visa for seasonal Serbian and Ukrainian workers, as well as the facilitation of the acquisition of citizenship for the ethnic Hungarians still present in these territories.

“There was a new citizenship law again passed by this government in 2011 that allows the expedited naturalization process for ethnic Hungarians [...].”

“The Ukrainians, they are looking for opportunities, and this is organized through agencies. They bring these people first. They live in this kind of workers’ dorm, in kind of very limited conditions in very specific jobs. They get these short-term permits, and obviously these people try to stay here in Hungary and see some kind of future for themselves.”

Academic Expert 1, Central European University

In sum, it is argued that an EU member state facing an increased demand for labor but which has available alternatives to meet it does not accept refugees. Therefore, the patterns of Hungarian state preferences per primary economic interests is what induced the state to not accept refugees. Thus H₁ is confirmed for the Hungarian case.

⁸⁰For further information, see the report “Labor Market Integration of Third-Country Nationals in EU Member States – Hungary” (p.4) of the European Migration Network. Available online at: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/13a_hungary_labor_market_integration_2018_en.pdf (accessed November 25, 2019).

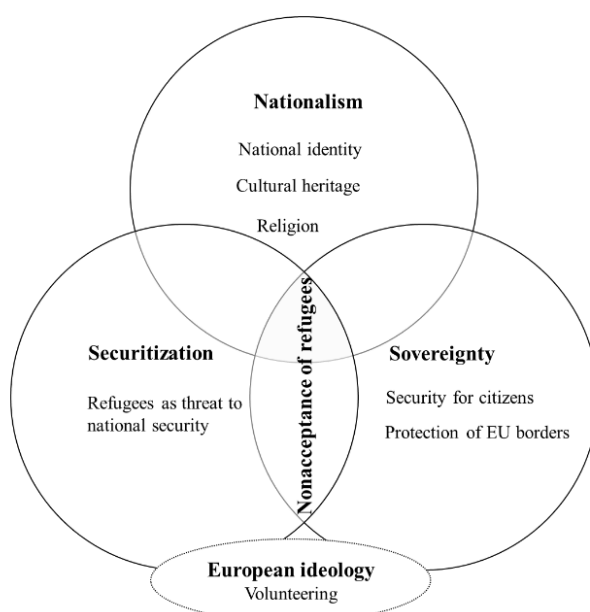
7.1.2 Ideology

Ideology represents the secondary determinant of state preferences, which in the Hungarian case resulted in the clear and explicit nonacceptance of refugees in summer 2015. H₂'s validity thus needs to be considered here:

H₂: The stronger the European ideology in a country, the more likely the state will accept refugees.

Ideational state preferences in Hungary are characterized by the concepts of nationalism, migration's securitization (B. Nagy 2016; Rizova 2019; Z. Nagy 2016), and sovereignty, which have clearly dominated over European ideology (Bernát, Kertész, and Tóth 2016). The first three are operationalized by the following variables: the close relationship with the own Hungarian national identity and the country's cultural heritage; the Hungarian's public perception of migration as a threat to national security; and, the protection of Hungarian national territory and EU borders. Conversely, European ideology is operationalized by the work of the civil society volunteers organizing with the aim to assist refugees and respect their human rights (see Figure 29 below).

Figure 29. **Hungarian Ideational State Preferences**



Source: Author's own depiction, based on interviews.

Hungarian society in the course of the twentieth century was transformed from a heterogeneous into a homogenous society as a result of the historical vicissitudes following both world wars

(Bozóki and Ádám 2016; Hárs and Sik 2008).⁸¹ Furthermore, in the aftermath of the establishment of the communist regime in 1949 that would last for four decades Hungary did not witness any real immigration, besides the granting of asylum to Greek and Chileans citizens in the 1950s and the 1970s respectively (Hárs and Sik 2009, 170). It was only in the early 1990s that the first migration and refugee flows of mainly ethnic Hungarians came into the country, arriving especially from the neighboring countries Serbia, Romania, and Croatia (Barlai and Sik 2017, 149). Due to its geographical location, the migration pressure exerted on Hungary has been very limited. The country has not faced large inflows of people coming from ones with different cultural and identity backgrounds (Tarrósy 2014, 289). These developments have strengthened the deep-rooted perspective that the country's ethnically homogenous society is not just an empirical fact but also a desirable constituent of Hungarian national identity. Consequently, this precludes the acceptance of non-Hungarian refugees.

“We haven't [had any] kind of experience with refugees and asylum seekers. It was a little bit fast, because during the Yugoslavian wars there were huge numbers of asylum seekers in Hungary but most of them were ethnic Hungarians.”

Expert, Governmental Agency 2

In particular, in relation to nationalism the nonacceptance of refugees in Hungary is based on the public perception that refugees represent a threat to national identity, on considerations of cultural heritage, as well as on notions of religion (Fekete 2016)

“Refugees or asylum seekers are not welcomed within Hungarian society because the national identity and cultural heritage are totally different, as well as unique. Under this framework, Hungarian society does not prefer migrant or refugee flows.”

Expert, Ministry 5

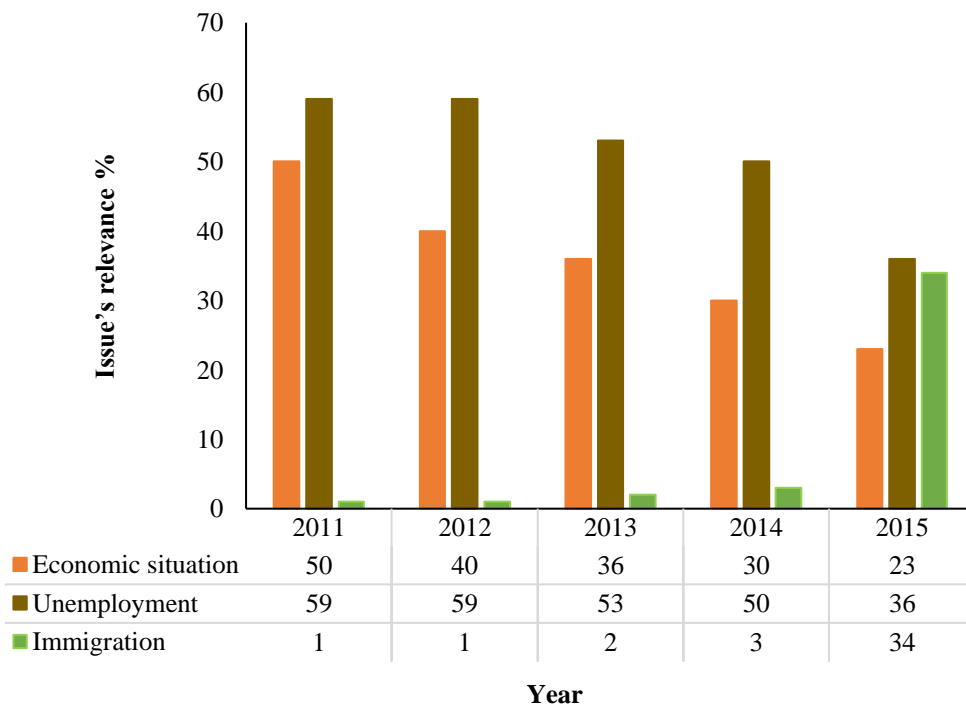
⁸¹In the aftermath of WWI, following the Treaty of Trianon in 1920, Hungary became characterized by a homogenous society where 90 percent of the population was of Magyar ethnicity. Furthermore, the end of WWII and the respective resettlement movements led to the creation of a homogenous society inside Hungary, and of an ethnic diaspora in its neighboring countries.

“And why should I wear a Burka when I am home? When I go to an Arab country, I would probably cover myself. But why should I obey their rules here? That is something the majority of the Hungarian population is against.”

Expert, EIG 6

In this respect, the increasing skeptical Hungarian public perception of refugees is confirmed by Eurobarometer data.⁸² According to this, migration flows in 2015 represented the second-most relevant concern that the country had to face. By contrast, migration did not at all represent a relevant issue in Hungarian public perception up to 2014 (see Figure 30 below).

Figure 30. **Hungarian Public Opinion on the Two Most Relevant Issues Faced at the National Level in 2011–2015**



Source: Author’s own depiction, based on Standard Eurobarometer Autumn N. 76, 78, 80, 82, 84 in autumn 2011–2015.

In particular, quantitative studies show that the “fear index” of the Hungarian population toward migrants was in 2014 and 2015 much higher than in other EU countries (Klaus et al. 2018; Messing and Ságvári 2018; Simonovits 2016). In particular, according to European Social Survey data, migrants represent a threat in the Hungarian public’s perception regarding employment, welfare, culture, and crime. Accordingly, Hungary is second-top among EU

⁸²The question posed by Standard Eurobarometer was: “What do you think are the two most important issues facing (OUR COUNTRY) at the moment?” For further information, see the Standard Eurobarometer Standard Eurobarometer Autumn N. 76, 78, 80, 82, 84 pursued in 2011–2015. Two answers are possible.

member states based on the average fear index toward migrants in relation to the abovementioned components—being surpassed only by the Czech Republic (Messing and SÁgvári 2018, 40). This makes refugees undesirable for and rejected by the general public there, illustrating the different rationalities underpinning the primary economic interests and the secondary ideological ones of domestic actors.

“What we see, for instance, is that hiring visibly non-European foreigners sometimes creates conflicts in the workplace. Very often, what we see is the employers are all fine [with it], they desperately need someone to work, but eventually it does not work out because their colleagues do not want these people to work there. The employer faces a problem that they can hire one more person, but then five others would quit the next day and then it wouldn’t work out again.”

Expert, NGIG 6

Migration’s securitization embodies the second determinant of Hungarian ideational preferences. This concept was developed by the Copenhagen School, who define it as the speech act aimed at transforming a given phenomenon into a threat (Buzan et al. 1998). In Hungary, the articulated migration threat has reflected the public perception of refugees as a dangerous menace to the security of Hungarian citizens (B. Nagy 2016). In particular this narrative has helped establish a cause-and-effect relationship in Hungarian public opinion between immigration and crime. Based on the results of the survey conducted by the Tark Institute in October 2015,⁸³ some 38 percent of respondents associated immigration with an increase in crime in society (Simonovits 2016, 34). The same results were confirmed by the European Social Survey, according to which Hungary places fourth among other countries (after Austria, Norway and Czech republic), after regarding the perception of a cause-and-effect relationship between immigration and increased crime (Messing and SÁgvári 2018, 7).⁸⁴

The migration threat in Hungary is, as noted, closely connected to the concept of sovereignty (Coman and Leconte 2019, 862), which according to realist theory is constituted by the state being the supreme authority and the guarantor of the security of the population within a given territory (Lavenex 2001a, 11). In this context, the Hungarian state’s nonacceptance of refugees—manifested as an extreme restrictive asylum policy—in 2015 and beyond was

⁸³The question posed was: “To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?” The answers refer to those who replied “strongly agree” or “agree”.

⁸⁴The data regarding the fear index have been extrapolated between fall 2014 and spring 2015 Messing and SÁgvári (2018, 2).

associated with internal security in the country and the security of EU borders, given the geographical position of Hungary along the latter’s external ones.

“The closure of the borders answered the necessity to defend the border of Schengen [...]. The Hungarian government has acted on behalf of the security of their own population [...]. Asylum is a different issue, it is closely related to the security in a country and of its citizens.”

Expert, Ministry 7

The nonacceptance of refugees in Hungarian public perception, as strongly embedded in political rhetoric too, was nevertheless also countered by a consolidated network of aid and charity organizations, as well as of volunteers, aiming at assisting refugees in summer 2015. This mobilization lasted until the closure of the borders de jure and de facto (Bernát, Kertész, and Tóth 2016).

“And a lot of people came, not just necessarily NGOs but volunteers themselves in their individual capacities, and you could really rely on their support when it came to coordinating assistance, coordinating whatever there was a need for—at collection points or anywhere. You would be able to find those people who were eager and willing to help. So it was at the time when there was a need, it was just really nice that there was this support from individual Hungarian citizens.”

Expert, NGIG 8

Volunteering activity was observed also among economic domestic interest groups in Hungary seeking to help refugees in summer 2015. However these initiatives were mainly individual ones, which means that the officials of some of the most relevant economic interest groups had to work alone within the structures of civil society and of NGIGs in order to assist refugees in the difficult days of summer 2015. Nevertheless, the provision of official assistance to refugees by these interest groups as well as by government partners was overall lacking because of the anti-immigrant campaign that clearly dominated the public discourse in the country at the time.

“I am just proud of all my colleagues who on their own individually did things, going out, helping, bringing food and water. The anti-immigrant sentiment orchestrated by the government was massive. Of course, our institutional membership is just the same as the composition of society in terms of voting here and there. Therefore you have more voters for the prime minister than against, if public opinion is looked at. As such, there was nothing official from us.”

Expert, EIG 8

The Hungarian government undertook the first anti-immigrant campaign through its “National Consultation on Immigration and Terrorism” (Bocskor 2018, 599-560). Some of the questions included in the survey were⁸⁵:

- “Do you think that Hungary could be the target of an act of terror in the next few years?”
- “Did you know that economic migrants cross the Hungarian border illegally, and that recently the number of immigrants in Hungary has increased twentyfold?”
- Would you support the Hungarian government in the introduction of more stringent immigration regulations, in contrast to Brussels’ lenient policy?”

Hungarian citizens were asked to answer a questionnaire in which refugees were described as economic migrants aiming to cross Hungary illegally and enjoy the EU’s welfare system (Z. Nagy 2016).

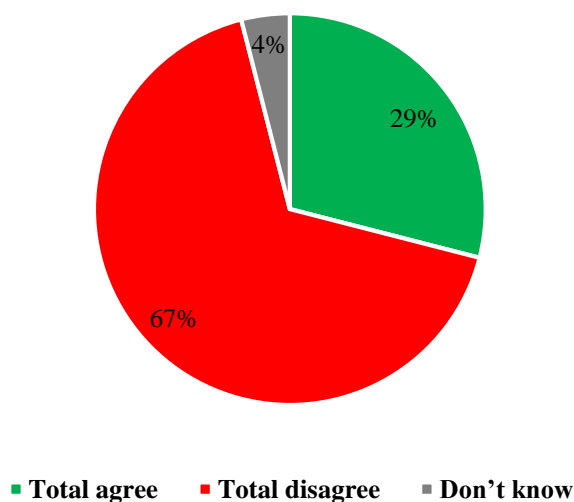
A second billboard campaign was launched on June 1, 2015, with the aim to inform migrants about life in Hungary, with it conveying the following messages (Kiss 2016, 48–49):

- “If you come to Hungary, you must respect our laws”
- “If you come to Hungary, you must respect our culture”
- “If you come to Hungary, you must not take the Hungarian’s jobs”

The results of the government campaigns against refugees were not slow in coming. This refers particularly to the position of Hungarian public opinion on the (dis)agreement with their country having to help refugees (see Figure 31 below).

⁸⁵The “National Consultation on Immigration and Terrorism” was launched on April 24, 2015, and continued until July 27, 2015. For further information on the questionnaire and the questions included in it, see: <https://www.kormany.hu/en/prime-minister-s-office/news/national-consultation-on-immigration-to-begin> (accessed February 27, 2019).

Figure 31. **Hungarian Public Opinion on (Dis)agreement with Helping Refugees in 2015**



Source: Source: Author's own depiction, based on Standard Eurobarometer Autumn N. 84 in 2015.

According to the data from a Standard Eurobarometer survey conducted in autumn 2015 only, two-thirds of respondents did not agree that Hungary should help refugees. Conversely, only 29 percent thereof agreed that the country should in fact help refugees. This underlines further, and clearly, the nonacceptance of refugees that dominated the Hungarian state's ideational preferences, as based also on those of domestic society.

In a nutshell the Hungarian case strengthens, then, the validity of H₂. This is explained by the evident very low level of European ideology in the face of a strong own Hungarian national identity, which consequently contributed to the nonacceptance of refugees in 2015 and beyond.

7.2 Interstate Bargaining Power

Interstate bargaining power relates here to the behavior of the Hungarian government regarding cooperation on the RS, based on the principle of responsibility sharing for refugees at the EU-wide level. The empirical evidence garnered from the interviews with experts in the field of asylum and migration among domestic interest groups are, alongside the articulated public positions of the Hungarian government's representatives, of particular importance in addressing this topic. The low migration pressure faced is cited in this second analytical part as the explanation for the Hungarian state's noncooperation on the RS at the EU-wide level. This is because of Hungary's categorization as a TC, as a result of the country being situated on the EU's external borders and with refugees having already entered the EU through another member state (mainly Greece, Romania, or Bulgaria). As a consequence, the Hungarian

government was clearly noncooperative on the RS, as expressed during the negotiation process in its refusal to commit.

In particular, Hungary’s bargaining power hereon was determined by the unilateral policy alternatives and the alternative coalitions that it had available to counter the migration pressure faced. These alternatives led to the same outcome: the refusal of the Hungarian government to endorse the RS. This was the result of its effective pursual of unilateral actions instead, especially the construction of a fence on the southern border with Serbia as well as its cooperation with two of the Visegrad countries—Czech Republic and Slovakia—and with Romania.

However Hungarian bargaining power was ultimately weak given that the RS was eventually approved. In this regard the voting procedure used, QMV, was of crucial importance. This explains the difference in witnessed outcomes as compared to the initial theoretical expectations derived from LI. In sum, it is argued that the Hungarian state’s preferences at the national level, namely the nonacceptance of refugees, led to its chosen behavior on responsibility sharing for them at the European one. This was encapsulated by the clear refutal of the RS during the negotiation process at the heart of the Council.

7.2.1 Hungary’s Position as a Transit Country

The Hungarian state’s preferences based on both primary economic interests and secondary ideational ones implied the nonacceptance of refugees in the crucial year 2015. Furthermore the Hungarian government’s approach emphasized its preference to circumvent the refugee issue within the scope of national competencies, rather than address it at the common EU-wide level.

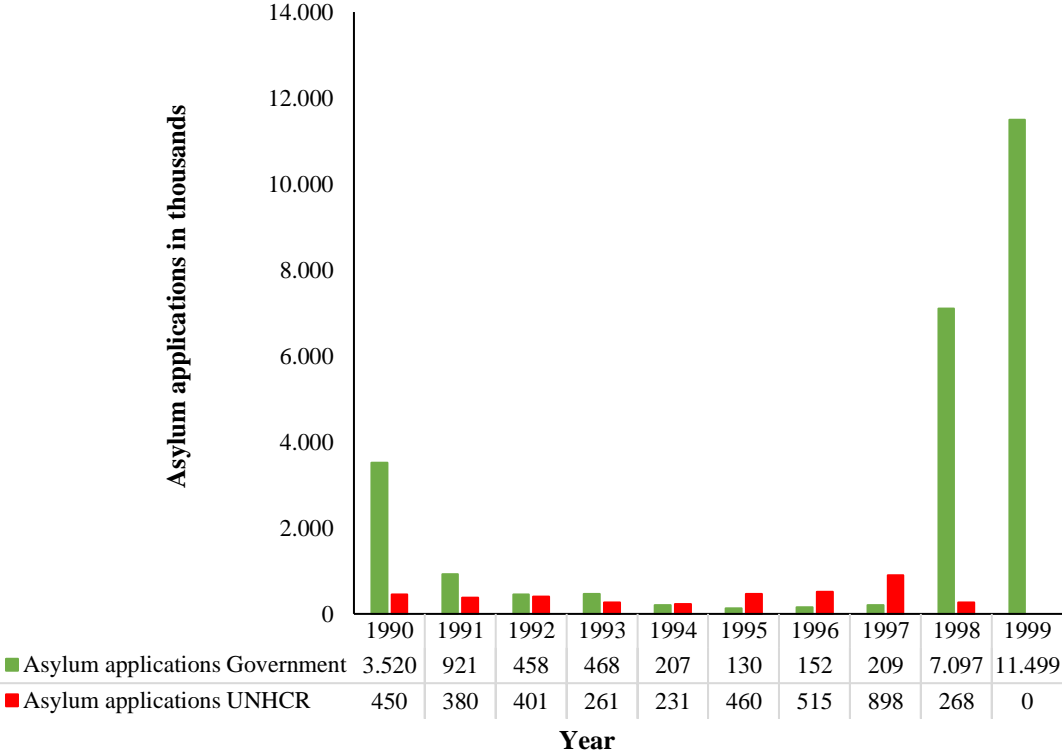
“The refugee issue has a national nature. This means, it represents and is closely related to the sovereignty issue and the assumption that every country needs to and should make their own choice.”
Expert, Governmental Agency 1

Hungary registered high migration pressure vis-à-vis asylum applications (177,135) in 2015, representing the highest values ever seen domestically. Accordingly Hungary was the EU member state with the third-highest degree of migration pressure (after Germany and Sweden) then faced, on the basis of the absolute number of first asylum applications lodged in the country during that year. Yet despite experiencing such high migration pressure in terms of asylum

applications in 2015, Hungary still rejected responsibility sharing for refugees through the RS regardless. This implies that its preference was for the maintenance of the status quo in the form of the FEC rule of D III R.

In this context, the question that arises is: Why did the Hungarian government choose to face the refugee issue by rigorously applying unilateral policy alternatives at the national level rather than pursue cooperation hereon at the European one? In order to provide a comprehensive analysis of this, it is relevant to understand the historical migration pressure on the country. In particular, in the aftermath of the fall of the communist regime Hungary saw significant such pressure (see Figure 32 below).

Figure 32. Asylum Applications in Hungary in 1990–1999



Source: Author’s own depiction, based on UNHCR and OIN data in 1990–1999.

It is worth specifying here that it was the national government and UNHCR who between them registered asylum applications in Hungary between 1990 and 1999⁸⁶. This was because Hungary ratified the 1951 Geneva Convention and its 1967 Protocol relating to the status of refugees in 1989, applying geographical limits accordingly. As such, the OIN was responsible for asylum applications by those coming from European countries (Fullerton 1996; Nagy 1993,

⁸⁶Data on asylum-seeker inflows into the country are provided by the OIN, and included in the EQUAL program. For further information, see: <https://s.gwdg.de/Bv0Yus>, p. 42 (accessed February 27, 2020).

197). By contrast, UNHCR was responsible for asylum applicants coming from countries beyond the European continent (UNHCR 2001). With regard to the nationality of the asylum seekers arriving in Hungary between 1990 and 1999, they came mainly from neighboring countries following the dissolution of the communist regimes and the corresponding conflicts in the former Yugoslavia and in Romania. In addition, a small number of refugees came also from other countries—namely Iraq and Afghanistan—later on (UNHCR 2001, 158).

“So, at the turn of the 1980s and 1990s, it was mostly ethnic Hungarians who came over from Romania [...]. Then, during the first Yugoslav war, people came from Croatia, Serbia, and later on from Bosnia.”

Expert, NGIG 6

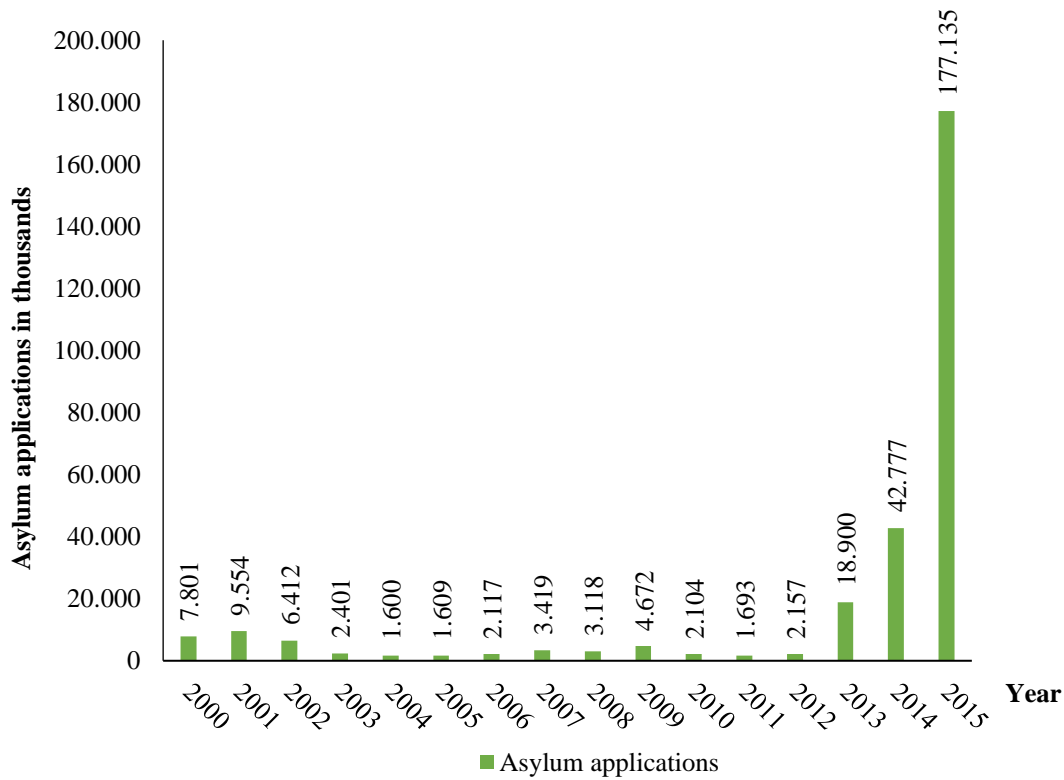
Act CXXXIX⁸⁷ on the Right to Asylum, passed in 1997, then cancelled the geographical limits on refugeehood related to the 1951 Geneva Convention. As a consequence, it was now the OIN who would register the asylum applications of third-country nationals—and thus independently of country of origin. Asylum applications increased due to the war in Kosovo in 1999, while in the first decade of the new century up until the early years of its second decade they were very low.

An increase in the migration pressure on Hungary emerged especially in the biennium 2013–2014 however (see Figure 33 below), with 18,900 and 42,777 asylum applications lodged across the two years respectively prior to the crucial one of 2015. In respect to the nationalities involved, Afghanistan and Iraq represent the main countries of origin of asylum seekers up until the year 2013. In the biennium 2014–2015 the main nationalities were Syrian, Afghan, Iraqi, and Kosovan citizens meanwhile.⁸⁸

⁸⁷For further information, see the unofficial translation of the Act offered by UNHCR. Available online at: <https://s.gwdg.de/fHSRIc> (accessed February 27, 2019).

⁸⁸Data from the HCSO report “Asylum seekers arriving in Hungary by citizenship and type of entry.” For further information, see: http://www.ksh.hu/docs/eng/xstadat/xstadat_annual/i_wnvn002a.html?lang=en (accessed April 1, 2019).

Figure 33. Asylum Seekers in Hungary in 2000–2015



Source: HCSO data in 2000–2015.

In sum, the migration pressure faced in Hungary historically and geographically—characterized by asylum-seeker inflows coming particularly from the Eastern European countries—represents a determining factor regarding the behavior of the Hungarian government toward the refugee issue in 2015. Given that the goal of a government is to counter such migration pressure, the choice of Hungary between the responsibility sharing for PCNIP via the RS (the new agreement) and the FEC rule (the status quo) was oriented toward the maintenance of the latter. Adhering to D III R was hence perceived as the most effective way to offset that pressure (further to pursuing unilateral policies too).

The Hungarian government’s decision-making in 2015 was also influenced by it having already taken in significant numbers of refugees two decades before.

This denoted the refutation of the RS and the further application of D III R, which still represented an available option for Hungary as it attributes the responsibility for examining an asylum application to the FEC. In this regard, Greece or Bulgaria are the countries of first entry through which refugees had entered the EU before continuing onward to Hungary in 2015.

“Bulgaria and Greece have not fulfilled their obligations in accordance with the Dublin Convention, either because immigrants have circumvented their authorities, or because those authorities did not perform their work successfully.”

Press Release Ministry of Interior June 29, 2015⁸⁹

7.2.2 Hungary’s Bargaining Power

Hungary represents the EU member state that most opposed the RS based on the principle of the responsibility sharing for PCNIP, that despite the high migration pressure that the country would face particularly in summer 2015. This is due to the existence of the Western Balkan route that allowed refugees arriving on the Greek coast to travel onward to the economically more affluent EU member states in the north. In the following, H_{3A} will be scrutinized in explaining the position of the Hungarian government on the RS during related negotiations at the EU-wide level:

H_{3A}: The more attractive the unilateral policy alternative a country has, the less likely the state will bargain with the new agreement.

The nonacceptance of refugees in Hungary was due to D III R’s existence, according to which the FEC countries (thus Greece, regarding the Western Balkan route) have, as noted, to register and examine the asylum applications of refugees. This point was strongly emphasized by the Hungarian state’s representatives at the beginning of the arrivals of refugees to the country via the Serbian border.

“According to D III R, Hungary is not responsible for these people. So, in a way I think that the communication basically is based on EU rules. Of course, we all know the context that this is not completely true, but this is what the government has been using.”

Expert, NGIG 4

The arrivals of refugees mainly from Greece via the Serbian but also Romanian and Bulgarian borders is what led to Hungary’s classification as a TC. The Hungarian government further underlined this status in mid-2015 by still agreeing to register asylum applications even despite

⁸⁹For further information, see “Press Release, Ministry of Interior of Hungary (2015). For further information, see <https://www.kormany.hu/en/ministry-of-interior/news/refugee-camps-must-be-established-outside-the-eu> (accessed February 1, 2020).

D III R's formal stipulation. It argued that the reason for this registration of first asylum applications in the country in early summer 2015 was to save the lives of those fleeing from war and persecution.

“Immigrants who made aggressive demands to be transferred on toward the West had been previously registered despite the fact that the majority of them came from Afghanistan and Pakistan, and so they must already have crossed at least one EU border before reaching Hungary.

“Saving human lives is the priority, and therefore those fleeing war or persecution must under all circumstances be received.”

Press Release Ministry of Interior June 29, 2015⁹⁰

In addition, the perception that refugees themselves used Hungary as a passageway to reaching the northern EU member states was strongly emphasized also by the interviewed experts within governmental domestic interest groups.

“Hungary has never represented a country of destination for refugees or asylum seekers, but only a transit country in order to have access to Western Europe. In fact, even previously different people coming to Hungary have left as recognized refugees, beneficiaries of international protection, and asylum seekers. Refugees already had information that the country does not have good conditions, a principle that underlines further the choice of Hungary as a transit (and not destination) country.”

Expert, Ministry 5

The preference of refugees for leaving the country after passing through it is based on a series of factors such as the weak Hungarian integration system for asylum seekers as well as family reunification. In particular, in summer 2015 refugees did not have access to a number of services that are fundamental for the initial steps in the integration process such as education, psychological assistance, and access to the labor market. This made the country less attractive for refugees to stay in.

⁹⁰For further information, see “Press Release, Ministry of Interior of Hungary (2015). Available online at: <https://2015-2019.kormany.hu/en/ministry-of-interior/news/refugee-camps-must-be-established-outside-the-eu> (accessed February 1, 2020).

“If we stay in Hungary there is no work. We cannot study. The language is very strange, and they’re not helping refugees. We have been through all these countries, this one is definitely the worst. It is supposed to be an EU country, but it has broken every single tenet they had. Greece is such a poor country, and it treated us better.”

Refugee Interview, The New York Times, September 5, 2015⁹¹

The extensive refugee arrivals through the Western Balkan route in the country in summer 2015, as mentioned above, significantly increased the migration pressure faced. This put Hungary third among EU member states vis-à-vis the highest numbers of first asylum applications lodged (174,435)⁹²—being surpassed only by Germany (441,805) Sweden (156,115) (see Figure 34 below).

With regard to the recognition of PCNIP status regarding those 174,435 asylum applicants in 2015, the Hungarian government granted 146 persons refugee status, 356 subsidiary protection, and 6 tolerated stays.⁹³

The interviewed experts especially within governmental interests groups confirmed the low recognition rate of refugee status in the country. However they explained it in relation to the safe third countries such as Serbia whose borders refugees had crossed before entering Hungary. As a consequence, their asylum applications were negatively evaluated.

“In the first instance, what they were looking at is where the person was coming from. The physical place where they were coming from was Serbia (a safe third country). A lot of the asylum claims were rejected based on this: they were deemed inadmissible, because the person was coming from a safe third country. Thus, there was a very low recognition rate.”

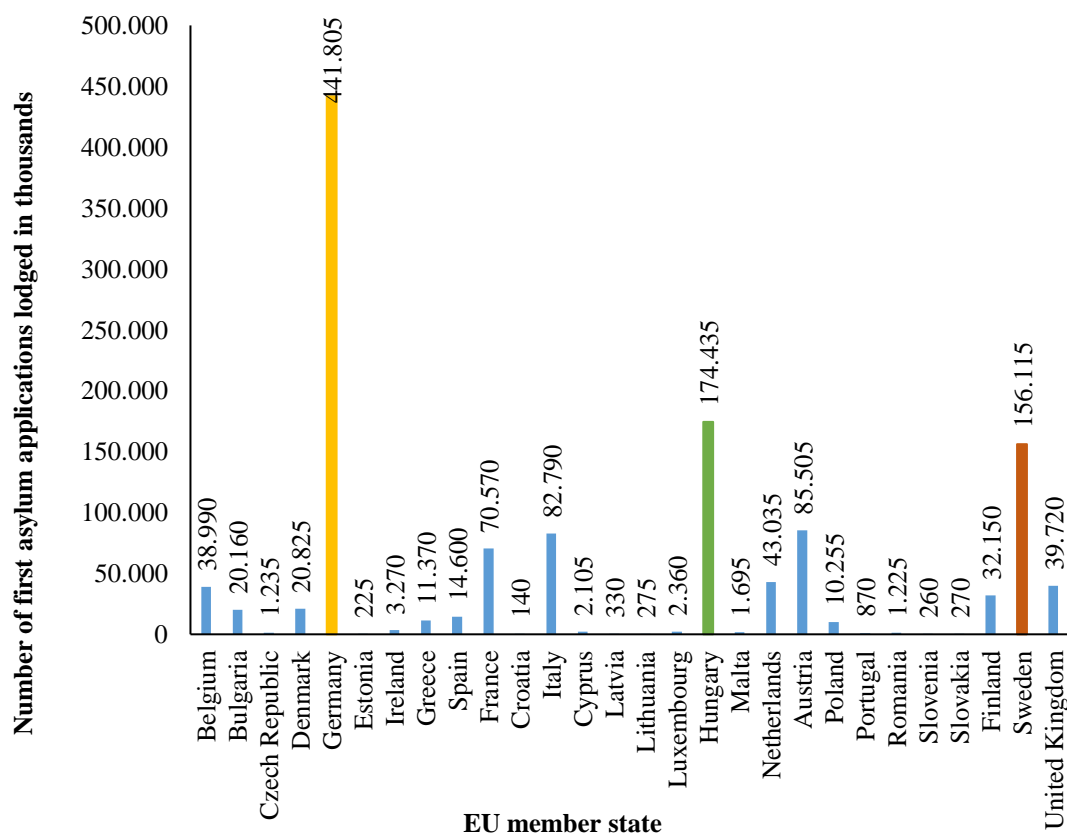
Expert, NGIG 5

⁹¹For further information, see Hartocollis (2015) at: <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/projects/cp/reporters-notebook/migrants/hungary-treatment-refugees> (accessed March 10, 2020).

⁹²These data are provided by the Eurostat. This is the reason why they might be slightly different from the data provided by the Hungarian government presented in the previous section.

⁹³Data provided by the HCSO. For further information, see: <https://s.gwdg.de/drqbKB> (accessed December 10, 2019).

Figure 34. First Asylum Applications Lodged in the EU Member States in 2015



Source: Author's own depiction, based on Eurostat data in 2015.

The Hungarian government, on the one side, in the aftermath of the Council meeting that took place on April 23, 2015, underlined its willingness to cooperate at the EU-wide level and backed the proposal to introduce an emergency relocation scheme on a voluntary basis to assist the FECs. On the other side, however, it emphasized the national nature of the refugee issue and the intention to treat it as such.

“We believe that if we are given the task of legislating on the situation of refugees coming to Hungary, we can do it [...]. If there are common problems, Hungary is ready to cooperate and to make offers in order to take its share in jointly solving them. [...] In cases which concern us—because we, too, have refugees, but they do not arrive across the sea—we would like to solve the problems ourselves; and, we could solve them ourselves.”

Press Release of the Prime Minister Cabinet, April 23, 2015⁹⁴

⁹⁴For further information, see Prime Minister's Office (2015). Available online at: <https://s.gwdg.de/dwKAVb> (accessed February 10, 2020).

However the previous understanding among EU member states reached at the Council meeting of June 15–16, 2015, aimed at assisting the FECs through a relocation scheme based on the principle of solidarity and responsibility sharing for PCNIP, was met by a series of unilateral actions undertaken by the Hungarian government instead.

“It would be unacceptable for Hungary if the reception of a fixed number of refugees is imposed as an EU obligation, given that the country is already under significant migration pressure as it is. [...] Hungary is firmly on the side of a voluntary approach.”

Press Release Ministry of Interior, June 17, 2015⁹⁵

The first and most relevant unilateral policy adopted was the aforementioned construction of a fence along the border with Serbia, being 175 km long and 4 m high; the initiative was announced by Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade Péter Szijjártó on June 17, 2015. Preparatory work relating to the construction of the fence started on July 13, 2015, with its completion achieved on August 31, 2015.⁹⁶ Initially, it was conceptualized as a way to direct refugees to so-called transit zones (see below) so as to identify PCNIP. Furthermore, the government announced on October 16, 2015, the construction of a new fence along the Croatian border to further counter the high migration pressure faced.

“The fence was changing quite drastically and rapidly. So, when the idea first came out, the narrative was that this would be a fence that will simply direct the inflow of people to the transit zones, they will be simply guiding the flow toward the transit zones. The transit zones were to be places where these people can be properly registered and they can receive services. Then a decision can be made on whether these people can get asylum in Hungary, or whether they should return to their countries of origin and so on.”

Expert, NGIG 5

⁹⁵For further information, see “Press Release Ministry of Interior Hungary (2015a). Available online at: <https://2015-2019.kormany.hu/en/ministry-of-interior/news/mandatory-immigrant-quota-would-be-unacceptable> (accessed February 10, 2020).

⁹⁶The construction of the fence was implemented by the amendment of the Hungarian Asylum Act (Act LXXX of 2007) as well as of its Government Decree 301/2007 (XI. 9) on the implementation of Act LXXX. For further information, see the unofficial English version available online at: <https://s.gwdg.de/o6Yrdb> (accessed February 27, 2019).

“The Hungarian-Croatian green border will be closed from midnight.”

Peter Szijjarto, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary, October 16, 2015⁹⁷

Hungarian cooperation at the EU-wide level in relation to the refugee issue was withdrawn, however, when the EU member states formulated a commitment in the Council meeting on June 25–26, 2015, on the relocation among themselves of 40,000 refugees from the FECs (namely Italy and Greece).

“The Government of Hungary represented the standpoint according to which the regulations and quotas concerning the distribution of migrants are not applicable to Hungary.”

Press Release of the Ministry of Interior, July 7, 2015⁹⁸

In this context, a second unilateral action was undertaken. The Hungarian parliament amended the Asylum Act on June 30, 2015, through Government Decree 191/2015, and established a list of safe countries of origin and safe third countries and territories: namely the EU member states and the respective candidate states, the European Economic Area states, as well as those federal states in the US that do not uphold the death penalty. Furthermore, the applicant had to prove during the asylum procedure with clear evidence that the country of origin or the third country through which he or she had travelled was not safe or did not provide sufficient conditions of protection.⁹⁹ This means that Serbia was transformed into a safe third country, which led to the acceleration of asylum applications’ processing as well as their denial if the applicant came from a safe third country. In addition, in case of inadmissibility of the asylum application the authority responsible, the earlier-mentioned OIN, had 15 days to take a definitive decision thereon¹⁰⁰.

The third unilateral action occurring was the amendments of the Asylum Act on September 4, 2015, entering into force on September 15, 2015, concerning three matters: the introduction of the border procedure; mass migration; and, the Criminal Code and the Criminal Procedure Act (Juhász 2017, 43–44). The border procedure¹⁰¹ established the aforementioned transit zones,

⁹⁷For further information, see Buchanan (2015): <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/refugee-crisis-hungary-closes-croatian-border-to-refugees-from-midnight-a6697071.html> (accessed December 10, 2019).

⁹⁸For further information, see “Press Release Ministry of Interior Hungary (2015b). Available online at: <https://s.gwdg.de/vbaSMX> (accessed February 10, 2020).

⁹⁹Section 2 of Decree 191/2015 entered into force on July 21, 2015. For further information, see the unofficial English translation available online at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/55ca02c74.html> (accessed September 2, 2018).

¹⁰⁰Hungarian Helsinki Committee, “Information Note August 2015.” Available online at: <https://helsinki.hu/wp-content/uploads/HHC-HU-asylum-law-amendment-2015-August-info-note.pdf> (accessed September 2, 2018).

¹⁰¹Section 71/A of the Asylum Act.

where the potential asylum seeker had the possibility to proceed with the registration of their application within a very restrictive period of time: that is, eight days. Conversely, a decision on the respective asylum applications was taken within a few hours, as the organizations operating in the field, such as the Hungarian Helsinki Committee, made clear in their communications.¹⁰²

The legal amendment regarding mass migration allowed the Hungarian government to declare a given set of circumstances a “crisis situation”¹⁰³ upon the following conditions being met:

- if the daily asylum applications registered in the country exceed the average 500 on a monthly average, 750 daily over two consecutive weeks’ average, or 800 daily over the one-week average;
- if the daily presence of asylum seekers in the transit zone exceeds 1,000 in number on a monthly average, 1,500 daily over two consecutive weeks’ average, or 2,000 daily over the one-week average;
- the verification of violent episodes within the transit zone that might put at risk public security, order, or health.

Lastly, the Hungarian parliament amended the Criminal Code and the relative Act on Criminal Procedure, which introduced three additional typologies of crime based on: the border crossing; the border closure’s destruction, construction, or maintenance’s interruption of the border fence; and, human trafficking.¹⁰⁴ As a consequence of these three unilateral actions, the migration pressure faced in the country decreased. According to HCSO data, registered asylum applications in the country decreased from 175,963 between January and September 2015 to just 1,172 asylum applications being lodged in Hungary between October and December of the same year.

The restrictive position of the Hungarian government on the responsibility sharing for PNCIP was emphasized, as noted, during the negotiation process vis-à-vis the RS at the heart of the Council too. This was expressed through the vote against the two Decisions establishing the RS respectively on September 14 and 22, 2015, regarding the relocation of 160,000 refugees

¹⁰²Hungarian Helsinki Committee, Information Note September 2015.” Available online at: https://helsinki.hu/wp-content/uploads/HHC_Hungary_Info_Note_Sept-2015_No_country_for_refugees.pdf (accessed September 2, 2018).

¹⁰³Section 80/A of the Asylum Act. An unofficial translated version is available online at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/4979cc072.html> (accessed February 27, 2019).

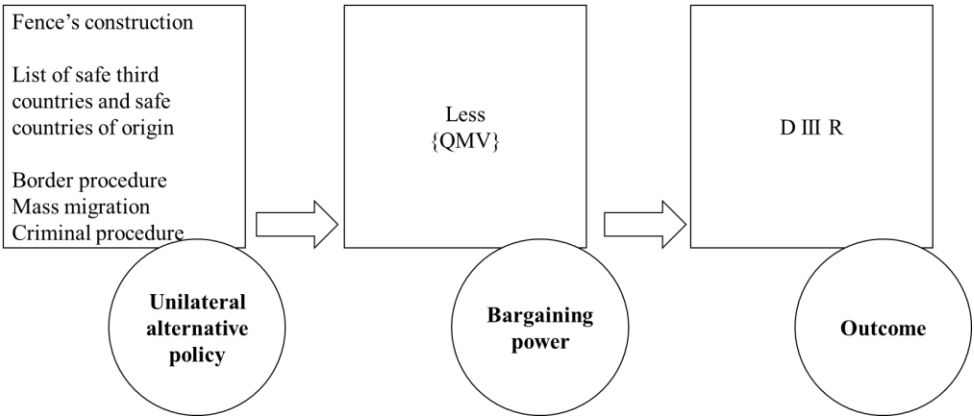
¹⁰⁴The amendment of Act C of 2012 related to the Criminal Code and of Act XIX of 1998 of the Criminal Procedure. Hungarian Helsinki Committee, available online at: <https://s.gwdg.de/1wv32O> (accessed September 2, 2018).

from Greece and Italy in the coming biennium 2015–2017. Such a position by the Hungarian government is explainable regarding the distribution of the benefits that it might have gained compared to the best available alternative policy it had—hence the outside options. In other words, the more attractive the benefits derived from the unilateral policy alternative for the country, the less likely its cooperation on the EU-wide level on the RS—thus affecting the achievement of an agreement.

The behavior of the country’s government was based on the fact that Hungary is a TC, and as such not responsible for registering asylum applications. Furthermore, it adopted the abovementioned effective unilateral policy measures to lessen the migration pressure faced. Hungary therefore preferred maintaining the status quo over committing to the RS, which might have obliged it to accept a certain number of refugees. In this regard it is important to recollect, as mentioned in chapter 2, that Hungary refused to be included as the RS’s third beneficiary member state (alongside Italy and Greece) on the basis of the high migration pressure faced in 2015.¹⁰⁵

In line with LI, Hungary would be theoretically expected to exercise strong bargaining power with the aim of maintaining the status quo, and thus the FEC rule, as opposed to upholding the principle of responsibility sharing for PCNIP as established by the RS (see Figure 35 below). However, the Hungarian case does not meet the assumptions of H_{3A} regarding bargaining power in reality. This means that despite the unilateral policy alternatives available and the ultimate choice to opt for D III R (and refuse the RS) Hungary still had only weak bargaining power. This is explained by the voting procedure that was used at the Council on the RS: that is, QMV.

Figure 35. Hungarian Bargaining Power in Relation to Unilateral Alternative Policy



Source: Author’s own depiction

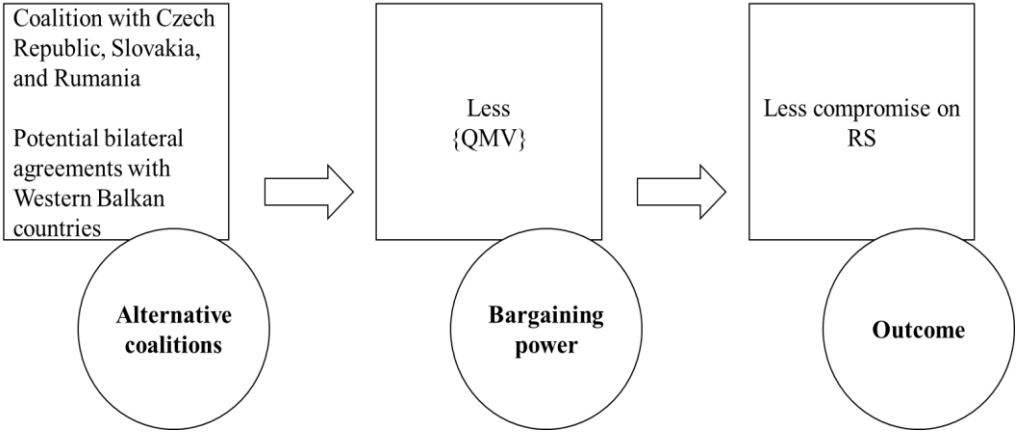
¹⁰⁵For further information, see: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/es/MEMO_15_5698 (accessed December 10, 2019).

The other determinant of member state bargaining power at the EU-wide level is the distribution of benefits derived from possible alternative coalitions. Hence, H_{3B} is of significance here:

H_{3B}: The easier a country can form alternative coalitions, the less likely state will compromise on its own position.

Accordingly, the Hungarian government had available alternative coalitions represented by regional cooperation during the negotiation and voting process with two of the Visegrad countries—Czech Republic and Slovakia— and with Romania (Šelo Šabić 2017) or bilateral agreements with Western Balkan countries vis-à-vis countering the migration pressure (Joint Statement of the Heads of Governments of the Visegrad Group Countries 2015). With Hungary having these potential alternative coalitions—especially with the other Visegrad countries, which in principle were against the introduction of an obligatory refugee quota system (Pachocka 2016)—it was expected, per LI, to have greater bargaining power. Yet it had less bargaining power during the negotiation process on the RS in fact, as the result of the QMV procedure that rendered the coalition with the Visegrad countries insufficiently influential compared to the preferences of the other EU member states—who would not compromise on their own desire to see the RS realized (see Figure 36 below). Thus, the postulations of H_{3B} seem to be plausible in the Hungarian case.

Figure 36. **Hungarian Bargaining Power in relation to Alternative Coalitions**



Source: Author’s own depiction

Besides the Hungarian vote against the RS, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Romania also behaved in the same manner.

“[The] quota system is grossly mistaken [...]—it is a typical example of [the] ‘moral imperialism’ that Germany imposes on Europe.”

Press Release of the Prime Minister’s Office, September 22, 2015¹⁰⁶

In the following months, Hungary and Slovakia complained before the Court of Justice that the Council had adopted a decision based on procedural errors and an inadequate legal basis. They claimed that it did not represent a suitable mechanism to address the refugee issue, being inefficient as such (Court of Justice of the EU 2017). This complaint was dismissed in September 2017 however.

7.3 Summary of the Empirical Findings: The Hungarian Case Study

In this chapter the Hungarian state’s behavior in its nonacceptance of refugees at the national level and its noncooperation on the RS at the European one has been examined. The findings in these regards can be outlined as follows. First, the weak interests of domestic actors regarding refugees is what led to their nonacceptance at the domestic level. In particular, the crucial explanatory factor for the restrictive behavior of Hungarian domestic groups with regard to refugees is the outside option available vis-à-vis satisfying the demand for labor. In other words, if the primary economic interests of domestic actors regarding the demand for labor are oriented toward more attractive alternatives, such as regional labor migration here, then the nonacceptance of refugees follows. This leads to the state preferences on refugees witnessed at the national level in this case: namely their nonacceptance. Likewise, the analysis of the secondary ideational state preferences showed that Hungarian society being characterized by nationalistic values—a strong own national identity and cultural heritage—alongside the securitization of the refugee issue led also to the nonacceptance of refugees at the national level. Second, the Hungarian state’s behavior vis-à-vis cooperation on the RS at the EU-wide level was explained in reference to the migration pressure faced as a TC. Therefore, Hungary opted for adhering to D III R over committing to the RS. The country’s bargaining power was determined by the available unilateral policy alternatives (the construction of a fence; a number

¹⁰⁶For further information, see the “Press Release of the Prime Minister’s Office”. Available online at: <https://s.gwdg.de/4pfqSa> (accessed February 11, 2020).

of legal amendments) and the alternative coalitions (regional coalition with the Visegrad countries; potential bilateral agreements aimed at relieving the migration pressure with Western Balkan countries). This led to maintenance of the status quo and less compromise on the RS agreement respectively. However the Hungarian state had less bargaining power during the negotiation process in reality; the RS was approved given that the QMV procedure was used at the heart of the Council. In sum, it is hence argued that Hungary's nonacceptance of refugees at the national level led to its noncooperative behavior at the European one.

In order to understand the third typology of patterns of state preferences and cooperation on refugees, it is relevant to analyze a final case study: Germany. This represents the aim of the next chapter then.

8 Explaining the German State's Behavior toward Refugees: Voluntary Acceptance and Cooperation on Responsibility Sharing

This thesis, in line with LI's theoretical paradigm, advances the argument according to which EU member state behaviors toward refugees at the national level lead to their further behaviors with regard to cooperation onto the responsibility sharing for them at the EU-wide one.

Therefore, the analysis of the third case study, Germany, presented in this chapter consists of two parts. First, the formation process of state preferences on the acceptance of refugees at the national level (RQ₁) is examined. This relates to the articulation "wir schaffen das" ("we will do it") put forward by German chancellor Angela Merkel on August 31, 2015. Second, the bargaining power that Germany had on the RS—regarding which it promoted cooperation—at the EU-wide level (RQ₂) will be scrutinized.

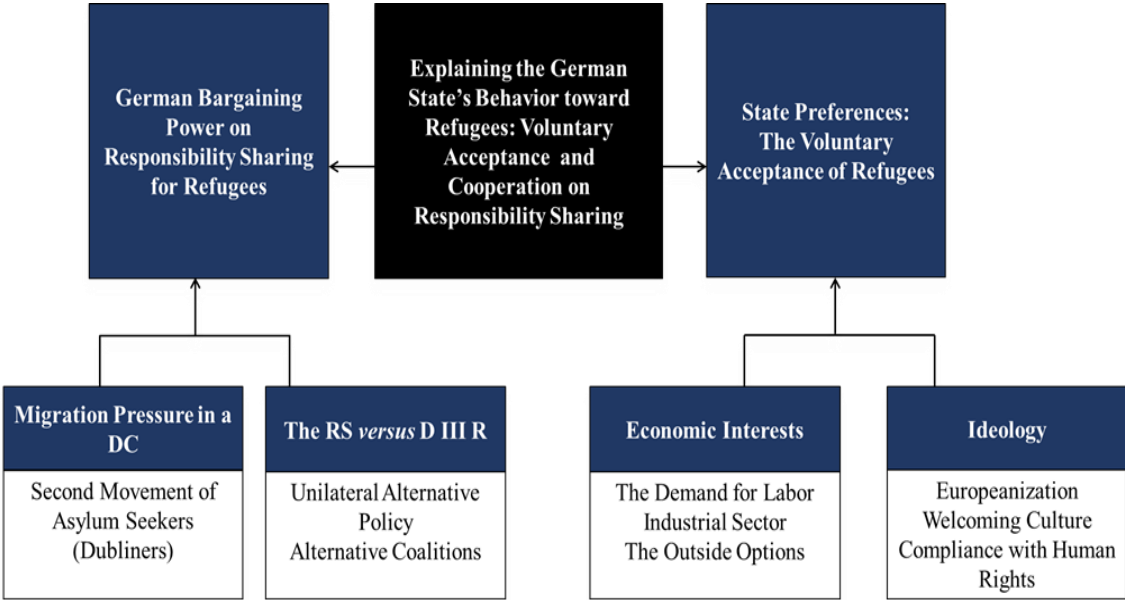
The first analytical stage traces the German behavioral patterns with regard to refugees in the context of the 2015 refugee issue, focused on the voluntary acceptance thereof according to domestic actors' primary economic interests and secondary ideological ones too. Further empirical evidence is examined, being followed by a critical discussion relating to additional variables that influenced the design of German state preferences. The primary economic interests refer to the demand for labor especially in the manufacturing sector that characterizes the German economy. In addition, the German state's preferences in relation to the demand for labor are analyzed in comparison to the best alternatives—the outside options—that domestic interest groups had available to satisfy it.

Ideology represents the second source of German state preferences, as informing the country's voluntary acceptance of refugees. These secondary interests reflect the Europeanization of German society based on a series of values: namely a welcoming culture; the compliance with national, European, as well as international conventions on the right to asylum and the respecting of human rights; and, the relevance of historical memory. These factors all dominated over the increasingly anti-immigration attitude found in German public perception from 2015.

Bargaining power constitutes the second analytical frame related to the German state's behavior toward the responsibility sharing for refugees. In particular, it explains the cooperative position of the German government on the new agreement—that is, the RS—focusing on the principle of responsibility sharing for refugees at the EU-wide level. This position was strongly shaped by the migration pressure that Germany faced as a DC for refugees. In particular, Germany's bargaining power throughout the whole RS negotiation process is analyzed in comparison to the unilateral policies and the alternative coalitions that it might have had

available to counter the high migration pressure faced. Therefore it is argued that the cooperative German behavior toward the RS (instead of D III R) was due to that migration pressure, as well as to the principle of solidarity that the German government once more affirmed through its decision to voluntarily accept refugees from August 31, 2015. The structure of the whole chapter is illustrated in the Figure 37 below.

Figure 37. **Chapter 8—The German State’s Behavior toward Refugees: Voluntary Acceptance and Cooperation on Responsibility Sharing**



Source: Author’s own depiction.

8.1 State Preferences: The German Governmental Argument for Voluntary Accepting the Refugees

German state preferences led to the voluntary acceptance of refugees at the national level, being based on the primary economic interests of domestic actors in the country and on their secondary ideological ones too. To examine these, the following sources are drawn on in this chapter: the empirical evidence obtained through the conduction of interviews with experts from German domestic interest groups (involving actors from economy, government, and civil society); the secondary empirical literature; and, national indicators vis-à-vis the labor market, numbers of first asylum applications, and other related issues in this regard. In addition, press interviews by the most relevant German domestic actors who assumed a public position on the decision to voluntarily accept refugees at the end of summer 2015 are used to round out the analysis.

German economic interests regarding refugees were closely connected to the characteristics of the national labor market. Therefore, the demand for labor represents the first IV that traces the harmonized economic interests of the two categories of German domestic actors: namely the big industrialists and SMEs.

The second IV—that is, the available outside options—contributed further to the patterns of economic German state preferences seen on the acceptance of refugees. In particular, referred to here are the viable alternatives that German economic interest groups might have had to satisfy the demand for labor in the country. In this regard, it is relevant to underline that German legislation up until 2015 did provide general laws aimed at attracting labor migrants—such as in the case of Italy too, or regional labor in the Hungarian one. Germany is traditionally focused on the supply side: that is, on the qualifications of the labor force and the use of EU labor-migration legislation. One example is the Blue Card aimed at promoting the movement of qualified labor within the EU. In addition, a detailed survey of the state of the art relating to the outside options post-2015—especially the Skilled Worker Immigration Act implemented in 2018 and entering into force in March 2020—is included in order to explain the evolution of the German national labor market.

Ideology represents the secondary determinant of Germany's voluntary acceptance of refugees. Reflected here is the strong degree of Europeanization of German society, translated into high regard for European values. These are a welcoming culture, humanitarianism based on the respecting of human rights, as well as compliance with national, European, and international conventions aimed at protecting the right to asylum. Historical memory relating to East German refugee movements after the fall of the Berlin Wall is another key factor needing to be elucidated vis-à-vis these secondary interests.

By contrast, the rise of far-right political parties saw strong opposition to the voluntary acceptance of refugees also emerge, particularly in the biennium 2016–2017. Such views would gradually acquire more societal consensus, culminating in the election of the AfD to the German federal parliament in 2017 (Dostal 2017; Hansen and Olsen 2019). Regardless, German secondary ideological interests have still ultimately been dominated by maintaining a welcoming culture (Karakayali 2018, 608; Mavelli 2017)—especially in the crucial year 2015, which represents the time frame to which this analysis refers. Therefore, German ideational interests reflect the acceptance of refugees—as characterized by the principle of respecting human rights and strong European values.

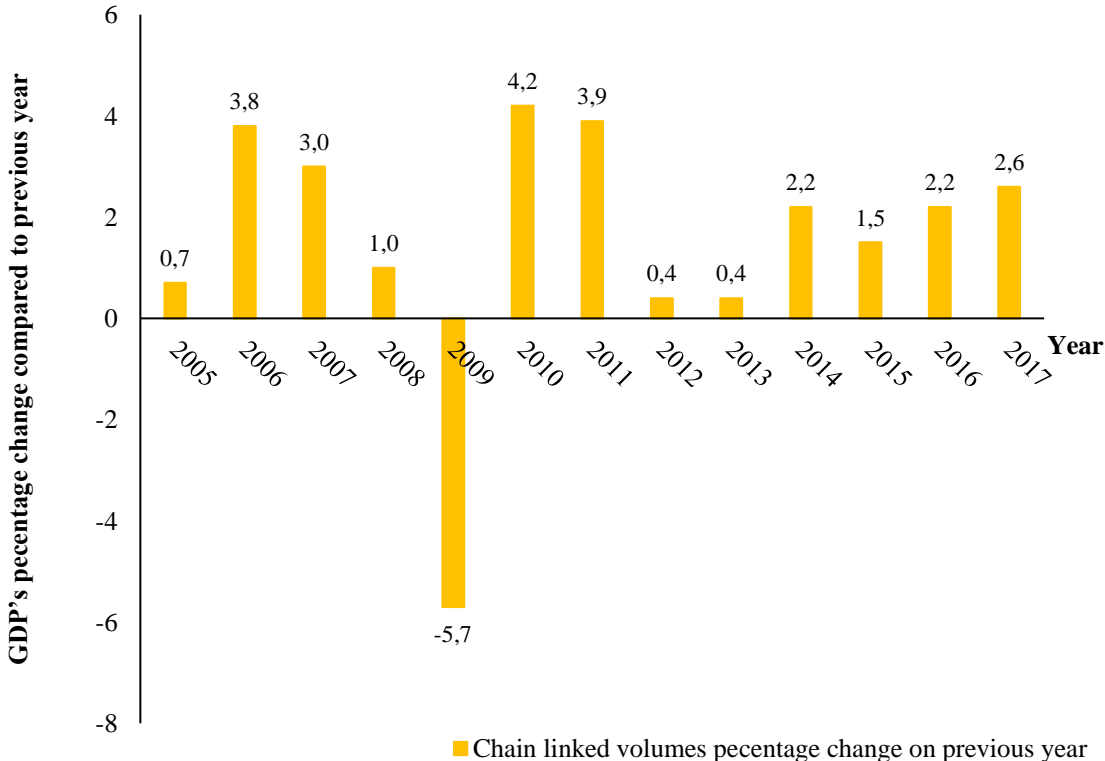
In sum, it is argued that the strong interest of domestic groups in welcoming refugees, based on the demand for labor and insufficient outside options, is what led to the latter's voluntary acceptance at the national level. Furthermore, the dominance of the Europeanization of social

identity prevailing over anti-immigrant sentiment among the population further strengthened the voluntary acceptance informing the patterns of German state preferences with regard to refugees.

8.1.1 Economic Interests

The great recession of 2008 had one of its strongest impacts on the German economy, rendering it on a similar level of macroeconomic performance as that registered in 2005—when the country was defined as the “sick man of Europe” (Rinne and Zimmermann 2012, 7). The core economic indicators demonstrating German economic recession are the decrease of GDP’s trend (see Figure 38 below) as well as the reduction in exports of industrial goods—namely cars and machinery (Bosch 2011; Rinne and Zimmermann 2012).

Figure 38. GDP’s Trend in 2005–2017



Source: Author’s own depiction, based on Eurostat data in 2005–2017.

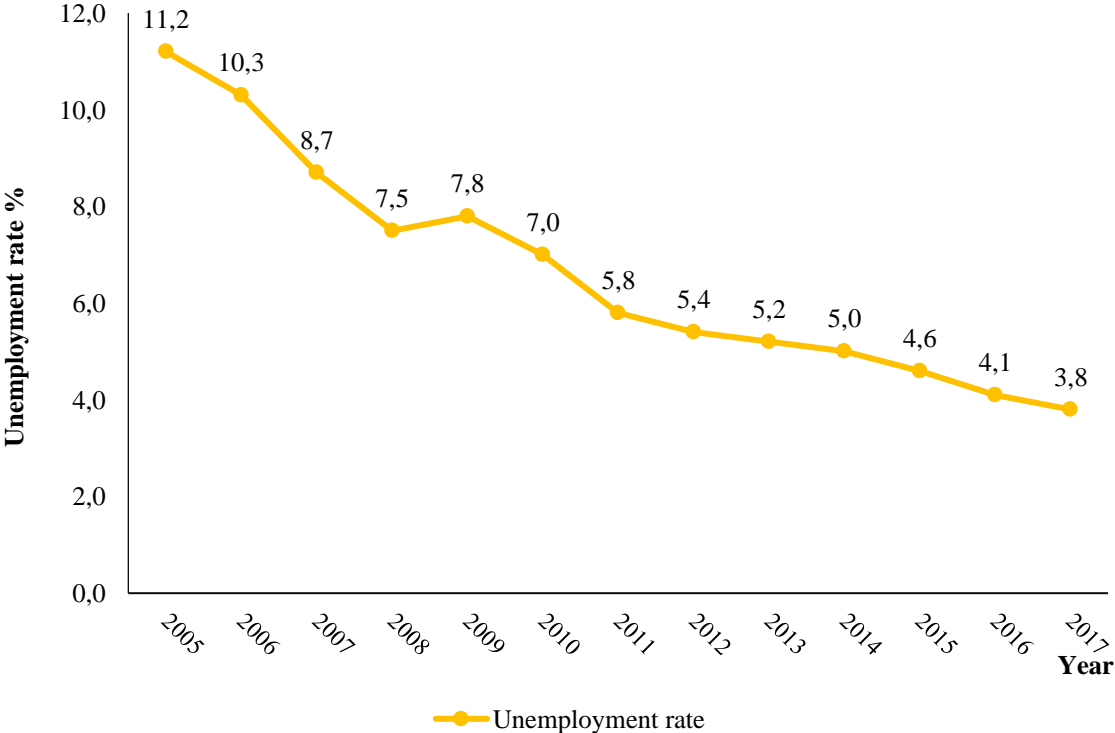
Accordingly, GDP’s trend registered, at -5.7 percent,¹⁰⁷ its biggest drop in 2009; four years earlier, it had been 0.4 percent. As a consequence productivity in a number of sectors was

¹⁰⁷Data on the macroeconomic indicators of EU member states are available online at: <https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/submitViewTableAction.do> (accessed November 15, 2019).

strongly affected: especially the metal, automotive, and machinery industries (50 percent decline); construction (40 percent decline); and, financial services (30 decline). Meanwhile, industry’s exports dropped by 18.3 percent in 2009 (Reisenbichler and Morgan 2012, 565).

Yet despite the poor economic performance caused by the great recession, the national labor market was not strongly affected. In particular, the German unemployment rate¹⁰⁸ in fact registered encouraging values compared to other industrialized countries in 2008 and beyond (Reisenbichler and Morgan 2012, 552). According to Eurostat data, the unemployment rate among the age group of 15 to 74 years old increased only from 7.5 percent to 7.8 percent in the biennium 2008–2009 for the country; it then continued to decrease, registering the value of 4.6 percent in 2015 and beyond (see Figure 39 below). In this regard, it is relevant to highlight that a longer time frame (2005–2017) has been taken into consideration here compared to in the other two country cases so as to show the unique effects of the great recession on Germany.

Figure 39. Unemployment Rate in Germany in 2005–2017



Source: Author’s own depiction, based on Eurostat data in 2005–2017.

In this context, the question that arises is: How did Germany manage to keep its unemployment rate under control during the great recession and beyond? Answering this is relevant to

¹⁰⁸Eurostat provides data on the German unemployment rate. For further information, see: <https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/submitViewTableAction.do> (accessed December 10, 2019).

understanding the longer-term dynamics of the German labor market, thereby contributing to our greater awareness of how refugees might or might not represent a source of labor in this regard. Particularly important turned out to be the so-called Hartz reforms driven by the principle of “assist and demand” (“*Fördern und Fordern*”) that restructured the German labor market between 2003 and 2005 (Krause and Uhlig 2012; Krebs and Scheffel 2013; Launov and Wälde 2016).¹⁰⁹ According to the listed abovementioned quantitative studies, the stabilization and then reduction of the country’s unemployment rate were the result of the reforms enacted relating to the unemployment-benefit system and to the reorganization of the BA respectively (Launov and Wälde 2016; Reisenbichler and Morgan 2012). More specifically, the Hartz reforms focused on the following three pillars of the national labor market:

- The labor demand (Hartz I and Hartz II) especially on low-qualified people, aimed at the reduction of taxes on low earners and incentivizing the employment of jobseekers through the introduction of specific programs and monitoring activities to promote that (Kemmerling and Bruttel 2006, 95–96);
- The reorganization of the BA (Hartz III), carried out with the aim to improve job-placement processes as well as service delivery (Bauer and King 2018, 7);
- Labor supply (Hartz IV), characterized by the restructuring of the unemployment-benefit and welfare-assistance systems that led to the reduction of unemployment benefits—now transformed into a flat-rate payment (Rinne and Zimmermann 2013, 706).

In sum, on the one hand the good performance of the labor market—defined as the “German miracle”—was argued to have been the result of the country’s internal flexibility and further integration of those seeking employment (Möller 2010). On the other, it was associated with the low rate of industrial recruitment in the previous recession (in the late 1990s and early years of the new century). This led respectively to the reduction of the newly unemployed in 2008 as well as to the introduction of “short-time working” (“*Kurzarbeit*”) especially in the industrial manufacturing sector (Brenke, Rinne, and Zimmermann 2013; Burda and Hunt 2011).

¹⁰⁹German chancellor Gerhard Schröder launched “Agenda 2010” on March 14, 2003, consisting of a series of measures (among which were the Hartz reforms) aimed at reforming the German labor market.

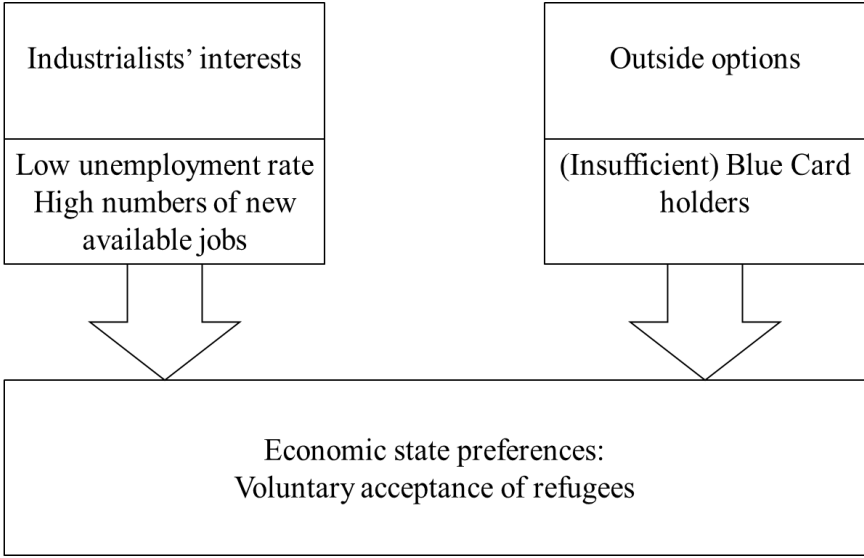
8.1.1.1 The Industrial Sector

In the following, the patterns of German state preferences are now traced in line with the primary economic interests of the country vis-à-vis refugees. H₁'s validity is hence under scrutiny here:

H₁: The stronger the demand for labor forces in a country and the weaker the outside options, the more likely the state will accept refugees.

The core argument that follows is that refugees were voluntarily accepted and strongly supported at the national level on the basis of the German labor market's very robust development, as coming in tandem with a continual future demand for labor too (see Figure 40 below).

Figure 40. German Economic Interests

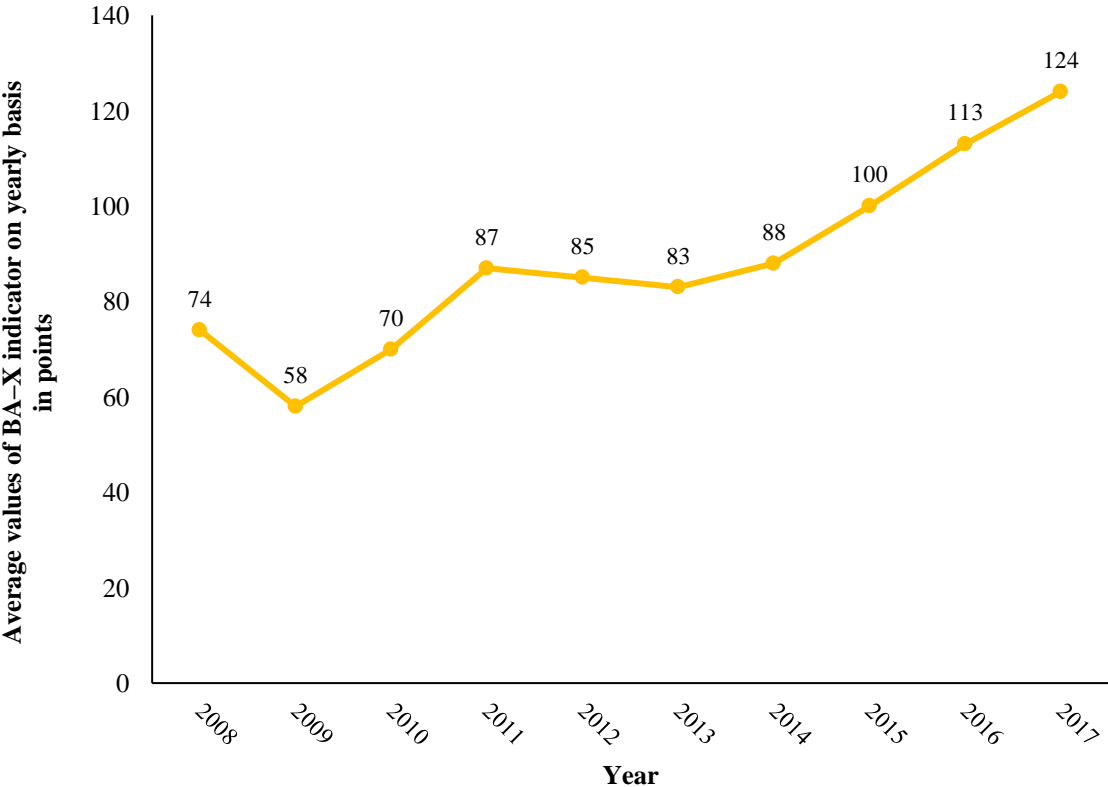


Source: Author's own depiction.

In the aftermath of the great recession the German economy was, as demonstrated earlier, characterized on the one hand by a steady and fairly swift decrease in the unemployment rate—reaching 5 percent and 4.6 percent in the biennium 2014–2015 across the two years respectively. It continued to further decrease by reaching the value of 3.8 percent in 2017 meanwhile. On the other hand, however, an acute shortage of skilled labor—a shortfall of 3.5 million people to be precise—is expected by 2025 (Fuchs, Söhnlein, and Weber 2011) especially in sectors such as IT, healthcare, and telecommunications (Bosch, Brücker, and Koppel 2011, 587).

The BA-X indicator, a monthly labor-market index published by the BA at both the federal and national levels, depicts the demand for labor in Germany¹¹⁰. For the scope of this thesis, the data below present an average value of the BA-X indicator per year (calculated by the author). It emphasizes a solid and progressive increase in available employment in the wake of the great recession (see Figure 41 below). As the data show, the average of the demand for labor per the BA-X indicator's values decreased with 16 percent from 74 to 58 points between 2008 and 2009. By contrast, it registered a peak in 2011 at 87 points; a sustained decrease then followed, with 85 points being the figure in 2012. However the BA-X indicator's values would increase progressively from 2013, reaching 88 and 100 points between 2014 and 2015. The core sectors characterized by this increased demand for labor were mainly healthcare, trade, as well as services sectors—including here gastronomy and logistics sectors.¹¹¹

Figure 41. The BA-X indicator's Trend in Germany in 2008–2017



Source: Author's own depiction, based on BA data in 2008–2017.

¹¹⁰The data regarding the BA-X indicator in Figure 41 refer to the yearly average that has been calculated by the author. This represent better the evolution of the demand for labor forces in Germany in 2008–2017. For further information, see: <https://s.gwdg.de/fpNvNi> (Update accessed June 5, 2020).

¹¹¹For further information, see the BA-X indicator reports available online at: <https://statistik.arbeitsagentur.de/Statistikdaten/Detail/201501/arbeitsmarktberichte/bax-ba-x/ba-x-d-0-201501-pdf.pdf> (accessed November 25, 2019).

The solid performance of the German economy as well as the demand for labor in the abovementioned sectors led to domestic actors adopting a liberal position on refugees, one publicly emphasized. It is also relevant to stress that in the public statements of German business representatives the term “migrant” was usually articulated instead of “refugee,” with the latter connoting a long-term form of migration. These comments are from interviews where business leaders were asked about the refugee issue and the choice of Germany in letting these individuals in.

“But in the best case, it [referring to the acceptance of refugees] can also become a basis for the next German economic miracle - just as the millions of guest workers in the 1950s and 1960s contributed quite significantly to the upswing of the Federal Republic of Germany.”

Dieter Zetsche, CEO of Daimler, September 15, 2015¹¹²

“If we can integrate them quickly into the jobs market, we’ll be helping refugees, but also helping ourselves as well.”

“We are ready to provide all asylum seekers with legitimate chances of obtaining the right to stay, with rapid and time-secured access to education and jobs.”

Ulrich Grillo, Former President of the Federation of German Industries
September 5, 2015¹¹³; September 6, 2015¹¹⁴

“The next 20 years we will need much more manpower than this country is going to produce.”

“Immigration is a necessity for our country. It is a huge challenge with many problems, but it is also an opportunity.”

Ingo Kramer, President of the Confederation of German Employers’ Associations,
September 4, 2015¹¹⁵; November 3, 2015¹¹⁶

¹¹²For further information, see: <https://www.faz.net/aktuell/technik-motor/iaa/daimler-chef-zetsche-fluechtlinge-koennten-neues-wirtschaftswunder-ausloesen-13803671.html> (accessed November 20 2019).

¹¹³For further information, see Richter (2015) at: <https://s.gwdg.de/VWe1uU> (accessed September 15, 2020).

¹¹⁴For further information, see: <https://www.welt.de/wirtschaft/article146079271/Wirtschaft-will-Fluechtlinge-schnell-in-Jobs-bringen.html> (accessed September 15, 2020).

¹¹⁵For further information, see Esslinger and Nimz (2015) at: <https://s.gwdg.de/fBFF7X> (accessed April 25, 2020).

¹¹⁶For further information, see Windolph (2015) at: <https://s.gwdg.de/QZPTbn> (accessed April 27, 2020).

“Our labor market is currently stable and receptive. Those who speak good German and are qualified will quickly find a job. That’s why we need to invest quickly in language and education. That increases the chances of finding work. And work is the best form of integration. Companies have more vacancies than ever before, and it is becoming increasingly difficult to fill them.”

Frank-Jürgen Weise, Former Head of the BA, November 12, 2015¹¹⁷

It is important to underline that the interviewed experts, especially from economic interest groups, also confirmed the high demand for labor in the abovementioned sectors, as well as in the manufacturing one.

“Germany is a very highly developed economy with a very strong industrial basis, and in industry we need highly qualified people, also in the craft sector; even there, we also need more qualified and less qualified people too.”

Expert, EIG 5

At the same time, interviewees emphasized the importance of being qualified—which seems to have been a crucial aspect relating to the genuine access of refugees to the labor market, as well as an obstacle to their further integration therein. Thus the percentage of qualified refugees able to be integrated into the German labor market turned out to be limited compared to those without qualifications.

“It became apparent that only 15 percent of refugees coming to Germany had a kind of qualification that was needed for the German labor market, all the others were unqualified or had no real qualifications for the German labor market.”

Expert, EIG 5

“The expectations were: we will get people with university degrees, with work experience, who speak German, and who have recognized qualifications. But these expectations were not fulfilled.”

Expert 2, Ministry 4

¹¹⁷For further information, see: <https://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/fluechtlinge-deutsche-arbeitgeber-wir-brauchen-fluechtlinge-dpa.urn-newsml-dpa-com-20090101-150904-99-02223> (accessed November 20 2019).

Issues of qualification aside, the language represents the other relevant factor for the valorization of the voluntary acceptance of refugees in Germany and their further socioeconomic integration, with the aim also of avoiding their exploitation.

“We need immigration [...]. They urgently need to be integrated faster. They need German language lessons from day one—regardless of whether they are allowed to stay here permanently or not. This will make it easier for people to get started in our country.”

Ingo Kramer, President of the Confederation of German Employers' Associations,
July 13, 2015¹¹⁸

“If you cannot speak the language but you need a job, then you go for a lower qualification. We have temporary agencies that can supply people to the hospitality sector (e.g. tourism, restaurants, bars) where you need little language qualification. These agencies make a contract with you for two months and they send you off to somebody else, it's basically short-term contracts, and whenever you are not needed anymore you go home. That was one of the largest sectors where refugees were employed.”

Expert, EIG 4

As a consequence, the number of language courses taken within the vocational-training system increased from 24,000 in 2015 to 175,000 in 2017 (Degler, Liebig, and Senner 2017, 7). Furthermore, according to recent data provided by the Institute for Labor Market and Occupational Research, the integration of refugees coming to Germany between 2013 and 2016 was efficient in the following terms (Brücker, Kosyakova, and Schuß 2020):

- granting access to the labor market for refugees after five years of residence in Germany, where 52 percent were skilled workers and 44 percent assistants;
- 23 percent of refugees acquired a general qualification, vocational training, or attended university;
- 85 percent of refugees attended German language courses.

¹¹⁸For further information, see Ruzic and Winter (2015) at: <https://s.gwdg.de/b5av3e> (accessed April 27, 2020).

“Of the more than one million people who have come to Germany, especially since 2015, almost 400,000 now have a training place or job. I am surprised that this is happening so quickly.”

Ingo Kramer, President of the Confederation of German Employers' Associations,
December 14, 2018¹¹⁹

Thus, H_1 's assumption regarding the demand for labor seems to be valid in the German case. But what about the other IVs? An aging population and the outside options available are now examined in the following, representing the other two variables informing the voluntary-acceptance patterns in German economic state preferences.

8.1.1.2 The Outside Options

Germany represents a country with strong relevant experience of labor migration, a mechanism in use ever since the aftermath of WWII (Givens and Luedtke 2005; Kolb 2014). In particular, Germany attracted four million “*Gastarbeiter*” (“guest workers”) to help reconstruct the country between 1955 and 1973 (Green 2007). In the following years, ethnic Germans from Eastern European neighboring countries and the former Soviet Union (D’Amuri, Ottaviano, and Peri 2010; Zimmermann 1999) would contribute to the German labor force up until the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. The dissolution of the USSR then led to continuous movements of immigrants from Central and Eastern Europe into Germany, helping fill the gaps in its labor force (Bauder, Lenard, and Straehle 2014).

In the early years of the new century, Germany further became an immigration-welcoming country by implementing two laws aimed at attracting labor migrants: namely the German Green Card of the year 2000 and the Immigration Act of 2005 (Kahanec and Zimmermann 2011). These laws addressed particularly contractual work and the corresponding appropriate requirements regarding the labor force (Kolb 2014). The former focused on highly qualified workers and aimed especially at attracting 20,000 IT specialists from abroad (Jurgens 2010), while the latter officially confirmed the status of Germany as an immigration-friendly country and provided the legislative framework for labor migration as well as the required integration process.¹²⁰ Further measures were also taken, especially bilateral agreements vis-à-vis seasonal

¹¹⁹For further information, see Stahl (2018) at: <https://www.augsburger-allgemeine.de/wirtschaft/Arbeitgeber-Praesident-Wir-schaffen-das-mit-der-Integration-id52932321.html> (accessed February 10, 2020).

¹²⁰For further information, see: <https://s.gwdg.de/1CJkFz> (accessed March 22, 2020).

workers concluded between German firms and their counterparts in the Eastern European countries between 2008 and 2009 (Parusel and Schneider 2010).

In the aftermath of the great recession, given the stable unemployment rate and the continued demand for labor in specific sectors, the German government began promoting the concept of a “skilled work force” (“*Fachkräftekonzept*”) in 2011. These measures were strengthened by the Recognition Act (“*Anerkennungsgesetz*”)¹²¹ approved in 2012 in order to promote the recognition of job qualifications acquired abroad as well as the better integration of qualified workers into the German labor market.

Despite these measures focused on both the supply and demand sides of the equation, they could not address the problems related to the labor requirements in specific sectors such as manufacturing, IT, engineering, or healthcare. Therefore the voluntary acceptance of refugees, as demonstrated above, was based on the continuously increasing demand for labor and the lack of a legal instrument to meet it. The demand for labor still characterized the German market to such a degree that in even in the aftermath of the voluntary acceptance of refugees in later summer 2015 the Specialist Immigration Act¹²² (“*Fachkräfteeinwanderungsgesetz*”) was also approved in 2018. The interviewed experts, especially those from governmental interest groups, defined the latter as a measure aimed at addressing the high demand for labor in the country, the aging population, as well as the consequences of that demography vis-à-vis funding the state pension system.

“So the need for labor is there, and it has even become bigger and it is getting bigger from year to year. It is because of German demography. There are various estimates confirming the sharp decrease of available labor and we have to solve this problem, otherwise we will no longer be able to finance our social security systems, we will no longer be able to finance pensions. So, the Specialist Immigration Act is a balancing law.”

Expert 1, Ministry 4

Thus German domestic actors saw refugees as a viable available resource for addressing the challenges facing the national labor market.

¹²¹For further information, see: https://www.anerkennung-in-deutschland.de/assets/content/Medien_Dokumente-Fachpublikum/20120320_erlaeuterungen_zum_anerkennungsg_bund.pdf (accessed March 22, 2020).

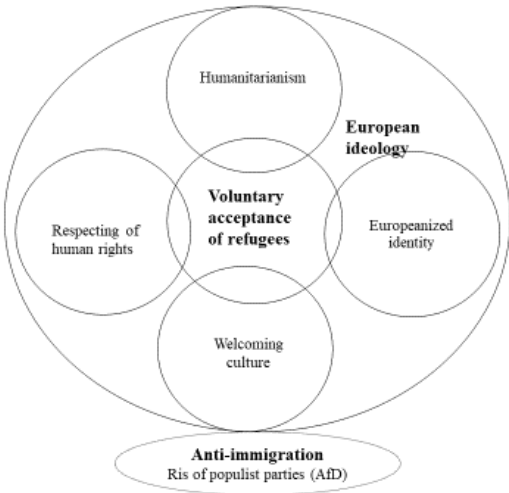
¹²²For further information, see: <https://s.gwdg.de/TWXWKB> (accessed March 22, 2020).

8.1.2 Ideology

The voluntary acceptance of refugees by the German government in September 2015 was based also on the secondary source of state preferences: ideology. In the following, the formation process of these German ideational state preferences is hence outlined (see Figure 42 below). Accordingly, H₂ is of relevance here:

H₂: The stronger the European ideology in a country, the more likely the state will accept refugees.

Figure 42. **German Ideational State Preferences**



Source: Author’s own depiction.

German ideational state preferences reflect a clear dominance of European ideology, leading to the voluntary acceptance of refugees in late summer 2015 (Karakayali 2017; 2018, 608–9) that ran counter to nascent anti-immigration sentiment in society not only in the crucial year 2015 but also afterwards. However this decision taken on September 4, 2015, did lead to a steady increase in anti-immigration organizations in the country (Arzheimer 2015; Dostal 2017; Jäckle and König 2017).

According to the empirical evidence, the core determinants of European ideology in the formation of German ideational state preferences are a Europeanized identity (Wallaschek 2020, 84–85), humanitarianism and the respecting of human rights (Mavelli 2017), compliance with national, European, and international legislation, as well as upholding a welcoming culture (Hamann and Karakayali 2016). By contrast, anti-immigrant sentiment emerged and consolidated with the rise of populist political parties like the AfD, whose popularity in society

would gradually later increase—as demonstrated particularly in the national elections of September 2017 (Dostal 2017; Hansen and Olsen 2019).

Germany represents the EU member state *par excellence* that would rebuild its national identity in the aftermath of WWII, given the legacies of the Nazi regime and the nationalistic sentiment it perpetuated (Marcussen et al. 1999; Schild 2001). This was reflected in the strong and continuous support that the German elite would provide to the EU integration process during the CW years, as well as to the creation of a European federalist model based on the common values of cooperation and solidarity (Risse 2002; 2003; 2005). This vision strengthened the affinity of German society for the EU in terms of responsibility sharing and upholding European values. This bond was reflected also in the behavior of the German government in its voluntary acceptance of refugees in late summer 2015.

“It was a decision for Europe, it was a decision simply to take away pressure from the first countries of arrival and especially from the transit countries.”
Expert 2, Ministry 4

The other variable of European ideology related to the German voluntary acceptance of refugees was the respecting of human rights. In this respect, in line with LI, the protection of refugees as individuals whose rights have been violated represents a core goal of the international community (Lavenex 2001a, 15). Therefore Germany’s ideational state preferences were guided by the principles of humanitarianism and the respecting of human rights (Mavelli 2017). In particular, the situation in Keleti train station in the Hungarian capital, Budapest, was critical. More than 3,000 refugees were camping out on the souterrain level there, surrounded by plastic garbage and living under inadequate hygienic and inhumane conditions.¹²³ These scenes, reported worldwide, had a strong impact on German state actors and on Chancellor Merkel. They represented exactly a lack of respect for European values such as upholding human rights that was anathema to the Germans.

“They are on the way, they need support, and [...] Germany has been aware of its role and has also said that we will help.”
Expert 1, Ministry 4

¹²³For further information on the chronology of the decision taken on September 4, 2015, to let these refugees into Germany, see: <https://s.gwdg.de/Pxoj0M> (accessed December 12, 2019).

“Well, basically we had a situation in Hungary that was from Angela Merkel’s point of view against the minimum standards of reception conditions, an inhumane situation in the Budapest train station [...]. But taking over responsibility for humanitarian reasons basically, and that was the case; the humanitarian situation was terrible, and that’s why the decision was taken.”

Expert, Ministry 3

Historical memorial explains further the behavior of the German government in voluntarily accepting refugees in late summer 2015. In particular, German reunification from October 1990 caused important refugee flows of ethnic Germans coming from Central and Eastern Europe and the former East Germany. This direct experience with refugees already two decades before had given the German government a taste of what it meant to be in need of state support and protection.

Thus the weight of history affected the reaction of the German government to the refugee issue of 2015 (Perron 2021), with it further emphasizing the necessity to respect the rights of refugees as PCNIP.

“I think it has [...] to do with human rights values, and as a country that was not long ago divided by a wall, not long before that. One wanted and could, I think, also simply not take the risk of people standing at the border and violently being prevented from coming to Germany. So these images were not wanted.”

Expert 2, Ministry 4

“I am deeply convinced personally that Angela Merkel took this decision on humanitarian grounds, and I think it is to be seen against the background of her being a Christian.”

Expert, Ministry 3

“The main cause was that the situation in Syria was horrible, that there was a need to support these people, that the situation in Hungary was unacceptable. It was a very non-German decision because it was not bureaucratic, it was quick, it was with a certain legal flexibility, it was not illegal but it did not have to trigger the discretionary clause either.”

Expert, Ministry 3

The rational-choice explanation in this context is that domestic interest groups act in line with the commitment to treaties signed and ratified by themselves (Mavelli 2017, 828). Hence, the voluntary acceptance of refugees in summer 2015 was based on the respecting of the right to asylum that is clearly defined by the German Constitution. As Article 16a (1) of the German Constitution states: “Politically persecuted persons enjoy the right of asylum.” However according to the German Constitution the right to asylum based on the condition of being politically persecuted is not recognized for third-country nationals who have entered Germany through a safe third country. Consequently Article 16a (2) of the German Constitution¹²⁴ stipulates that:

Paragraph 1 may not be invoked by persons arriving from a Member State of the European Communities or from any other third country where the application of the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms is ensured. The states outside the European Communities to which the conditions of the first sentence apply shall be determined by law requiring the consent of the Bundesrat. In the cases of the first sentence, measures terminating residence may be taken independently of any appeal lodged against them.

Thus the refugees camping out in Keleti train station did not meet the conditions for the right to asylum based on the German Constitution because they had previously traveled through safe third countries such as Greece and Hungary.¹²⁵ Yet they were still accepted regardless because the majority of them were Syrian and the Iraqi nationals, and thus qualified as PCNIP.

“It was not a mistake to take in those couple of thousand people from Hungary, it was not a mistake to take in Syrians, they were in need of protection.”

Expert, Ministry 3

The compliance of the German government in accepting voluntarily these refugees in September 2015 was hence ultimately with the core international conventions in the field of asylum: that is, the 1951 Geneva Convention and the 1967 Protocol. These two legal texts provide a definition of “refugee” that is based on political persecution and the prohibition of return to one’s home country on the grounds that doing so might put one’s life at risk. This

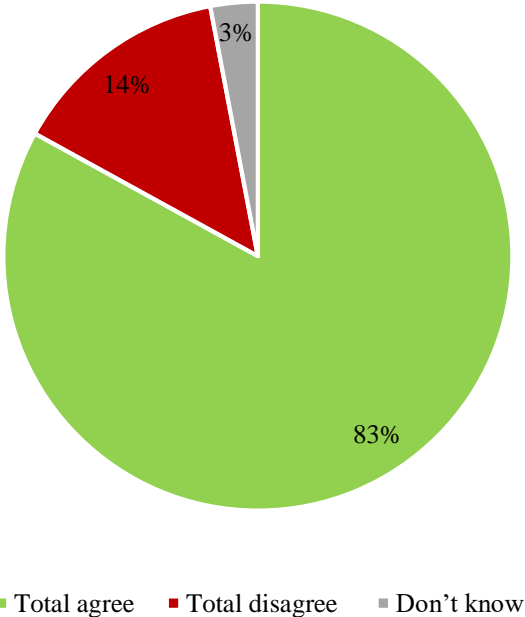
¹²⁴For further information regarding Article 16 of the German Constitution, see: <https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/gg/index.html#BJNR000010949BJNE001700314> (accessed November 15, 2019).

¹²⁵The Syrian refugees who came to Germany in this historical moment had travelled through Greece, Bulgaria, Romania, and Hungary as the result of the geographical positions of these countries and their sea or land borders with Turkey. Furthermore come EU candidate states fall in the geographical area of the Western Balkan route, such as North Macedonia and Serbia. For further information, see p. 10 of: https://migration.iom.int/docs/Flows_Compilation_Report_July_2018.pdf (accessed April 9, 2020).

determined further the compliance of the German state with the EU’s own legal texts of the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Convention on Human Rights that advocate directly for the abovementioned principles too.

European ideology was reflected in the immediate ex post decision to accept refugees voluntarily in Germany based on an additional strand thereof: that is, the aforementioned welcoming culture (“*Willkommenskultur*”) (Hamann and Karakayali 2016). This is confirmed also by empirical data. According to that provided by Standard Eurobarometer,¹²⁶ 83 percent of Germans agreed with the decision to help refugees in late summer 2015 (see Figure 43 below).

Figure 43. German Public Opinion on Dis(agreement) with Helping Refugees in 2015



Source: Author’s own depiction, based on Standard Eurobarometer Autumn N. 84 in 2015.

Furthermore, the organization of civil society along the lines of significant volunteering would characterize German society in September 2015 and the months afterward (Karakayali 2017). This network of voluntary helpers was at the front line of providing refugees with the initial necessities such as food, clothes, translation support, as well as legal assistance (Funk 2016).

¹²⁶The question posed to respective publics in the EU member states was: “To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements: (OUR COUNTRY) should help refugees?” For further information, see: Standard Eurobarometer Autumn (84).

“It was a feeling not only shared by German politicians but also by citizens—if you look at the pictures for example at Munich train station, when the refugees came in, all were welcomed by normal people like you and me.”

Expert 2, Ministry 4

“It was not only Chancellor Merkel, she made that possible, but it was echoed by the people. A lot of trade union members had for example organized by themselves bottles of water, and welcoming gifts for the kids, at the train station in Munich.”

Expert, EIG 4

“The refugee wave was a nationwide phenomenon and one very much discussed in the media. In the last two years there were many volunteers and helpers, also at our institution. It was gratifying that among the population and society there was a very great willingness to help, that they stood up to help people.”

Expert, NGIG 7

Yet the voluntary acceptance of refugees in Germany was also accompanied by a certain anti-immigration sentiment in society, expressed through xenophobic and far-right political entities such as PEGIDA and AfD that started to gain traction particularly in the former East Germany in 2015 (Brubaker 2017, 1193; Dostal 2015; Grabow 2016, 175; Vorländer, Herold, and Schäller 2018). This would lead to the increasing public perception of immigration as a national concern in Germany (see Figure 44 below).

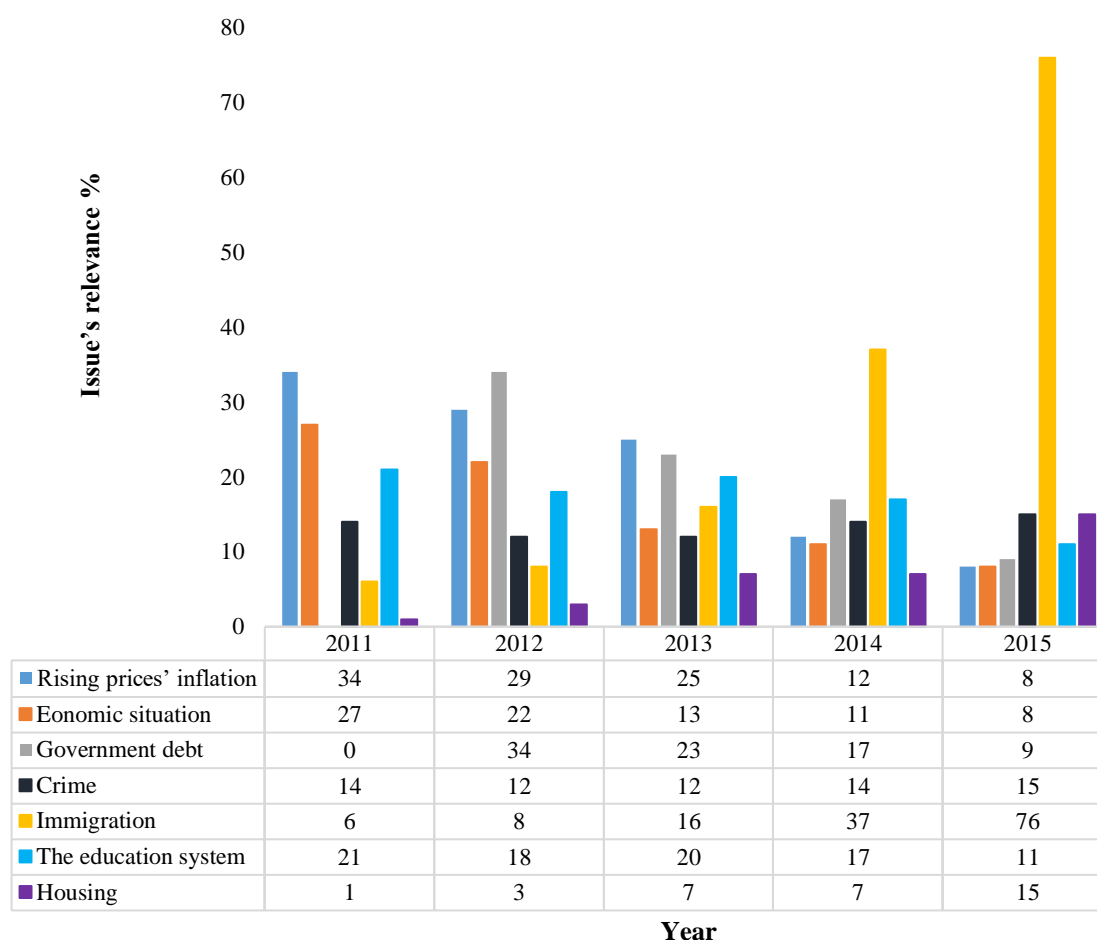
“On the other hand, there are already intercultural misunderstandings, racist everyday phenomena, as well as radical right-wing moods, and for this reason we try to make it possible to create a better atmosphere.”

Expert, NGIG 7

As the data in Figure 44 show, immigration represented the most relevant concern in German public opinion in the biennium 2014–2015, with 37 percent and 76 percent of respondents expressing that across the two years respectively.¹²⁷ By contrast, economic issues dominated as the primary national concern in previous years.

¹²⁷The question posed by Standard Eurobarometer was: “What do you think are the two most important issues facing (OUR COUNTRY) at the moment?” For further information, see the Standard Eurobarometer Standard Eurobarometer Autumn N. 76, 78, 80, 82, 84 pursued in 2011–2015. Two answers are possible.

Figure 44. The German public opinion on the Two Most Relevant Issues Faced at the National Level in 2011–2015



Source: Source: Author's own depiction, based on Standard Eurobarometer Autumn N. 76, 78, 80, 82, 84 in 2011–2015.

In sum, in line with H₂, the German case strengthens the view that the stronger the European ideology in a country is, the more likely it is to accept refugees. European ideology clearly dominated over anti-immigration sentiments in German society in later summer 2015. This is explained by the fact that the dominant societal interest groups were not affected by the populists, and chose instead to support and further promote humanitarianism. Therefore the German case can be said to ultimately validate the postulations relating to European ideology encapsulated in H₂.

In the German case, the answers given regard different issues from year to year. This is the reason of the long list regarding the issues of concern at the national level compared to Hungary and Germany.

8.2 Interstate Bargaining Power

In the following, the interstate bargaining that constitutes the second analytical part of the German country case will be analyzed. It aims at explaining German state behavior regarding cooperation on the RS, based on the principle of responsibility sharing for refugees at the EU-wide level. The key factor that clarifies the favorable position taken by the German government vis-à-vis the RS is the migration pressure faced. As with the other two case studies, the latter was determined by the first asylum applications lodged in Germany in the biennium 2014–2015. The German decision to voluntarily accept refugees in late summer 2015, which increased drastically the number of first asylum applications lodged in the country, led to its categorization as a DC then.

The bargaining power that Germany had on the RS, regarding which, as noted, it took a favorable position, is further explained by the available unilateral policy alternatives and alternative coalitions that the government had to counter the high migration pressure faced as a DC. Germany's favorable position is explainable also by the benefits that derived from this new agreement between the EU member states compared to those potentially stemming from maintaining the status quo instead (that is, upholding D III R). In sum, it is argued that German patterns of voluntarily accepting refugees are what led to the cooperative behavior seen on the RS at the EU-wide level.

8.2.1 Germany's Position as a Destination Country

The German government promoted continuously cooperation regarding the distribution of refugees at the EU-wide level in the year 2015.

“Perhaps we can launch a European reception program for Syrian refugees and distribute them among the European states.”

Thomas de Maizière, Minister of the Interior of Germany, January 23, 2015¹²⁸

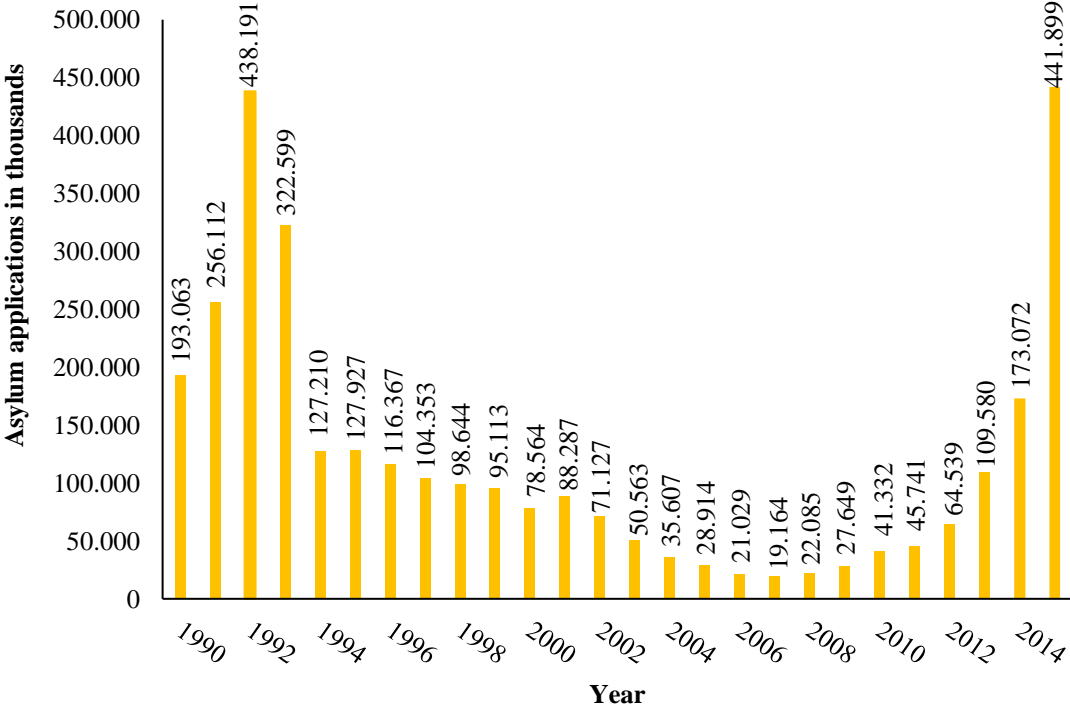
Yet the decision to voluntarily accept refugees, announced on September 4, 2015, by Chancellor Merkel, increased significantly the migration pressure on the country. However this did not undermine the cooperative approach of the German government within the EU institutions, as

¹²⁸For further information, see “Press Release Ministry of Interior Germany (2015a).” Available online at: <https://www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/kurzmeldungen/DE/2015/01/bundesinnenminister-beim-weltwirtschaftsforum-in-davos.html> (accessed February 10, 2020).

definitively confirmed by its voting in favor of the RS at the heart of the Council on September 14 and 22, 2015, respectively. The question that arises here is: To what extent did the high migration pressure faced influence the behavior of the German government regarding its degree of acceptance of refugees?

Germany represents, as noted, a country with a relevant migration history, especially in the early 1990s after the CW ended and following the fall of the Berlin Wall. The core migration communities were the ethnic Germans, people coming from the new republics of the former Yugoslavia as well as from Central and Eastern Europe (Bosswick 2000, 48; Finotelli 2009, 890). This transformed Germany into a DC for migration and refugee flows. Thus migration pressure related to the number of first asylum applications lodged in the country increased particularly in the first two years of the 1990s, reaching their peak in 1992 at 438,191 such applications (see Figure 45 below).¹²⁹

Figure 45: **First* Asylum Applications in Germany in 1990–2015**



Source: Author’s own depiction, based on BAMF data in 1990–2015.

¹²⁹In reference to the years 1990–1994, the numbers indicate total asylum applications while from 1995 they refer to specifically first asylum applications. For further information, see “Das Bundesamt in Zahlen 2012.” Available online at: <https://s.gwdg.de/t7GqVH> (accessed April 2, 2020). For the years 2011–2015, see “Das Bundesamt in Zahlen 2012”. Available at: <https://s.gwdg.de/Xjeaae> (accessed April 2, 2020).

Furthermore, in the late 1990s—due to the Kosovo refugee issue—asylum applications registered a slight increase (but not one comparable to the previous period).

The number of first asylum applications lodged in Germany then stabilized in the early years of the century, even decreasing over the course of its first decade—going from 78,564 in 2000 to 41,332 in number in 2010. However migration pressure vis-à-vis first asylum applications increased in the aftermath of the Arab Spring. In particular, in the biennium 2013–2014 a total of 109,580 and 173,072 were lodged respectively across the two years in Germany.

The decision to voluntarily accept refugees in late summer 2015 then transformed Germany into the country with the highest migration pressure in the whole of the EU in absolute terms, with 441,899 first asylum applications being lodged in the country in that year.

Germany represents a country with high migration pressure not only regarding the specific time frame analyzed in this thesis but also previously too. Certain crucial factors marked Germany out as a DC: namely the organized asylum system and the relatively sophisticated integration process that refugees had access to compared to in other EU member states.

The interviewed experts from German governmental and economic domestic interest groups indicated also the relevance of these factors in determining Germany’s status as a DC. Scientific studies also confirm the robustness of the country’s welfare system before the 2015 refugee issue’s onset as an element leading to Germany having the status of DC (Neumayer 2004). This refers to the other side to the issue: that is, the preferences of refugees themselves regarding the EU member states where they wished to seek asylum. However examining this dimension falls outside the scope of this thesis unfortunately.

“All states have different levels of social benefits, and we of course always have the problem that people from states where the level is perhaps not so high or where people are not so concerned about integration then go from there to other states.”

Expert 1, Ministry 4

“Now, the migrants coming to Italy don’t know details of the internal situation there, but they certainly know Germany. For a migrant, the fact that Germany is a strong, economically stable country is well known.”

Expert, EIG 2

In sum, Germany represented a DC in 2015 and beyond for three reasons: the acute migration pressure faced vis-à-vis first asylum applications, with the increase of refugee arrivals through

Italy and then later Greece; the country's robust welfare system; and, the well-organized asylum and integration system that the country offers.

8.2.2 Germany's Bargaining Power

The intensity of Germany's economic and ideational state preferences vis-à-vis the acceptance of refugees on a voluntary basis was further transmitted during the negotiation process at the heart of the Council on the RS. The core principles that contributed to the behavior of the German government in the year 2015 were responsibility sharing for refugees and solidarity in addressing the refugee issue at the EU-wide level. As previously noted, the migration pressure faced represented a key factor that shaped the behaviors and positions of EU member states during that negotiation process. In this regard, the migration pressure on Germany was extremely high following its decision to accept the refugees stuck in Hungary on September 4, 2015.

The acceptance of refugees in September 2015 implied the clear suspension of D III R, with Chancellor Merkel declaring it temporarily suspended regarding Syrian citizens. As a consequence, the migration pressure encountered significantly went up—with more than 800,000 refugees now entering Germany (Wolff 2015). The decision to voluntarily accept refugees was in line with the previous behavior of the German government, which had promoted continuously the welcoming of people escaping war in their country. In this regard, the German government emphasized the necessity to involve all EU member states so as to address the issue at the EU-wide level. This position was continuously assumed and stressed by the representatives of the German government.

“We welcome those who are politically persecuted. All states must participate.”

Thomas de Maizière, Minister of the Interior of Germany, March 18, 2015¹³⁰

In the following, the German government being in favor of the RS and against maintaining the status quo represented by D III R is scrutinized. H_{3A} is of relevance here then:

H_{3A}: The more attractive the unilateral policy alternative a country has, the less likely the state will bargain with the new agreement.

¹³⁰For further information, see Huhn (2015) at: <https://s.gwdg.de/VUA5Cp> (accessed March 10, 2020).

The German government defined the acceptance of refugees on a voluntary basis in Germany in the year 2015 as a temporary exception to the rules (thus, D III R).

“So, it was an exception from the Dublin rule.”

Expert, Ministry 3

In particular, following the launch of the RS the German government emphasized further the necessity of cooperation at the EU-wide level with the aim to assist the FECs. This was declared on April 22 2015, one day before the first meeting of the Council that took place on April 23, 2015.

“It is clear that no country can solve the refugee problem alone. We need not only a common European strategy, but also better integration of foreign, domestic, and development policy in and between the Member States, as well as with the countries of origin and transit.”

Thomas de Maizière, Minister of the Interior of Germany, April 22, 2015¹³¹

The approach of promoting the involvement of all EU member states in addressing the refugee issue was validated by the Council agreeing on July 20, 2015, to the relocation of 40,000 refugees from Italy and Greece starting October of the same year.

“For the first time, all EU member states recognize that all states must be on board and participate. We are very close to the target number. Now we still have to talk about some details. The negotiations today have shown that we have come a long way. We have found a solution for this year’s distribution; we will negotiate next year’s distribution in the autumn.”

Emily Haber, State Secretary of Germany, July 20, 2015¹³²

The favorable position of the country on the RS was determined during the final voting procedure on September 22, 2015 that Germany cast on the second RS Decision, establishing the relocation of 40,000 and 120,000 refugees from the FECs of Italy and Greece respectively. This means that the bargaining power of Germany was strong in reference to the agreement that was achieved at the heart of the Council.

¹³¹For further information, see “Press Release Ministry of Interior Germany (2015b).” Available online at: <https://s.gwdg.de/2yjuoo> (accessed February 10, 2020).

¹³²For further information, see: <https://s.gwdg.de/wJXM8K> (accessed February 10, 2020).

“It was a laborious path, but Germany’s tough negotiating course has paid off. We have taken an important step forward.”

Thomas de Maizière, Minister of the Interior of Germany, September 22, 2015¹³³

The favorable position of Germany on the RS is explained in relation to the benefits that the country could thereby obtain compared to those derived from the best outside option it had at the time. This means that given the high migration pressure on the country as the result of the suspension of D III R and the acceptance of refugees on a voluntary basis, the German government had no other option than to pursue the sharing of responsibility for refugees at the EU-wide level. This was due to the criticisms that the government received both internally and externally regarding such a decision and the message that it might convey regarding the future.

“I think in particular Germany underestimated the power of the signal that was sent by doing so, and which was received by hundreds of thousands of people on social media: that—and it was abused also by smugglers of course—Germany is heaven on earth for everybody.”

Expert, Ministry 3

In reference to H_{3A}, and in line with LI theory, the more that benefits accrue from the unilateral policy alternatives a country has, the less likely it is to bargain on the RS agreement. Germany had no unilateral policy options with regard to the high migration pressure faced in 2015, and as such was a strong proponent of cooperation. Additionally it suspended D III R, thereby, theoretically, diminishing its own bargaining power.

“If nothing changes, it is bad for Germany and good for others. And that’s why negotiating is more difficult. But it is not hopeless.”

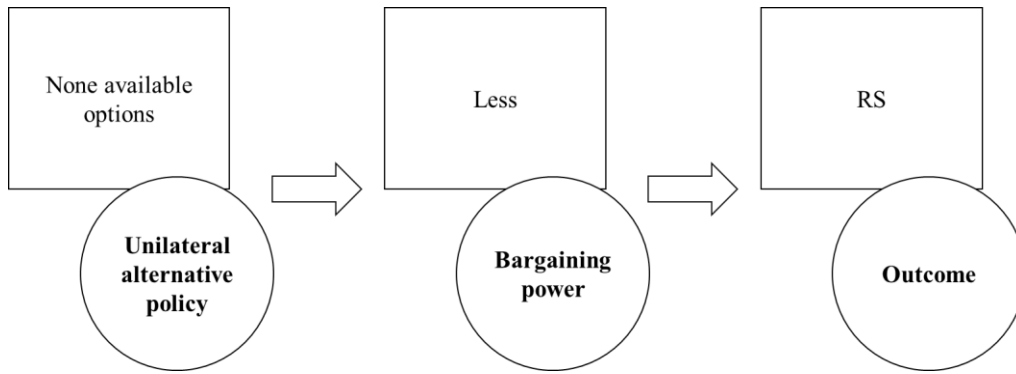
Thomas de Maizière, Minister of the Interior of Germany, September 3, 2015¹³⁴

Hence the assumptions relating to unilateral policy alternatives’ effect vis-à-vis the migration pressure faced, as highlighted by H_{3A}, are found to be valid on the basis of the evidence from the German case (see Figure 46 below).

¹³³For further information, see “Press Release Ministry of Interior Germany (2015d).” Available online at: <https://s.gwdg.de/vDth2h> (accessed February 10, 2020).

¹³⁴For further information, see Brost and Wefing (2015) at: <https://s.gwdg.de/w8Yhmg> (accessed February 10, 2020).

Figure 46. German Bargaining Power in Relation to Unilateral Policy Alternative



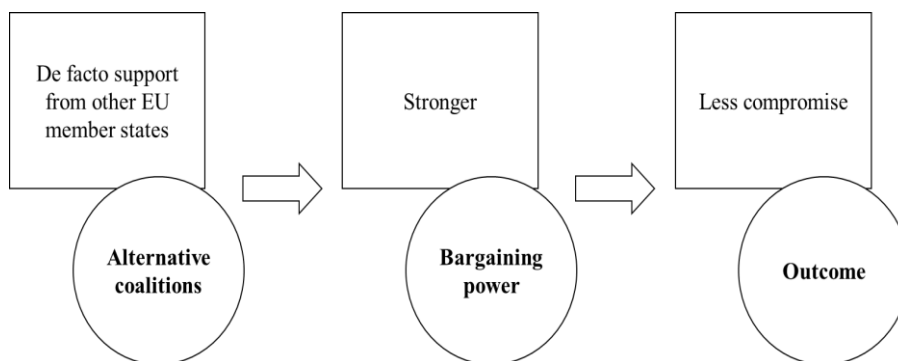
Source: Author's own depiction.

The second determinant, in line with interstate bargaining theory, that determines the degree of cooperation seen at the EU-wide level is the distribution of benefits originating from the alternative coalitions available. This implies that the more alternative coalitions exist, the stronger the bargaining power a country has and the less inclined it is to compromise. Hence H_{3B} is examined here:

H_{3B}: The easier a country can form alternative coalitions, the less likely a state will compromise on its own position.

The German government, likewise the Italian one, did not have any official alternative coalitions. As a matter of consequence, it is expected according to LI's theoretical paradigm that Germany should have weaker bargaining power and so be likely to greatly compromise. Conversely, the empirical evidence shows that Germany had strong bargaining power and was less inclinable to compromise in reality (see Figure 47 below).

Figure 47. German Bargaining Power in Relation to Alternative Coalitions



Source: Author's own depiction.

This is argued to be the result of de facto alternative coalitions that Germany had regarding the migration pressure faced specifically the support and good cooperation on this matter with Italy and France. In this regard, it is relevant to underline the principle for a permanent distribution mechanism regarding the refugees at the EU-wide level, an initiative undertaken by the German government with the support of the Italian and French ones. In this regard, the European Commission proposed to discuss the introduction of a permanent mechanism for the distribution of refugees at the EU-wide level in December 2015 (EU Commission 2015d, 2). Furthermore, the European Council concluded in December 2015 that the EU member states preferred to focus on the results of the RS (EU Council 2015c, 2) and decided to review the introduction of this proposal in relation to the revision of D III R in March 2016 (Zaun 2018, 54).

“I spoke this morning with the French president, and the French-German position, which we will transmit to the European institutions, is that we agree that ... we need binding quotas within the European Union to share the burden. That is the principle of solidarity.”

Angela Merkel, Chancellor of Germany, September 3, 2015¹³⁵

“What is happening today is not enough and there are countries that are not fulfilling their moral obligations.

This [Franco-German] initiative (introducing an obligatory refugee quotas) involves asking the president of the [European] commission and the president of the [European] council and all our partners, so that we can put in place immigration policies worthy of what we represent.”

François Hollande, President of France, September 3, 2015¹³⁶

In addition, Germany had stronger bargaining power in 2015 because the RS's creation was decided through the QMV procedure that requires 55 percent of the EU member states' votes to adopt and approve a determined decision. Therefore, H_{3B} is hence plausible for the German case.

¹³⁵For further information, see <https://nz.news.yahoo.com/france-germany-agree-binding-migrant-quotas-needed-merkel-29429138.html> at: <https://s.gwdg.de/NxFiCU> (accessed February 10, 2020).

¹³⁶For further information, see Willsher and Kirchgaessner (2015) at: <https://s.gwdg.de/NxFiCU> (accessed February 10, 2020).

8.3 Summary of the Empirical Findings: The German Case Study

This chapter has offered the following research findings related to the analysis of the German state's behavior toward the acceptance of refugees at the national level and cooperation on the responsibility sharing for them at the European one. First, the strong primary economic interests of domestic actors with regard to refugees led to them voluntarily accepting the latter at the national level in late summer 2015 and beyond. This choice has been explained in reference to the increasing demand for labor and to the continued development of the national economy. Furthermore, the latter in late summer 2015 did not have sufficient alternatives available to satisfy the extensive demand for labor. As a consequence, refugees represented one rational source of meeting that demand in the medium- to long term for Germany.

Similarly, the secondary source of German state preferences—that is, ideology—also led to voluntary-acceptance patterns with regard to refugees. In particular humanitarianism, compliance with national, European, and international conventions so as to protect the right to asylum, as well as the country's welcoming culture are all important factors herein. Of particular relevance was also the historical memory regarding East German refugees after the fall of the Berlin Wall.

Second, the cooperative German state behavior on the RS at the EU-wide level reflected the effects of the voluntary-acceptance patterns informing state preferences at the national one. In particular, the bargaining power Germany had was determined by the benefits derived from the new agreement compared to those coming from maintaining the status quo instead. Regarding the unilateral policy alternatives and the alternative coalitions available to counter the high migration pressure faced as a DC, the German government's were ultimately limited—resulting in its favorable position on the RS.

With the empirical analysis of each individual case study, it is now relevant to compare them in order to understand to what extent the respective findings might be applicable to other EU member states, and what the theoretical implications might be in this regard. This represents the aim of the next chapter then.

9 Comparison of the Three Case Studies

In this chapter, I will formulate answers to the two RQs that this study addresses. This contributes further to elucidating the empirical findings related to the analyzed case studies (Italy, Hungary, and Germany). It also helps identify implications for the theoretical discussion. The structure of the present chapter follows in Figure 48 below.

This thesis, in line with LI, advances the primary argument that the behavior of EU member states regarding cooperation in a specific policy field is determined rationally, based on the economic interests of domestic actors whose interdependence leads to a given member state taking a position in favor of or against cooperation during negotiation processes at the EU-wide level. This study asks what explains the EU member state behaviors regarding the diverging acceptance of refugees witnessed at the national level (RQ₁) and concerning their cooperation or not on the responsibility sharing for refugees at the European one (RQ₂) respectively in the biennium 2014–2015. It aims at understanding how state preferences are formed at the domestic level, and what the effects thereof are on member states' behavior at the European one.

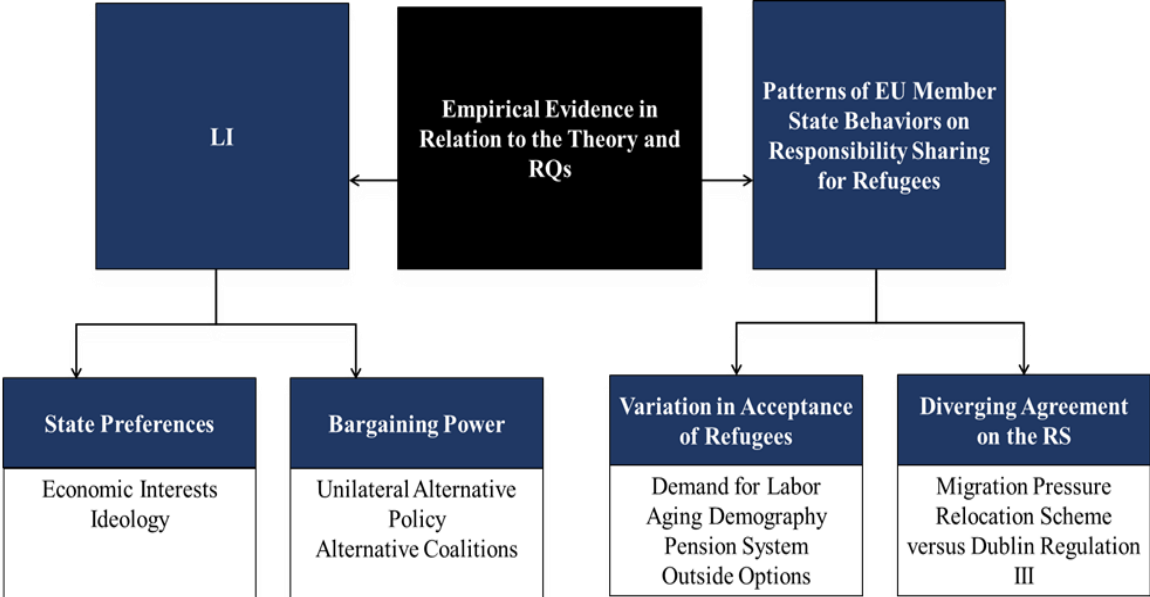
In order to address the two RQs, first the different patterns of EU member state behaviors regarding the acceptance of refugees in the identified time period (2014–2015) are delineated (DV₁). This behavior is based on the primary interests of domestic actors: that is, economic ones. In addition, secondary ideational interests contribute further to the explanation of EU member state behaviors toward refugees' acceptance at the national level. The identification of primary economic factors—namely the demand for labor, an aging population, and the funding of the state pension system—in tandem with secondary ideology ones—the respecting of human rights, pro refugee volunteering, and a welcoming culture (as contrasted by Euroscepticism)—as well as the available outside options led to three patterns of state preferences vis-à-vis refugees: namely formal acceptance (Italy), nonacceptance (Hungary), and voluntary acceptance (Germany).

Second, the patterns of EU member state behaviors regarding (dis)agreement with the RS (DV₂), driven by the principle of responsibility sharing for refugees, are differentiated according to the degree of cooperation witnessed in each of the three country cases. This was driven by the different migration pressure that each of the three states experiences as a FEC, TC, and DC respectively. Analyzed is the extent of the benefits derived from the unilateral policies and coalitional alternatives available that these three member states had compared to those stemming from choosing to cooperate on the RS instead.

The theoretical framework, constructed from LI, is reconsidered in light of the evidence from the field of asylum policy. The theoretical discussion advances in three steps. First, the rational

formation of state preferences is reconsidered in light of the empirical findings, with a special focus on their characteristics as well as their sources. Second, the bargaining power available and the three core premises of it are scrutinized. Focus is on the unanimity voting procedure, the low transaction costs, as well as the lack of asymmetrical interdependence between EU member states' preferences (Moravcsik 1993, 498). In this regard, empirical evidence regarding the voting procedure and its impact on the outcomes of the negotiation process vis-à-vis EU asylum policy are emphasized. Third, it is argued based on the obtained empirical evidence that the approach of institutional choice, representing the third stage of the LI model, cannot be sensibly applied in explaining integration in a given EU policy field.

Figure 48. Chapter 9—Comparison of the Three Case Studies



Source: Author’s own depiction.

9.1 Empirical Evidence in Relation to the Research Question

This thesis addresses the following two RQs:

RQ1: *What explains EU member state behaviors regarding the (non)acceptance of refugees at the national level?*

RQ2: *What explains EU member state behaviors regarding the responsibility sharing for PCNIP at the EU-wide level?*

RQ₁ traces the behavior of three EU member states in light of their diverging acceptance of refugees at the national level (DV₁). In this regard, the demand for labor and the more attractive alternatives that EU member states have available regarding meeting that shortage, strengthened further by the respecting of human rights, represent the explanatory factors relating to DV₁.

RQ₂ addresses EU member state behaviors vis-à-vis the responsibility sharing for refugees at the EU-wide level (DV₂). The migration pressure faced constitutes the IV that explains the diverging behaviors seen in the three country cases examined. Therefore, the patterns of EU member state behaviors regarding the degree of acceptance of refugees and cooperation on responsibility sharing for them are scrutinized across three EU member states of interest: namely Italy, Hungary, and Germany (see Table 11 below).

Table 11: **Patterns of EU Member States’ Behavior to the Acceptance of Refugees**

Indicators and Behavioral Patterns	EU member state		
	Italy	Hungary	Germany
Demand for labor and outside options	↘ Demand for labor ↑ Unemployment rate × Outside options	↑ Demand for labor ↓ Unemployment rate ✓ Outside options	↑ Demand for labor ↓ Unemployment rate ↗ Outside options
Europeanized society and compliance with human rights	↑ Compliance ↑ Euroscepticism	↓ Compliance ↑ Nationalism	↑ Compliance ↑ Europeanized identity
Patterns of state behavior on the acceptance of refugees	Formal acceptance of refugees	Nonacceptance of refugees	Voluntary acceptance of refugees

Source: Author’s own depiction, based on the interviews and the labor market data.

With regard to the variation seen in the acceptance of refugees, it is argued that:

H₁: The stronger the demand for labor in a country and the weaker the outside options, the more likely the state will accept refugees.

This means that EU member states characterized by a limited demand for labor as the result of a high youth unemployment rate but with weaker outside options in determined sectors for satisfying that demand will formally accept refugees. This case is represented by Italy, where

the youth unemployment rate as the result of the great recession kept the demand for labor modest (see Chapter 6). Yet the events of 2008 also led to the emigration of young Italians to the other EU member states and elsewhere in search of better life conditions, and to a lack of outside options relating to meeting that demand—despite it being modest—in the long term (especially in light of an aging society). These issues concern, too, the other southern EU member states. This produces a lack of interest especially among industrialist domestic actors in trying to meet the needs of the labor market via accepting refugees, and additionally, in the short term for other sectors such as agriculture—suffering from a lack of outside options—contrariwise supporting that choice. In addition, refugees might become functional to the revitalization of the population given the aging demographic that afflicts Italy as well as for the funding of the national retirement system.

The argument regarding the patterns of Italian state preferences based on primary economic interests and characterized especially by high youth unemployment rate might be applied also to other EU member states—particularly Greece, Spain, or Portugal—that were strongly affected in this regard by the great recession and whose labor-market characteristics are similar to Italy's (Eichhorst and Neder 2014; Pastore 2018, 3–4). Furthermore, the Mediterranean countries present similar trends regarding the correlation between economy and demography (Domínguez-Mujica and Gracia 2017). This implies that also in this regard the patterns of Italian state preferences could be extended to the other Mediterranean countries too.

By contrast, EU member states with a high demand for labor as the result of a low unemployment rate but more attractive outside options than refugees do not accept them at the national level. According to the analysis pursued in Chapter 7, Hungary represents the best example in this sense, notwithstanding the significant impact the events of 2008 had. It registered in the following years, however, a very good recovery, determining the high demand for labor and low unemployment rate (in contrast to Italy). Furthermore it enjoys better related outside options, represented by the ethnic Hungarians and the Ukrainian workers whose access to the labor market is more profitable economically for the government. This implies the reduction of potential costs, given the integration of refugees and the facilitation of their access to the labor market need significant time, money, and resources invested in them.

Similarly, the Eastern European EU member states such as Hungary and Poland, were particularly characterized by high unemployment following the great recession (Furuoka 2014, 196). However the level thereof was stabilized in the following years, with positive effects on their national labor markets (Hadas-Dyduch, Pietrzak, and Balcerzak 2016, 7–8). As a consequence, the unemployment rate decreased and the demand for labor—with the alternative to meeting it being bringing in labor from elsewhere in the region—increased (Astrov 2019, 1).

Therefore the explanations offered for the Hungarian patterns of state preferences might be applicable to the other Visegrad countries too, notwithstanding the particularities of their respective national labor markets.

Finally, EU member states with high demand for labor based on a low unemployment rate and the lack of available outside options—especially in the long term—voluntarily accept refugees. This was thus Germany's choice, in contrast to Italy's and Hungary's. This is due to the low unemployment rate registered in the biennium 2014–2015 and the high demand for labor in the years following the great recession—especially in the industrial sector (see Chapter 8). The positive performance of the German labor market regarding a low unemployment rate and an increase in the demand for labor characterizes also some of the other EU member states such as Sweden and Denmark, which replied positively to the economic recovery after the great recession (Tridico 2013, 177). Therefore, the argument relating to the voluntary acceptance of refugees might apply also for these countries too.

The variation in acceptance of refugees in the biennium 2014–2015 across EU member states is further determined by a secondary factor. That is, the extent of Europeanization of a given society. As H₂ predicts:

H₂: The stronger the European ideology in a country, the more likely the state will accept refugees.

Thus it is argued that EU member states complying with the respecting of human rights but constrained by Euroscepticism formally accept refugees. This concerns particularly Italy, that on the one side underlines the principle of humanitarianism through the OMN (Cuttitta 2018; Musarò 2017) and the country's commitment to national, European, and international conventions aimed at protecting the right to asylum—as underlined by the national legislation in this field. On the other hand, however, Italy's wholesale acceptance of refugees was tempered by increasing populism and anti-immigrant sentiment within domestic society (Castelli Gattinara 2017; Gianfreda 2018; Quaranta and Martini 2019).

Contrariwise, EU member states not complying with the respecting of human rights and characterized by nationalistic ideology do not accept refugees. This speaks particularly to Hungary. Here, a strong own national identity and culture (Fekete 2016; Messing and Ságvári 2018; Simonovits 2016) and the low compliance with human rights conventions led to the country refusing to take in refugees.

EU member states characterized by a dominant Europeanized approach to protecting and sharing responsibility on refugees, as overriding increasing populism in the crucial year 2015

(Hamann and Karakayali 2016; Sola 2018; Wallaschek 2020, 84–85) and anti-immigrant attitudes within domestic society (Jäckle and König 2017; Sola 2018), witness the voluntary acceptance of refugees at the national level. Germany represents the best example in this regard, where a more deeply rooted European identity within society and the high state compliance with the principle of respecting human rights (Mavelli 2017, 828) determined the voluntary acceptance of refugees in 2015 and beyond.

The migration pressure faced represents the third indicator used to explain the behavior of member states regarding responsibility sharing for refugees at the EU-wide level, as well as the overall outcome of the negotiations on the RS at the heart of the Council. This leads to the patterns of EU member state behaviors (DV₂) during that negotiation process being outlined in relation to the distribution of benefits derived by cooperating on the RS agreement compared to those stemming from pursuing available unilateral policies and alternative coalitions. It is argued that FECs and DCs facing high migration pressure are cooperative, and thus agree with the RS. By contrast, TCs with low migration pressure are noncooperative and disagree with the RS. In reference to the three EU member states analyzed in this study, the following outcomes are shown (see Table 12).

Table 12: Patterns of EU Member States’ Behavior to the RS

Indicators and Behavioral Patterns	EU member state		
	Italy	Hungary	Germany
Migration pressure	↑Migration pressure	↓Migration pressure	↑Migration pressure
Distributed benefits	✗Unilateral policy alternatives ✗Alternative coalitions	✓Unilateral policy alternatives ✓Alternative coalitions	✗Unilateral policy alternatives ✗Alternative coalitions
Patterns of state behavior on the RS	Agreement with the RS	Disagreement with the RS	Agreement with the RS

Source: Author’s own depiction, based on the interviews.

First, EU member states representing FECs, such as Italy, encounter high migration pressure as a result of their geographical location and their formal compliance with D III R. These countries are cooperative at the EU-wide level, and agree with the RS. This is determined by the benefits that Italy obtains via the RS vis-à-vis the reduction of migration pressure, compared to those

that would be derived from the maintenance of the status quo (namely D III R). The same argument could be applied to other European Mediterranean countries—in particular Greece, Spain, and Malta, which are geographically located on the EU's southern borders and were distinguished by high numbers of refugee arrivals in the year 2015 too (Castelli Gattinara 2017, 318; Zambeta and Papadaku 2019, 463);

Second, member states representing TCs, like Hungary, with low migration pressure are noncooperative at the EU-wide level. This position is the result of the benefits originating from pursuing unilateral policies aimed at stopping migration, such as the construction of a fence. Furthermore, the disagreement with the RS is explained also as the result of the alternative coalitions that they have available—for example cooperation with the Visegrad countries (despite it not preventing the RS's approval through QMV). Similar patterns might be observed in other Eastern European member states such as Bulgaria, a country that potentially constitutes a TC given its geographical position along the EU's external borders and its sharing of one with Turkey (Nancheva 2015). The other Visegrad countries, characterized by low migration, are also potentially of relevance here too (Pachocka 2016, 104; Zaun 2018, 49). Thus, they may have had similar reasons for preferring to maintain the status quo and refusing to endorse the RS.

Third, EU member states that are DCs—with the high migration pressure that comes with that, as Germany experienced for example—are cooperative on the responsibility sharing for refugees at the EU-wide level. This is the result of a lack of unilateral policy alternatives as well as of de facto alternative coalitions that might help reduce the acute migration pressure faced. In particular this applies to Sweden and the Netherlands, who have seen high migration pressure ensuing from accepting refugees (Zambeta and Papadaku 2019, 470; Zaun 2018, 50). In regard to the overall outcome of the negotiation process on the RS, it is important to underline the changing bargaining of the EU member states—given that the decision was taken through QMV and not unanimity.

It is important to reiterate that empirical evidence in relation to the LI model's third stage (that is, institutional choice) was not gathered, as the result of the stalled negotiation process toward D IV R and the CEAS reform especially regarding the introduction of a mechanism based on the principle of responsibility sharing for refugees at the time of research. This represents certainly an important research interest to be analyzed in future however.

9.2 Empirical Evidence in Relation to the Theory

LI's rational framework starts with the formation of state preferences, and assumes that they reflect the primary (economic) interests of domestic actors—as varying across time, policy field, and country (Moravcsik 1997; 1998). Furthermore, an additional category of such societal interests is provided by LI: namely secondary ideological ones (in this thesis, representing first and foremost the degree of Europeanization with a given society). The research interest in this particular study is EU asylum policy, with a special focus on the variation witnessed in the acceptance of refugees by three member states in the biennium 2014–2015. The interests of domestic actors, primarily economic but also ideological, are what informed the patterns of EU member state preferences on the acceptance of refugees then.

LI assumes that state behavior at the national level is determined by patterns of economic state preferences, as the result of what the specific interests of domestic groups are in a given moment. *Vis-à-vis* EU asylum policy, the outcomes identified regarding the three case studies have confirmed this to be the case. I argue that in the field of asylum, patterns of national preferences regarding the acceptance of refugees vary according to the demand for labor that domestic actors have in determined sectors of the national economy (see Table 13 below).

Table 13: **Distribution of Cases for H₁**

EU member state	Economic interests	Outside options	Degree of acceptance of refugees
Italy	High	No	Formal acceptance
Hungary	Low	Yes	Nonacceptance
Germany	High	No	Voluntary acceptance

Source: Author's own depiction.

In this regard, Italy represents the EU member state where industrialist interest groups would stress a lack of demand for labor existing in this particular sector. They also articulated the priority being to combat the youth unemployment rate specifically through the reform of the national labor market—in other words, not by taking in high numbers of refugees (Picot and Tassinari 2015; Sacchi and Vesan 2015; Tullia Galanti and Sacchi 2019). By contrast, farmers—as the result of the acute need for labor in the agricultural sector—were

accommodating toward refugees in 2015 and beyond (Corrado et al. 2018; Dines and Rigo 2015; Seifert and Valente 2018).

In Hungary, the low unemployment rate and the increase in available jobs—especially in the energy and manufacturing sectors, as well as in SMEs—intensified the demand for labor to fill the latter (Bakó 2014; Bakó and Lakatos 2016). However the existence of outside options—as represented by the ethnic Hungarian and regional labor force (Eróss, Kovály, and Tátrai 2016; Hárs 2018; Rusu 2011)—led to nonacceptance patterns among domestic interest groups vis-à-vis refugees. In Germany, the BA-X indicator underlined the increasing demand for labor in 2015 especially in the healthcare, trade, as well as services sectors—including here gastronomy and logistics. As a consequence, industrialist interest groups in the country promoted the voluntary acceptance of refugees in that year (Folkerts-Landau et al. 2015; Ilgit and Klotz 2018, 625).

Preferences vary across countries, then, with regard to the acceptance of refugees (see Table 14 below).

Table 14: **Dimension of State Preferences in Function of Economic Interests toward the Acceptance of Refugees**

Dimensions	Economic interests
Variation across issue and country	Performance of labor market leads to different patterns of state preferences
Variation across time	Stronger interdependence leads to diverging positions on cooperation
Policy consistency and negotiation demands	Negotiating demands in line with primary economic interests, but also influenced by secondary ideological ones
Domestic cleavages	Domestic actors’ limited interest in refugees regarding meeting the demand for labor
Content of domestic political discourse	Supremacy of economic interests, as opposed to of ideological concerns

Source: Author’s own depiction based on Dimension of State Preferences Moravcsik (1998, 28).

This implies the existence of three patterns of EU member state preferences hereon:

- formal acceptance of refugees in EU member states where domestic interest groups have only limited interest in bringing them in;

- nonacceptance of refugees in EU member states where domestic interest groups are wholly against taking them in;
- voluntary acceptance of refugees in EU member states where domestic actors are strongly in favor of welcoming them.

Furthermore, national preferences vary also across time. In particular, they alternate in relation to crises—such as the great recession of 2008 and the Eurozone crisis of 2012. These two events especially led to more economic interdependence between the EU member states. As a consequence, those that were most stricken by these crises would subsequently seek greater cooperation at the EU-wide level—also in future. In sum, negotiating demands and salient concerns in domestic policy discourse are informed by the preferences vis-à-vis primary economic and secondary ideological interests regarding the acceptance or not of refugees at the national level in a given moment of time.

Conversely, the patterns of EU member states behaviors toward the acceptance of refugees are further determined by a secondary source, ideology, as represented predominantly by the Europeanization of identity. As a consequence the following ideational patterns of state preferences regarding the three case studies are identifiable, confirming ideology as indeed a secondary source for those preferences (see Table 15 below).

Table 15: **Distribution of Cases for H₂**

EU member state	European ideology	Degree of acceptance of refugees
Italy	Medium-High	Formal acceptance
Hungary	Low	Nonacceptance
Germany	High	Voluntary acceptance

Source: Author's own depiction.

According to LI, ideology contributes additionally to the formation of state preferences within the scope specifically of geopolitical interests (Moravcsik 1998). It is important to underline, however, that the empirical evidence obtained from interviews with domestic actors does not identify geopolitical interests as explanatory factors in the formation of state preferences in the

field of EU asylum policy. Those particular interests pertain, rather, to maintaining the balance of power based on political-military goals. The aim here is to: through cooperation avoid a common threat emerging; decide the appropriate strategy to pursue in a polarized international order; and, to keep in check the supremacy of individual member states by means integration, as the only available mechanism in this regard (Moravcsik 1998). The latter concerns the economic, political, and monetary integration that the EU has achieved as well as the new global equilibriums established in the aftermath of the IIWW and CW.

The variation in state preferences across time is not evident within the EU context given that the analyzed countries represent member states that have fully pursued the integration process. Policy consistency and negotiating demands favor particularly economic interests and also the secondary ideological ones. The domestic actors and internal cleavages at the national level include also Ministries of the Interior, Labor, Social Affairs, and of Defense that together with the political elite and public opinion influence the choice on whether to accept refugees or not, as well as on responsibility sharing for them at the EU-wide level. In the three analyzed case studies these cleavages refer mostly to the different interests that domestic actors have regarding refugees, and their impact on the promotion of policies that favor or undermine the latter’s acceptance (see Table 16).

Table 16: Dimension of State Preferences in Function of Society’s Ideology toward the Acceptance of Refugees

Dimensions	Ideology
Variation across country	Extent of Europeanization of society in the respective EU member states
Variation across time	Unclear given the EU membership status of the states
Policy consistency and negotiation demands	Negotiating demands in line with the commitment to the national, European, and international conventions aimed at protecting human rights and the right to asylum
Domestic cleavages	Ministries, political elite, and public opinion
Content of domestic political discourse	Commitment to upholding human rights versus anti-immigrant sentiments and the rise of populism in the EU

Source: Author’s own depiction based on Dimension of State Preferences Moravcsik (1998, 28).

LI’s second rational stage, aimed at explaining the bargaining power of EU member states at the EU-wide level, assumes that related negotiation processes occur under three core

circumstances: the unanimity voting procedure, low transaction costs, and asymmetrical interdependence (Moravcsik 1998, 60). However in this study it is observed that the negotiation processes—specifically here, the one on the RS—at the EU-wide level aim at achieving further integration in a determined policy field, and furthermore occur often under consensus or QMV. This concerns, then, the bargaining process at the heart of the Council regarding responsibility sharing for refugees between EU member states too.

Consequently, the relative impact of the different factors informing the degree of bargaining power—namely unilateral policies, alternative coalitions, and issue linkages on the outcomes of the agreement—varies (see Table 17 below).

Table 17: **Distribution of Cases for H₃ A,B**

EU member state	Unilateral policy alternatives	De facto alternative coalitions	Variation in cooperation at the EU-wide level
Italy (FEC)	Yes	Yes	Cooperative
Hungary (TC)	Yes	Yes	Noncooperative
Germany (DC)	No	Yes	Cooperative

Source: Author's own depiction.

The bargaining outcome (that is, the RS) vis-à-vis the responsibility sharing for refugees at the EU-wide level, a core focus of this study, was ultimately decided by the type of voting procedure: QMV. This has implications for the impact of two of those sources of bargaining power: unilateral policies and available alternative coalitions. In other words, no single country, under QMV, can force a compromise with the threat of nonagreement—especially following the entering into force of the Treaty of Lisbon that enforced further this voting procedure in the Council, also in the field of asylum (Sieberson 2009, 949–50). Thus the impact of alternative coalitions between those unwilling to cooperate is diminished. The same is true for the threat of unilateral action. Contrary to what Moravcsik posits, under QMV in the present case the possibility for unilateral action as well as for coalition formation helped cooperation instead of hindering it.

Therefore, LI's theoretical postulation according to which strong unilateral policies lead to nonagreement is not verified for Italy. Next, the assumption according to which states upon the

ability to create alternative coalitions show less compromise on an agreement is also not upheld. The latter is exemplified by Hungary, whose bargaining power was shaped by the voting procedure used (namely QMV)—that even despite the coalition that it had with the Visegrad countries, as well as the potential agreements with Western Balkan countries vis-à-vis countering potential migration pressure.

The low transactions costs and the asymmetrical interdependence based on distributional benefits derived from the agreement characterize also the negotiation on the RS (see Table 18). Thus, it is argued that the dimensions of national preferences and bargaining power depend respectively on the EU policy field and the distribution of benefits that the member states obtain by endorsing a certain agreement.

Table 18: **Dimension of Bargaining Power toward the Responsibility Sharing for Refugees**

Dimensions	Bargaining power
Distribution of information and ideas	Accessible information and ideas relating to the positions of the EU member states on the responsibility sharing for refugees, as distributed between them
Negotiating process	Domestic actors involved in the negotiating process aim at coordinating the positions of the national governments by consensus
Outcomes based on efficiency and distribution	Outcomes reflect the salience of the unilateral policies and alternative coalitions, but not of issue linkages

Source: Author’s own depiction based on Dimension of Bargaining Power Moravcsik (1998, 55).

In sum, this chapter has compared the three analyzed case studies—namely Italy, Hungary, and Germany—with a special focus on empiricism and the delineation of LI’s theoretical implications for the field of EU asylum policy. It has also discussed the potential application of this thesis’s argument to other EU member states. The overall findings of the study, as well as the limits to it, will now be addressed in the closing chapter.

10 Conclusion

This chapter summarizes the research findings of the thesis, elucidates the contributions it makes to two study fields (namely Migration Studies and European Integration Studies), and identifies the limits of its research as well as goals for future work on the various topics examined (see Figure 49 below). The study asks what explains respectively EU member state preferences vis-à-vis the (non)acceptance of refugees at the national level (RQ₁) and behaviors regarding the responsibility sharing for the latter at the European one (RQ₂). The study started by delineating hypotheses from LI, which were subsequently tested with three case studies: Italy, Hungary, and Germany. In relation to the theoretical framework, it was argued that EU member states' acceptance of refugees changes as a function of the primary economic interests of domestic actors. Furthermore, there is an additional source of state preferences in this regard: the secondary ideological ones.

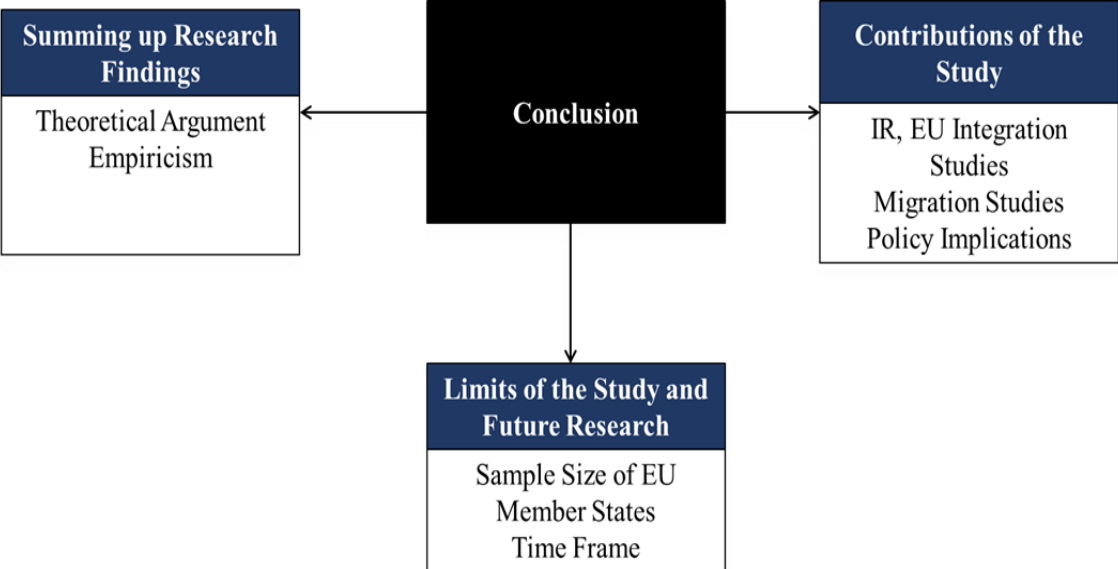
With regard to the empirical evidence, the patterns of EU member state behaviors vis-à-vis the acceptance of refugees were found to be primarily the result of the demand for labor—with the gains from taking in refugees compared to the best alternatives available weighed up—as well as of strains on the social security system as a result of an aging demography, especially in the Italian case. Furthermore the relationship between, on the one hand, the respecting of human rights and the compliance with national, European, and international conventions aimed at protecting the right to asylum, and, on the other, the predominance of anti-immigrant sentiment represents a secondary determining typology of patterns of state preferences with regard refugees: namely ideology. Concerning the positions of the member states on the responsibility sharing for refugees at the EU-wide level, it has been demonstrated that the migration pressure they face—further to the best available outside options to reduce it—is a determining factor.

The contributions of the thesis at both the scientific and policy levels are elucidated in the second part of this final chapter. On the one hand, the degree of cooperation in a specific EU policy field—that is, asylum policy—has been identified for three key member states. As such, the study contributes theoretically to the field of European Integration Studies. On the other hand, and of benefit to Migration Studies, a rational explanation for the behaviors of EU member states toward the specific category of “refugees”—relating here to the responsibility sharing taken for them—have been scrutinized, taking into account the particularities under European and international law. At the policy level, the research presented here sheds further light on the positions that the EU member states will very likely adopt regarding the ongoing CEAS reform process with a special focus on the establishment of the principle of responsibility

sharing for refugees. This helps improve, then, our general understanding of the hurdles that must be overcome as we move toward a more efficient CEAS.

Finally, the limits of the present study must also be acknowledged and addressed. These are the only limited period of time that has been examined—2014–2015, and especially the latter year as the apex of the refugee issue—and the fact that the reform of D III R was ongoing at the time of research respectively. These two factors have hindered complete analysis regarding the integration process in the field of EU asylum policy. As such, the third stage of the LI framework—that is, institutional choice, and the respective empirical evidence—could not be addressed here.

Figure 49. Chapter 10—Conclusion



Source: Author’s own depiction.

10.1 Summing up the Research Findings

In the following, a summary of the most relevant research findings relating to the theory and to the empiricism is given. LI explains the EU’s economic integration since its foundation in 1957 up until the creation of the monetary union (with the entry into force of the Treaty of Rome in that year) with a three-stage model: national preferences, bargaining power, and institutional choice (Moravcsik 1993; 1998). With respect to national preferences, it argues that economic integration is furthered as the result of the primary economic interests of multiple domestic actors then represented by the state; as noted, this process might also be further strengthened by secondary ideological ones (Moravcsik 1997). The intensity of the underlying preferences determines the bargaining power of member states during negotiation processes at the EU-wide

level on a desired agreement—further to the influence of available unilateral policies and alternative coalitions, as well as to issue linkages (Moravcsik 1993, 499). Institutional choice represents the third stage in the LI model, where EU member states create common institutions with the aim to achieve the distributed benefits from the previous phase (Moravcsik 1993, 508). Following LI's assumptions, this study argues that further integration within the CEAS—with a special focus on the responsibility sharing for refugees—is determined by the representation of respective member states' primary economic interests and secondary ideological ones at the EU-wide level. Therefore, the core research findings are:

- *Primacy of economic interests of domestic actors related to the variation in acceptance of refugees at the national level.* This study has shown that the analyzed EU member states—namely Italy, Hungary, and Germany—have behaved on the acceptance of refugees according to the crucial interests (read, economic) of their domestic actors. This means that the degree of acceptance of refugees at the national level is determined on the basis of the demand for labor evidenced in certain sectors, of the unemployment rate, as well as of (ailing) national social security systems particularly in Italy. Furthermore, the evaluation of the demand side has been undertaken in comparison to the best alternatives that the countries have available to satisfy the demand for labor other than accepting refugees. Thus, three types of domestic interests have aligned with three categories of state preferences:
 - I. Varying demand for labor in different sectors, with differentiated availability of alternatives, high youth unemployment, and an aging population, leads to the formal acceptance of refugees (Italy)
 - II. High demand for labor, low unemployment, and better available alternatives than refugees induces the nonacceptance of refugees (Hungary)
 - III. High demand for labor and nonexhaustive viable alternatives and low unemployment, drive the voluntary acceptance of refugees (Germany)
- *Ideology in the field of asylum as a secondary source of national preferences.* This study has revealed that the extent of Europeanization within national societies—understood as the upholding of human rights and compliance with national, European, and international conventions on protecting the right to asylum—contribute further as a secondary determining source regarding patterns of state preferences. In relation to such ideology, this study reveals the following two types:

- I. Pro-European ideology, characterized by norms having become rooted in national societies: namely the respecting of human rights and compliance with corresponding conventions. The country case that aligns with these characteristics is that of Germany, which chose to voluntarily accept refugees. Italy represents also an EU member state with a Europeanized society, but one increasingly permeated by Euroscepticism too. The latter sentiment would particularly strengthen following the Eurozone crisis as well as with the refugee issue. Furthermore, Euroscepticism has been exploited by far-right political parties. As a consequence, refugees have been only formally accepted in Italian society.
 - II. Nationalistic ideology, in which values based on a strong own identity and a deep-rooted cultural heritage prevail over pro-European ideology. This leads to the nonacceptance of refugees. These characteristics were found to apply to the country case of Hungary.
- *Centrality of migration pressure in EU member states' bargaining power on the responsibility sharing for refugees.* This thesis has emphasized the relevance of migration pressure in relation to the positions assumed by EU member states on the introduction of the principle to share responsibility for refugees collectively, overriding the FEC rule. In particular, this is valid in times of emergency when the member states geographically situated on the EU's external borders have to face intense migration pressure. This led to the evidence of two types of EU member state behaviors on the responsibility sharing for refugees: cooperative and noncooperative. Those with high migration pressure—operationalized by refugee inflows and the number of first asylum applications lodged—are cooperative at the EU-wide level vis-à-vis responsibility sharing on refugees (Italy and Germany). By contrast, EU member states with low migration pressure (though in certain moments it might be relevant) are noncooperative (Hungary).
 - *Necessity for further implementation of EU asylum policy at the national level.* The thesis's argument evidences the need for further implementation at the national level of the EU directives on asylum, and in the CEAS too. This has two implications going forward. On the one side, it directly concerns the rationality logic according to which refugees represent an additional resource both economically and culturally in the countries in which they reside. Thus in those EU member states with a harmonized and functional asylum integration system, their contributions are efficient and salient. By contrast, in the EU member states with a fragile asylum system, and which are disorganized as the result of the CEAS directives' lack of

implementation, refugees are not treated as a valuable resource. On the other hand, this leads to inefficiency with regard to the CEAS—as the result of second refugee movements, something already extensively witnessed between EU member states. In other words, refugees move onward to northern EU member states as the result of a lack of opportunities to pursue integration in certain of the southern ones.

10.2 Contributions of the Study

Overall, this study contributes scientifically in two research fields: Migration Studies and European Integration Studies. It serves to highlight relevant asylum-policy implications. By addressing integration in EU asylum policy—focusing particular on diverse EU member state behaviors regarding responsibility sharing for refugees—it contributes significantly to the state of the art of the two abovementioned academic fields.

First, this thesis traces patterns of state preferences on the degree of acceptance of refugees at the national level—explained as being the result of the primary economic interests of domestic actors. In addition, secondary ideological interests contribute further to the nature of these preferences. Therefore, this study provides a new argument for why the EU member states behaved the way they did (in 2014–2015) and the way that they do with regard to the (non)acceptance of refugees. This takes the literature forward, given that existing arguments highlight instead the migration pressure faced, the electorate’s preferences, and the politicization of identity as explanatory factors for those behaviors (Biermann et al. 2019; Börzel and Risse 2018; Schimmelfennig 2018b; Zaun 2018).

Further, the study has identified the various positions that EU member states assumed during the negotiation process on introducing a new principle: that is, responsibility sharing collectively for refugees within the CEAS framework. By contrast, existing studies had explained these positions as being taken due to the increase of populism and the politicization of the refugee issue (Börzel 2016; Hooghe and Marks 2018; Schimmelfennig 2018a). Thus this study enriches the state of the art in European Integration Studies by providing a systematic analysis of state preferences and of member state positions during the negotiation process on a specific policy field—that is, EU asylum policy—and regarding a recent topic where more research is clearly needed.

Second, the present thesis disaggregates the domestic actors whose interests, informed above all by the demand for labor in certain sectors of the national economy, provide the basis for the state preferences underlying the three types of refugee acceptance identified: formal, nonacceptance, voluntary. By contrast, other studies have failed to analyze the relevance of

these economic interests (Schimmelfennig 2018b). With regard to the individual case studies, the thesis has shown that, in the context of the biennium 2014–2015, addressing the high youth unemployment rate in Italy was the priority of industrialist domestic interest groups there—to be achieved predominantly by reform of the labor market (Picot and Tassinari 2015; Tullia Galanti and Sacchi 2019). This led to a lack of demand for labor in this particular sector. By contrast, the increasing demand for labor (Corrado et al. 2018; Dines and Rigo 2015; Seifert and Valente 2018) and the lack of available outside options in the country’s agricultural sector (Rigo and Dines 2017) led to accommodative behavior by farmers there toward refugees meanwhile.

In Hungary, the regional labor supply (Eröss, Kovály, and Tátrai 2016; Hárs 2018; Rusu 2011) represented a viable outside option for domestic actors to meet the needs of the country’s economy vis-à-vis filling available jobs. As such, it led those actors to refuse to accept refugees—preferring instead ethnic Hungarian and Ukrainian labor. In Germany, industrialist domestic interests groups promoted the voluntary acceptance of refugees (Folkerts-Landau et al. 2015; Ilgit and Klotz 2018).

Third, in the disaggregation of domestic interests vis-à-vis refugees, the qualitative nature of the study allowed the conduction of 39 interviews with three key groups of domestic actors: namely ministries, EIGS, and NGIGs. Further, secondary data—statistics on unemployment rates at the national level and on GDP growth, indicators relating to numbers of job vacancies, asylum applications, and refugee arrivals, political parties’ manifestos, as well as incidences of the implementation of new policies as a way to address the refugee issue at the national level—have contributed strongly to elucidating this study’s argument. This provides deeper insight regarding the ways in which EU member states handle refugees, and how they might instead do it differently.

Fourth, this thesis underlines relevant implications in the field of asylum policy at both the national and EU-wide levels. On the one side, it stresses just how relevant the inclusion of domestic actors in the reforming of national asylum policy is. In particular, it demonstrates that efficient cooperation between national interest groups could help clarify their preferences vis-à-vis refugees and canalize them into the right sectors. On the other, the study contributes to mapping out further the necessary guidelines for reform of the CEAS (especially of D III R)—therein taking into account the characteristics that unite and differentiate the respective EU member states. This might lead to efficient reform of the CEAS—making it applicable not only in times of low migration pressure but especially of emergency.

10.3 Limits of the Study and Future Research

The scientific contribution of this study, conducted so as to explain EU member state behaviors vis-à-vis responsibility sharing for refugees on the basis of rational explanations, is offset by certain limitations to the research too. This serves to highlight the necessity for future work on the topics examined. In particular, the size of the sample relating to the EU member states observed and the time frame scrutinized constitute such limitations.

First, Italy, Hungary, and Germany were the country cases here as they are considered to have particularly influenced the negotiation process regarding responsibility sharing for refugees at the EU-wide level. This study has argued that Italy (FEC)—despite the existence of unilateral policy alternatives (leaving the refugees to travel onward to the northern EU member states) and of alternative coalitions (support of and cooperation with Germany and the UK, and potential agreements with countries outside the EU such as Libya)—preferred cooperation on the RS regardless. By contrast, Hungary (TC) chose instead to maintain the status quo represented by D III R—given the country’s successful reduction of refugee flows as a result of productive unilateral policies (the construction of a fence; the proclamation of Serbia a third safe country). It also had available alternative coalitions, represented by the alliance with the Visegrad countries or possible cooperation with Western Balkan ones on reducing the migration pressure faced. Germany (DC), despite having alternative coalitions with Italy and France, preferred cooperation on the RS—due also to the lack of unilateral policy alternatives vis-à-vis the reduction of migration pressure. These three cases, thus, qualify as the most-different ones regarding the EU member states involved in the refugee crisis of 2015; it can plausibly be argued that they represent the extremes between which all other cases would find their typological place.

By contrast, existing studies have explained the variation seen in responsibility sharing for refugees as the consequence only of public opinion and the electorate’s preferences (Schimmelfennig 2018a; Zaun 2018). Still, it remains desirable to test whether and to what extent the findings derived from these three cases hold for all other EU member states, and whether maybe exactly concentration on extreme cases might have blurred perspective on additional factors that shaped the (non)acceptance of refugees in the country cases “of the middle.” This requires tracing the patterns of state preferences vis-à-vis the acceptance of refugees as well as of EU member state behaviors on the RS.

Second, this study concentrates on only a fixed period of time: namely the biennium 2014–2015. In addition, the observance of EU member state behaviors is limited to September 2015 given the approval of the RS on the 22nd of that month.

Arrivals by sea of PCNIP continued moderately until the year 2017 meanwhile, until a decrease in refugee flows at the EU-wide level set in as the result of the EU-Turkey deal signed in 2016 as well as of the bilateral agreements concluded between member states and sending countries outside the Union. Furthermore, state preferences are variable across time—which means that here the spectrum of the factors determining them is only limited. This implies also that variation occurs in their positions as well as in their bargaining power during negotiation processes. Thus, it is necessary to conduct further research over a longer time frame beyond just the biennium 2014–2015. This would complete both the research findings and empiricism relating to state preferences and bargaining power.

The time frame chosen here represents a limitation for an additional reason: the reform process vis-à-vis CEAS is ongoing. As a consequence, the present study could not analyze pooling or delegating authority in the field of asylum at the EU-wide level, as described by LI. Therefore, future research needs to focus on the negotiation process whether to introduce a mechanism based on the principle of responsibility sharing so as to provide new findings relating to institutional choice—something that has not been included in the present study at all. This would contribute further to understanding better, and deepening the research on, EU integration within the CEAS.

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Eigenständigkeitserklärung

1. Die Gelegenheit zum vorliegenden Promotionsvorhaben ist mir nicht kommerziell vermittelt worden. Insbesondere habe ich keine Organisation eingeschaltet, die gegen Entgelt Betreuerinnen und Betreuer für die Anfertigung von Dissertationen sucht oder die mir obliegenden Pflichten hinsichtlich der Prüfungsleistungen für mich ganz oder teilweise erledigt.
2. Ich versichere, dass ich die eingereichte Dissertation (What Explains European Union Member State Behaviors toward the Responsibility Sharing for People in Clear Need of International Protection? Bargaining Power in the EU Refugee Regime) selbstständig und ohne unerlaubte Hilfsmittel verfasst habe; fremde Hilfe habe ich dazu weder unentgeltlich noch entgeltlich entgegengenommen und werde dies auch zukünftig so halten. Anderer als der von mir angegebenen Hilfsmittel und Schriften habe ich mich nicht bedient. Alle wörtlich oder sinngemäß den Schriften anderer Autoren entnommenen Stellen habe ich kenntlich gemacht.
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Appendix

Appendix 1: List of Interviews

Expert	Position and Department	Interview Type	Date
EIG 8	International Secretary	In person: Budapest	February 25, 2019
NGIG 10	Advocacy and Asylum Project Officer	In person: Budapest	February 25, 2019
NGIG 5	Head of Office	In person: Budapest	February 26, 2019
NGIG 8	Director—Department for Humanitarian and International Development	In person: Budapest	February 26, 2019
NGIG 4	Integration Process Associate	In person: Budapest	February 27, 2019
EIG 10	Former Head—Department of Labor Market Policy	In person: Budapest	February 28, 2019
Central European University	Research Fellow in Migration Policies	In person: Budapest	March 1, 2019
EIG 7	Director of International Relations	In person: Budapest	March 4, 2019
NGIG 6	Director	In person: Budapest	March 4, 2019
NGIG 11	Voluntary Assistance to Refugees	In person: Budapest	March 4, 2019
Kopint-Tárki Institute for Economic Research	Senior Research Associate in Labor Migration	In person: Budapest	March 4, 2019
EIG 6	International Director	In person: Budapest	March 5, 2019
NGIG 9	Expert in Asylum Policy and Coordinator to Refugee Assistance	Skype: Budapest	March 5, 2019
Central European University	Associate Professor in International and Refugee Law	In person: Budapest	March 5, 2019
Volunteer Refugees 2015	Volunteer Refugees 2015	In person: Budapest	March 5, 2019
Ministry 5	Asylum Expert—Department for European Cooperation and Migration Network	In person: Budapest	March 6, 2019
Government Agency 1	Deputy Head—Directorate of Refugee Affairs	In person: Budapest	March 6, 2019
Government Agency 2	Head of Unit—Department of Migration Statistics	In person: Budapest	March 6, 2019
EIG 3	Head of Unit—Department of Migration Policies, Women and Youth	In person: Rome	March 11, 2019
NGIG 2	Expert 1—Head of Legal Affairs and Head of Integration	In person: Rome	March 11, 2019
EIG 1	Coordinator—Department of Migration Policies	In person: Rome	March 12, 2019
Ministry 2	Head of Unit—Department for Policies for Social and Labor Integration of Migrants and Protection of Foreign Minors	In person: Rome	March 13, 2019
EIG 9	Coordinator for the National Committee of Immigrants	In person: Rome	March 13, 2019
Ministry 1	Deputy Prefect—Central Directorate for Immigration and Asylum	In person: Rome	March 14, 2019

NGIG 7	Head of Department for Migration Policies	In person: Rome	March 14, 2019
NGIG 3	Head of Unit—Department for Migration Policies and International Protection	In person: Rome	March 15, 2019
Public Media	Journalist Specialized in Refugee Policy	In person: Rome	March 15, 2019
NGIG 13	Expert in Asylum Policy—Research Department	Telephone: Rome	March 16, 2019
EIG 2	Expert 1—Department of Legislation and Labor Law Expert 2—Research Department	In person: Rome	March 18, 2019
NGIG 2	Expert 2—Department of Communication	In person: Rome	March 18, 2019
NGIG 12	Expert in Asylum Policy—Research Department	Telephone: Frankfurt	March 21, 2019
Central European University	Research Group on Migration	Telephone: Göttingen	March 22, 2019
Ministry 3	Head of Unit Department for Asylum Law and Asylum Procedure Law	In person: Berlin	March 26, 2019
EIG 5	Head of Unit—Department of Labor Market, Collective Bargaining Policy and Labor Law	In person: Berlin	March 27, 2019
Ministry 4	Expert 1—Department for Fundamental Issues of Migration and Integration Policy	In person: Berlin	April 1, 2019
EIG 4	Trade Union Secretary—Department of Migration and Antiracism Policy Unit	In person: Berlin	April 1, 2019
University La Sapienza	Professor in Strategies of International Cooperation and Asylum Policy	Telephone: Göttingen	April 2, 2019
Ministry 4	Expert 2—Department for Fundamental Issues of Refugee Policy, Aliens Law, and the Employment of Foreign Workers	In person: Hannover	April 3, 2019
NGIG 1	International Protection Associate	Telephone: Göttingen	April 26, 2019

Appendix 2: Guideline Expert Interview

Introduction

- What is your personal position in this office and the main tasks of your institution?
- What are generally the main tasks of this institution in the field of asylum?
- What were the main tasks and issues in the field of asylum, between 2014 and 2017 that that this institution has been engaged with?

Refugees in the national labor system

- Could you please tell me more about the national labor system? What are its main characteristics? What are the main sectors with relevant representation of refugees and legal migrants?
- Could you tell me more about companies, multinationals, and/or stakeholders, who were interested in the integration of refugees and migrants between 2014 and 2017?
- In what terms could refugees be a resource in your country?
- Could you please tell me more about the integration process of refugees into the labor system? How many labor forces are employed respectively in the private and in the public sector in your country?
- What are the core issues that need to be taken into consideration for the integration process of refugees into the national labor system e.g. the language, the education of refugees, the bureaucracy etc.?

Your institution in the context of the asylum policy and the refugee issue in your country between 2015 and 2017

- What are the main institutions/organizations with which you collaborated with regard to the refugee issue in your country during between 2014 and 2017? How did the cooperation work out in such a field?
- Whom of the actors that you just named would you consider as your most important partner?
- What were the main strategies and the concrete actions that have been undertaken by your institution at the institutional and operational levels regarding the integration of refugees into the labor market?

- What are your key issues for the cooperation with your partners in your country in the future?

Cooperation with the EU and partner institutions

- What are the main partners at the European (or national level) with which your institution has cooperated in the field of asylum particularly between 2014 and 2017? What were the core issues and aspects on which you collaborated? What were the results of such collaboration? What were the key issues that need a particular attention also in the future?
- What are the main partners of your institution in other EU member states? What were the core issues and aspects on which you collaborated? What were the results of such collaboration?
- How might the cooperation between different actors at the national, bilateral and European levels be improved? Do you have any suggestion?

Conclusion

- Thinking of your work in in your country, what are the most relevant issues that need to be considered for the future in the field of asylum? What are the key issues and the key strategies that need to be taken into consideration?
- What are the main actions undertaken by your institution that you would list as the most important ones with regard to the refugee issue between 2015 and 2017?
- What is your explanation regarding the German/Italian position toward refugees between 2015 and 2017.

Specific Questions regarding the case studies

Hungary

- From your point of view, how did the changes introduced in the Hungarian asylum policy in 2015 (e.g. the amendments to the Asylum Act in 2015—Act CXXVII of 2015, Act CXL of 201, Act XX of 2017, Act VI of 2018—) influence the Hungarian asylum system? To what extent did they affect your institutional activity in relation to refugees?

- Could you please tell me more about the amendment to the Labor Code in December 2018? To what extent does it influence the labor system in Hungary? To what extent does it influence the integration process of foreign labor forces and asylum seekers into the Hungarian labor system?
- How do you explain the position of Italy and Germany, respectively regarding the distribution of asylum seekers among the EU member states in 2015?

Germany

- From your point of view, how did the decision to open the borders in late summer 2015 (e.g. the Willkommenskultur, “*wir schaffen das*”) influence the refugee route in the same year and later on? How do you interpret this decision? What other alternatives in terms of policy might have been adopted at that time? What might have been the consequences?
- Could you please tell me more about the First and Second Asylum Packages, approved between 2015 and 2016, the Integration Act and the Regulation to the Integration Act entered into force in 2016, as well as the Fachkräftezuwanderungsgesetz- the skill labor immigration law enacted in 2018? How they influenced the migration pressure in the country, the integration process of refugees into the German labor market as well as the German labor system?
- How do you explain the position of Italy and Hungary, respectively regarding the (non) distribution of asylum seekers among the EU member states in 2015?

Italy

- How do you explain (in rational terms) the Security Decree approved in 2018?
- How do you explain the consensus of Italy regarding the distribution of asylum seekers among the member states of the EU (as opposed to Hungary or the other states belonging to the Visegrad group)?
- How do you explain the position of Germany and Hungary, respectively regarding the (non) distribution of asylum seekers among the EU member states in 2015?

Confidentiality

All interviews will be recorded. The interviews and the interviewees will remain anonymous. Only the interview materials will be analyzed.