

# Identity, Culture, and Security: Hungary's Differing Positions on Muslim and Non-Muslim Refugees in the 2015 and 2022 European Refugee Crisis

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## ABSTRACT

*The European refugee problem has attracted global attention, especially amid the influxes of people in 2015 and 2022. Hungary, being a member state of the European Union, shown divergent stances towards refugees originating from the Middle East and Ukraine. The purpose of this essay is to examine Hungary's unique position regarding refugees, both Muslim and non-Muslim, during times of crisis, and to clarify the underlying causes behind these positions. This analysis examines how Hungary's attitude to refugees was influenced by cultural identity and national security, using the constructivism theory proposed by Peter J. Katzenstein and the notion of Migration and Security. Research findings suggest that Hungary's position towards Muslim migrants was greatly influenced by unfavourable stigmas connected with Islam and worries regarding national security. Additionally, these beliefs were additionally shaped by the political dynamics and domestic policies of Hungary. This study provides deep insights into the interrelation of identity, culture, and national security in influencing a nation's approach to refugees.*

Keywords: *Refugee Crisis, Muslim Refugees, Non-Muslim Refugees, Hungary*

## A. INTRODUCTION

Refugees have been a focal point of global problems since World War II. As a result of the ongoing war, many civilians have left their countries to seek refuge by fleeing to other safer areas. When refugees leave their home countries, they leave behind their lives, homes, possessions and families (UNHCR, 1951). Refugees leaving their country means they do not receive protection from their country of origin, so protection and assistance for those displaced is the responsibility of the international community. To get protection from the international community, refugees will come to safer areas, and one of the areas that refugees go to is Europe.

As one of the refugee destinations, the European Union has a refugee policy that is a common policy umbrella to overcome refugee problems. EU refugee policy is known as the *Common European Asylum System* (CEAS) which was established in 1999 by the European Commission. The CEAS policy aims to provide protection to refugees in accordance with applicable international law (Haliza & Pujiyono, 2019). In addition, the establishment of the *Common European Asylum System* aims to oversee the implementation of the 1951 Convention against EU member states. However, so far CEAS has not been able to bind EU member states to comply with all refugee handling policies, so it is called a policy that failed to overcome the European refugee crisis in 2015.

The European refugee crisis is a term that describes a situation in which the European Union was overwhelmed in the face of the wave of refugees who came to the European region in 2015. The European refugee crisis in 2015 was caused by the turmoil of conflicts in the Middle East region, especially Syria, which has been ongoing since 2011. The refugee crisis of 2015

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prompted an unprecedented number of asylum seekers to travel to Europe by sea to obtain a better life (Human Rights Watch, 2015). When Europe was hit by the refugee crisis in 2015, not all EU member states accepted Middle Eastern refugees and complied with EU refugee policies, including Hungary.

As part of the European Union and a country that has ratified the convention on refugees, Hungary should carry out its obligations by fulfilling refugee rights as stipulated on refugee protection. Hungary, however, firmly rejects a mandatory quota-sharing scheme to house Middle Eastern refugees (Bonasir, 2015). Hungary's rejection of refugees from the Middle East is evident with a domestic policy that threatens to impose prison sentences on anyone who helps refugees. In addition, discriminatory remarks were made by Hungary for Middle Eastern refugees. Hungary has nevertheless decided not to accept Middle Eastern refugees even until the surge in refugees during the crisis has subsided.

After the 2015 refugee crisis that hit Europe, the refugee crisis is back in 2022. The European refugee crisis of 2022 was caused by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. During the 2022 refugee crisis, many European countries welcomed Ukrainian refugees with open arms and provided various conveniences for Ukrainian refugees coming to Europe, as well as Hungary which accepted Ukrainian refugees and promised to provide various facilities for obtaining asylum in Hungary (Aulia, 2022). In addition, Viktor Orban said that Hungary had prepared to receive the arrival of refugees after the Russian invasion (Winahyu, 2022). In addition, Hungary has prepared necessities for refugees and promised to ease the process of applying for refugee status (DNH, 2022).

Hungary shows different treatment of Ukrainian refugees with the Middle East. Hungary rejected the EU refugee quota policy, but accepted many Ukrainian refugees. Hungary became an anti-refugee country during the 2015 refugee crisis, and became a pro-refugee country during the 2022 refugee crisis. Hungary considers Middle Eastern refugees a threat to national security, so it rejects Middle Eastern refugees. This is inseparable from the majority of Middle Eastern refugees who are Muslims, thus increasing Hungary's vigilance.

The research question in this paper is "How did Hungary's attitudes differ towards Muslim and non-Muslim refugees during the 2015 and 2022 refugee crises, and why did Hungary show different attitudes towards Middle Eastern refugees?". Thus, this study aims to analyze Hungary's policy in responding to Muslim and non-Muslim refugees during the 2015 and 2022 refugee crises. Hungary's policy towards Muslim and non-Muslim refugees will be looked at through the concept of *Migration and Security* and constructivism theory to find answers to why there are different Hungarian attitudes towards refugees.

## B. ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

### The theory of constructivism by Peter J. Katzenstein

One of the most well-known constructivist figures in the study of International Relations is Peter J. Katzenstein who is a Walter S. Carpenter, Jr. Professor of International Relations Studies at Cornell University. Katzenstein's main concentration is the study of culture, religion, identity and regionalism in the interstate system. Constructivism by Peter J. Katzenstein emphasizes the importance of the domestic environment in its influence on the behavior of actors. The 1999 book *The Culture of National Security, Norms and Identity in World Politics* (1999), edited by Peter J. Katzenstein, emphasizes constructivism's claim that culture, norms and identity are important to national security.

In Katzenstein's article entitled *Alternative Perspectives on National Security* contained in a book entitled *The Culture of National Security, Norms and Identity in World Politics (1999)*, it is said that there is a shift in factors affecting national security (Katzenstein, 2002). With the end of the cold war, factors affecting national security have changed, in which norms, identity, culture are more prominent. Katzenstein's *Alternative Perspectives on National Security* focuses on the effects of culture and identity on actor behavior and national security (Katzenstein, 2002).

In this case, Hungary is known as a country with a society that has hatred towards Muslims or anti-Muslims. The negative stigma in the international system about Islam has influenced Hungary's treatment of Middle Eastern refugees. Internationally, the negative stigma about Islam is growing rapidly. The portrayal of Islam as a violent religion spread to Europe. In addition, a bad view of Muslims as terrorism and a group of people who want to seize other people's territory encourages various discriminatory treatment of Muslim refugees.

### **Migration And Security Concept**

In a global context, migration is defined as the movement of a person either across an international border (international migration), or within a country (internal migration) for more than one year regardless of the cause either voluntarily or involuntarily (Migration And Home Affairs, n.d.). The presence of refugees causes polarization, namely the division of camps, namely the camp that accepts refugees as a form of obedience to international law, and the camp that rejects refugees on the grounds of prioritizing national interests.

In some cases, international migration often poses a national security threat to a country. Immigrants who come to an area are feared to have an impact on threatening national security (Makhroja et al., 2020). In an article entitled *Security, Stability, and International Migration* by Myron Weiner mentioned several reasons why international migration is a threat to a country's national security, namely (Weiner, 1990):

1. Refugees and migrants are a source of international conflict.  
Refugees coming to countries with democratic regimes generally have the freedom to access the media, speak out against the regimes of their home countries and send information to their countries of origin. In addition, the recipient country also has the opportunity to support refugees to change the regime in power in the country of origin. This can trigger international conflicts between the receiving country and the country of origin.
2. Refugees and migrants pose a political threat to host countries.  
Refugees who have been given protection at any time will turn against the receiving country. In addition, refugees are feared to carry out terrorist attacks in host countries by allying with the opposition. The existence of refugees carries a political threat to the host country, where the existence of relationships as well as ethnic influences and social characteristics can increase political risk.
3. Refugees and migrants pose a threat to the cultural identity of the receiving country.  
There are norms in society that govern who is accepted and what rights and privileges are given to those who are allowed to enter. Any violation of norms in the host country by unwanted immigrants will be considered a threat to basic values and considered a threat to national security.

#### 4. Refugees and migrants as a social or economic burden.

In addition to ethnicity, the indigenous people of the host country tend to react to the social behavior of the refugees. The existence of crime, dependence on welfare, and delinquency tends to be the highlight of refugees' social behavior. Indigenous people of the host country also tend to look at how many refugees are coming to their country as well as the economic level of the refugees. Large and very poor refugees will impose a large economic burden on the host country and society.

In terms of security, immigrants and refugees are often associated with terrorism, extremism, and crime. Immigrants and refugees are portrayed as a group of criminal-minded people and associated with international terrorism. However, not all immigrants and refugees are associated with terrorism. In this case, Muslim refugees are refugees who are always associated with terrorism, so some countries reject Muslim refugees under the pretext of maintaining their country's national security from the threat of terrorism. When Middle Eastern refugees came to Hungary, Hungary rejected Middle Eastern refugees on the pretext that Middle Eastern refugees would pose a threat to Hungary's national security.

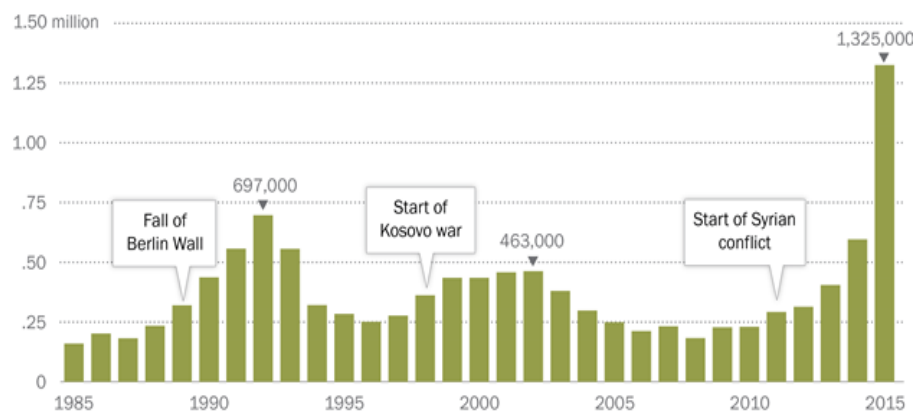
#### Refugee Crisis in 2015 and 2022

During the 2015 refugee crisis, many refugees came to Europe by land and sea for protection. Reports from the IMO and UNHCR stated that the total number of refugees entering Europe in 2015 amounted to around 1.3 million refugees (UNHCR, 2015).

**Chart 1. 1 Number of refugees entering Europe 1985-2015**

**Number of asylum seekers in Europe surges to record 1.3 million in 2015**

Annual number of asylum applications received by EU-28 countries, Norway and Switzerland, 1985 to 2015



Source: (Pew Research Center, 2016)

The spread of Middle Eastern refugees in EU countries has been uneven, with a surge in refugees piling up in Italy and Greece. To overcome the uneven distribution of refugees in both countries, the European Union created a policy known as *Quota Schemes*. The quota-sharing scheme is a concrete step by the European Commission in dealing with the refugee crisis. Relocation is carried out according to the mandatory distribution key using objective and measurable criteria, in which 40% of the population size, 40% of GDP and 10% of the average number of previous asylum applications, as well as 10% of the unemployment rate (European Commission, 2015b).

**Figure 1. 1 EU refugee quota sharing**



Source: [express.co.uk](http://express.co.uk)

Under the quota-sharing scheme, Hungary as part of the European Union is obliged to accept 827 of the 160,000 refugees relocated. However, Hungary rejected the refugee quota-sharing scheme and did not want to accept Middle Eastern refugees. To strengthen its legitimacy in rejecting the refugee quota-sharing scheme, Hungary conducted an anti-immigration referendum aimed at stopping Brussels and Berlin forcing Hungary to accept refugees under the EU quota scheme (Traynor, 2016). The official referendum was held on 2 October 2016. The question contained in the referendum was "Do you want the EU to be able to determine the compulsory settlement of non-Hungarian citizens in Hungary even without parliamentary approval?", and the result of the referendum showed that 95% of voters supported the government's position to reject the refugee quota-sharing scheme (Bulman, 2016).

**Table 1. 1 Number of asylum applications during the 2015 refugee crisis in Hungary and the European Union**

	2013	2014	2015	2016
<b>European Union</b>	431.090	626.920.	1.321.600	632.000
<b>Hungary</b>	18.895	42.775	177.135	24.357

Source: (Nagy, 2016).

Since the beginning of the arrival of Middle Easterners to Hungary to seek refuge, the Hungarian government has taken various discriminatory measures to deny asylum seekers from the Middle East. On Tuesday, September 15, 2015, the Hungarian government warned that asylum seekers entering Europe through the Serbian border would be expelled (Sari, 2015). Petter BoucKaert, emergencies director at Human Rights Watch, said in a joint interview with Al-Jazeera that Middle Easterners are confined in cages like animals, in the sun without food, water or medical aid (Beauchamp, 2015). Several Hungarian officials were also caught on footage throwing food at starving refugees, as well as a Hungarian journalist who was caught on camera deliberately kicking and tripping refugees fleeing police (Mackintosh, 2017).

Viktor Orban delivered a clear message to Muslim refugees living in Europe by saying "Don't come" (Rivett-Carnac, 2015). Orban said there was no guarantee that Middle Eastern refugees would be accepted. Hungary considers most Middle Eastern refugees who come to Europe not because they are fleeing dangerous conditions, but they want to take economic advantage. Thus those who come to Europe including Hungary should not be considered refugees, but "Muslim invaders", Orban told Bild's Jermal newspaper (Schultheis, 2018). There is no public space accepting Middle Eastern refugees in Hungary.

Hungary's attitude towards Middle Eastern refugees differs from Hungary's attitude towards Ukrainian refugees during the 2022 refugee crisis due to Russia's invasion. Since February 24, 2022, when Russia began its invasion of Ukraine until March 29, 2022, Hungary has received 530,587 Ukrainian refugees (Schengenvisa, 2022a). Other sources say that more than 1,312,550 refugees have arrived in Hungary langsung dari Ukraina atau melalui negara ketiga (OCHA, 2022). On Saturday, May 14, 2022, the Hungarian government revealed that 5,852 Ukrainian refugees crossed into Hungary directly from Ukraine, while another 6,605 refugees crossed from Romania (Schengenvisa, 2022b). In the statement, the Hungarian government also said that police had issued residence permits to Ukrainian refugees valid for 30 days. A week after Russia's invasion, Viktor Orban travelled to the border town of Beregsurany to meet Ukrainian refugees. In remarks to reporters at a refugee relief center, Orban said Hungary was a good friend of Ukraine and the Ukrainian people. Orban also said that the Hungarian government would provide assistance to Ukrainian refugees as well as displaced Ukrainians could count on Hungary (Egan, 2022).

Hungary is providing free accommodation, food, medical assistance, and financial assistance to Ukrainian refugees. Refugees who do not have jobs will receive a monthly allowance of 22,800 HUF. To get the accommodation provided, refugees must first apply by travelling from the border to the BOK Stadium in Budapest. At the BOK stadium, refugees will be divided into two categories. The first category is those who plan to stay for a long time will be handled by Hungary or specifically handled by the Disaster Management Agency that organizes refugee care. Those who wish to travel from Hungary will be sent to the NGO Migration Assistance hostel in Madridi Ut, where NGOs and volunteers work without state support.

There is widespread support from the public and politicians for opening the door to Ukrainian refugees coming to Hungary (Stewart, 2022). This can be seen from how Hungarian communities, NGOs, and charity groups provide assistance to Ukrainian refugees who come to Hungary. The Sports and Refugee Center in Hungary offers food and drink, medical services, toiletries, internet access, and help with travel arrangements in collaboration with charity groups and volunteers.

## **MIGRATION AND SECURITY IN THE CASE OF MIDDLE EAST REFUGEES IN HUNGARY**

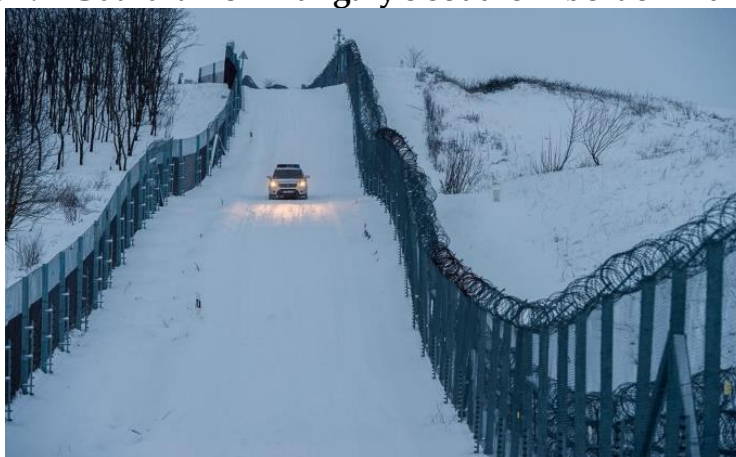
Ratifying the 1951 Convention on refugees did not allow Hungary to fulfill its obligations to fulfil refugee rights during the 2015 refugee crisis. Hungary categorically rejects Middle Eastern refugees. Hungary's action in rejecting Middle Eastern refugees is done by strengthening security at the border and enacting a law that criminalizes civil society, non-governmental organizations or anyone related to assisting refugees in obtaining asylum in Hungary.

### **Building a Fence on the Southern Border**

Hungary built two guardrails during the 2015 refugee crisis. The fence was built along 175 kilometers with a height of 4 meters. The first guardrail was only in the form of a fence made of iron accompanied by barbed wire. The second guardrail is a much more sophisticated guardrail and cost around €120 million to build (Saeed, 2017). The construction of the second guardrail was carried out by soldiers, unemployed people as well as convicts (Thorpe, 2015). The second guardrail is equipped with a variety of advanced technologies consisting of night cameras, heat and motion sensors, loudspeakers that sound in various languages, and electricity That will make anyone who touches the guardrail will be electrocuted (Dunai, 2017). Loudspeakers mounted on guardrails will speak English, Arabic, and Farsi.

Hungary has spent about €1.6 billion on border protection since 2015. The EU accounted for two percent of the total, including to increase the number of border guards. Border patrols will be carried out by soldiers, dogs, as well as border police officers who have been recruited.

**Figure 1. 2 Guardrail on Hungary's southern border with Serbia**



Source: behance.net

Populist leaders in Europe say the barrier is needed to protect their countries from illegal migration as well as criminals and possible terrorists (CBC Radio, 2020). In addition, a spokesman for the Hungarian government said that migration remains a threat to Hungary, and Hungary should strengthen its defenses, as well as in some ways should restructure its border defense system (Than, 2022). Hungary's construction of the fence is an implementation of Viktor Orban's pledge to defend the border from what he calls a Muslim invasion that threatens European Christian identity.

### **Stop Soros Law**

*The Stop Soros Law* criminalizes those who helped refugees in Hungary during the 2015 refugee crisis. Enacted in June 2018 by the Hungarian Parliament, Stop Soros prohibits anyone from assisting asylum seekers in filing asylum claims and applying to stay in the country, and anyone (Agius, 2021) who violates the provisions of the *Stop Soros Law* will be sentenced to one year in prison (Quell, 2021).

The nickname Stop Soros comes from George Soros who always supported immigrants entering Europe. George Soros is an American-Hungarian billionaire. Soros and his non-



governmental organization, *the Open Society Foundation*, aims to help asylum seekers. For the actions of Soros and his organization, Hungarian officials, including the prime minister, often blame Soros for attempts by refugees to enter Hungarian territory. The Hungarian government even installed *billboards* in large numbers in various regions of Hungary. The billboards read "Don't let George Soros have the last laugh".

**Figure 1. 3 Anti-Soros poster on a street in Hungary**



Source: m.jpost.com

Article 11 of *the Stop Soros Law*, outlines criminal sanctions will be given to (European Commission For Democracy Through Law (Venice Commission), 2018):

- 1a). Any person or organization that facilitates persons who are not persecuted in their home country, in their usual country of residence, or in the territory where they arrive in Hungary on the basis of nationality, race, membership in a particular social group, religious or political belief, or do not have good reason to fear persecution immediately begins asylum proceedings in Hungary,
- 1b). Any person who enters or resides illegally in Hungary and breaks the border barrier.
- 2). Any person or organization that provides financial assistance for criminal acts referred to in paragraph (1) shall be sentenced to imprisonment for a maximum of one year.
- 3). Any person who commits a criminal act as referred to in paragraph (1).

Furthermore, through *the Stop Soros Law*, the Hungarian government amended Article 1 paragraph (2) of Law Number XXXIV of 1994 concerning the Police regarding the duty of the police in countering illegal immigration. The latest provisions in Article 1 paragraph (2) of Law Number XXXIV of 1994 concerning the Police require the Hungarian Police Agency to strengthen guard against state borders, detect fiber and prevent all forms of unauthorized state border crossings.

Soros' Stop Act created a new category of crime known as "promoting and supporting illegal refugees". The essence of the Act is to prohibit individuals or organizations from providing assistance to undocumented or illegal refugees. The meaning of the term is so broad, that in theory the Hungarian government has the authority to arrest someone who provides food to undocumented refugees on the street or refugees who are attending political rallies to support their rights. In a press release, a local human rights group called the Hungarian Helsinki Committee said that the Stop Soros Law has the main purpose of intimidating anyone through criminal laws that help asylum seekers.



### C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

#### HUNGARY'S DOUBLE STANDARD POLICY ANALYSIS OF MIDDLE EASTERN REFUGEES

In the view of Constructivism, in addition to the economy and military there are other factors that can influence the policy of a country. Other factors in question relate to norms, values, identity, and other non-material factors. Constructivism by Katzenstein asserts that domestic factors, values and norms as well as national security influence a country's policies. In this regard, it will be seen how non-material factors according to Katzenstein in his constructivist thinking influence the differences in Hungary's attitude in responding to Muslim and non-Muslim refugees.

##### **Primordialism of Hungaria**

Primordialism is a view or understanding that shows an attitude that clings to things that are brought from birth that are inherent in individuals in the form of ethnicity, race, customs, birthplace, beliefs, and others (Darmawan, 2022). Primordialism can trigger ethnic conflicts. According to the primordialist view, ethnic conflicts basically arise because of differences in ethnic identity (Esteban et al., 2012). In primordialism, ethnic conflicts arise because of ancient hatred between ethnic groups and mutual fear of expulsion, domination and extinction (Geertz, 1963).

There are differing attitudes towards ethnic identity and migration between Western, Eastern and Central Europe. This difference was especially evident during the 2015 refugee crisis. Western European countries welcomed refugees from outside Europe and described them as in need of support. In addition, Western European countries accept many immigrants and give these immigrants the opportunity to engage in sectors of life in Western countries. In contrast to Eastern and Central European countries that are at the forefront of denying immigrants to their countries and opposing EU efforts to distribute immigrants to EU member states.

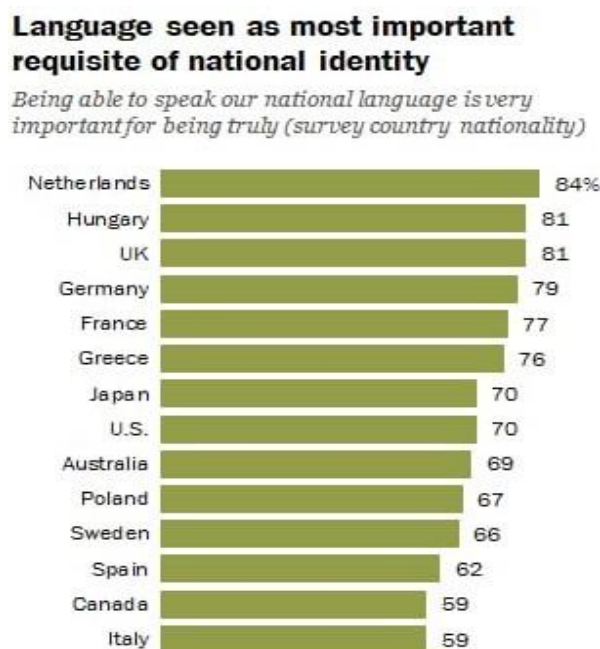
There are historical differences that trigger differences in views on ethnic identity and migration between Western Europe and Eastern and Central Europe. The political definition of nation in Western Europe is defined as a group of people living together in a region regardless of national origin, where the bond between citizens is not a common identity but loyalty to the law (Oltay, 2021). In contrast, in Central and Eastern Europe national borders and identities are often misaligned. In addition, the majority can be a minority in their historical lands.

The majority of the Hungarian population identifies as ethnically Hungarian (85.6%). Hungarians call themselves 'Magyars', a term that specifically refers to ethnic groups and languages. In the post-World War I period, the signing of the Treaty of Trianon in 1920 due to Hungary's defeat caused Hungary to lose two-thirds of its territory and population, causing ethnic Hungarians to become a minority in several other countries. The Hungarian minority did not develop substantial allegiance to the country in which they lived, and the Hungarian minority marked history as a struggle for survival as an ethnic community (Bárdi Nándor, 2013). Even though As a result of the separation of territories and populations due to the Treaty of Trianon, Hungarians continued and remained speaking the same language, sharing common traditions, and maintaining a strong sense of national identity (Laszlo, 2006).

In a survey conducted by the Pew Research Center on language, culture as the center of national identity in Europe shows that European opinions vary widely on this matter. Of the 10 countries surveyed, an average of 97% indicated that national language skills are very or somewhat important (Pew Research Center, 2017c).

Language takes on an important role as part of national identity. According to another survey conducted by the Pew Research Center, language is seen as the most critical of national identity. In the survey, 14 countries said that speaking an indigenous language is very important to be considered a true member of the nation (Pew Research Center, 2017b). Eight out of ten or more British, Dutch, German, and Hungarian people believe that the ability to speak their country's language is essential to nationality. In this survey Hungary came in second place with 81% saying that the language and being able to speak Hungarian became important as a national identity as well as for being part of a true Hungary.

**Chart 1.2 Some countries' views on language as national identity**



Source: (Pew Research Center, 2017b).

In addition to conducting surveys related to the important role of language and culture as national identity in several European countries, the Pew Research Center also conducts surveys related to religion and national identity. The question asked of respondents in the survey was whether being Christian or Catholic is important for national identity (Pew Research Center, 2017a). Of the 13 countries surveyed, 15% stated that it is very important to be Christian to be a true citizen. Hungary shows a figure of 29% as the country that considers it necessary to be Christian to be fully Hungarian.

The protection of Christian culture is an obligation for all organs of state. This has been regulated in the Hungarian Basic Law since 2018 in Article R paragraph 4 through the seventh amendment to the Hungarian Constitution. In the article it is said that Hungarian culture is a culture shaped by Christianity. The purpose of the establishment of the Law on the protection

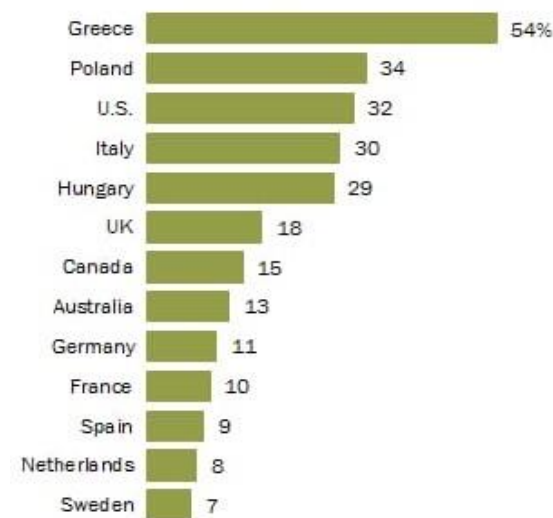
of Christian culture is to provide and protect the nation's identity by emphasizing stronger protection (Schanda, 2020).

Before the seventh amendment, the protection of Hungarian national identity came only from the sentence contained in the Preamble to the Hungarian Basic Law referred to as 'Recognition of Nationality' (Schanda, 2020). It should be underlined that the protection referred to in the seventh amendment to the Hungarian Constitution is the protection of Hungarian Christian culture, not the faith or Christianity (Schanda, 2022). By passing regulations that provide protection for Hungarian Christian culture, policymakers want to ensure that Hungarian Christian-based culture exists not only as an element of the past, but a value that must be protected (Schanda, 2022).

### Chart 1.3 The Views of several countries regarding the importance or not of religion as a national identity

#### Relatively few say religion essential to national identity

*Being a Christian\* is very important for being truly (survey country nationality)*



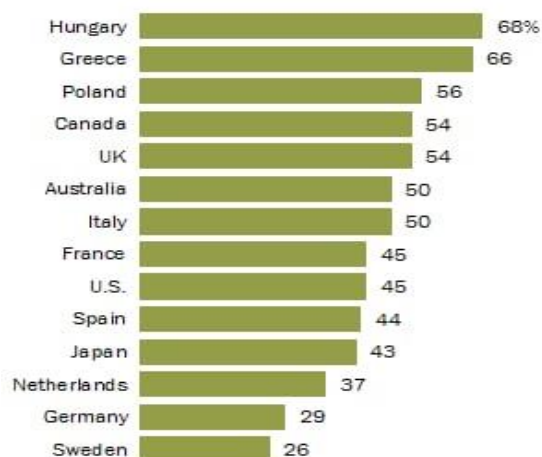
Source: (Pew Research Center, 2017a).

National customs and traditions such as holidays celebrated, food eaten, clothes worn, folklore told to children, have long been associated with national identity (Pew Research Center, 2017d). Some Europeans believe that following customs and traditions is important in determining national identity. Hungary came in first place with 68% saying that sharing the same national customs and traditions is important and customs and traditions are very important to be considered a true Hungarian.

### Chart 1.4 Some countries' views on the importance of national customs and traditions

#### Culture especially important to national identity for Hungarians, Greeks

*Sharing our national customs and traditions is very important for being truly (survey country nationality)*



Source: Spring 2016 Global Attitudes Survey, Q85d.

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Source: (Pew Research Center, 2017a).

Identity is a representation of the actor's understanding of both the state and society's understanding of who they are, which then determines the interests of the actor (Theys, 2018). Identity in constructivism can influence how actors behave. In addition, Identity in constructivism, which includes religion, ethnicity, language, culture and tradition, takes an important role in its influence in the decision-making of a policy, where the policy generally aims to protect the identity inherent in the country.

Identity becomes an important part of a country's national interest, and the state will make policies to protect that national interest. Hungarian society in this case acts as a group that shows that Hungary has identity interests with ethnic, cultural, and traditional ties that must be protected. The importance of ethnic protection can be seen from how the response of the Hungarian community involved in a survey conducted by the government regarding the threat to Hungarian identity brought by migration during the refugee crisis in 2015. Through the survey, people agreed to reject Middle Eastern refugees because it would threaten Hungary's cultural identity.

In addition to agreeing with the rejection of Middle Eastern refugees, Hungarians also agree with the anti-Soros campaign and the Stop Soros policy that criminalizes anyone who helps Middle Eastern refugees apply for asylum or residency in Hungary (BBC NEWS, 2018). This policy was made by Hungary solely to protect the ethnic, linguistic, cultural and traditional identity that Hungary has from being replaced by the identity brought by Middle Eastern refugees. In this regard, it appears that identity in constructivism influences decision-making regarding Hungary's policy of rejecting Middle Eastern refugees.

There is concern among Hungarians that differences with Middle Easterners will dilute traditional Hungarian values and create social conflict. There are huge differences between Hungarians and Middle Easterners during the refugee crisis. Differences in religion, language,

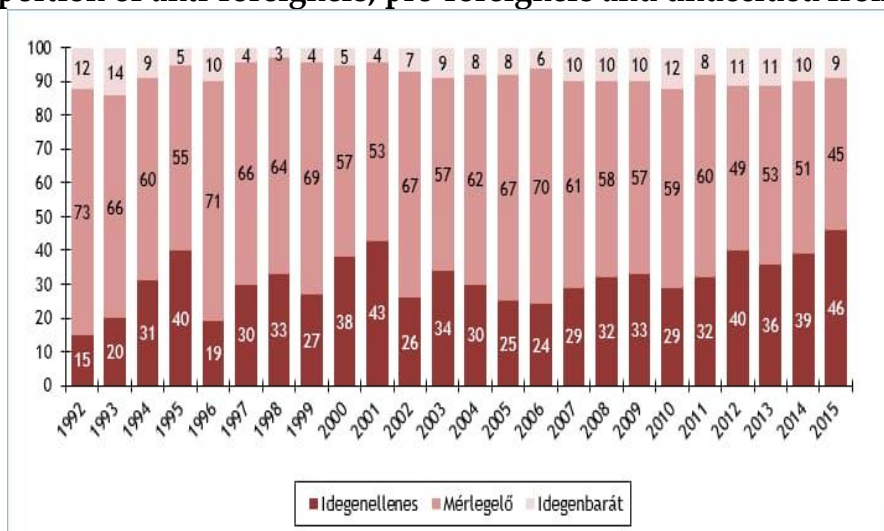
race, ethnicity, culture and others raise fears of social conflict if Middle Eastern refugees come and live in Hungary. In addition, the lack of experience of Hungarian people on migration can be one of the triggers for not accepting Hungarian refugees in the Middle East.

### Xenophobia and Islamophobia in Hungary

Hungary is one of the countries that is used as an example as an anti-refugee and racist country. In his speech to the *Conservative Political Action Conference* on July 27, 2022, Viktor Orban said that "*Europeans Should not become people of mixed race* (Noack, 2022). During the 2015 refugee crisis, Orban also said that the arrival of Muslim refugees would only be a threat to Europe's Christian identity (Perbawani, 2022).

Hungary, with a population with little migration experience, contributed to xenophobia during the 2015 refugee crisis. In 1992, 15% of Hungarians expressed xenophobia. In 2014, xenophobia increased to 39%, then increased rapidly in October 2018, where the xenophobia rate was 67% in Hungary (Péter Krekó, Bulcsú Hunyadi, 2019). The social research institute TARKI, since 1992, has been monitoring annually the opinion of Hungary's adult population on the admission of asylum seekers. Based on the results of research from TARKI in April 2015, 46% of the adult population chose anti-foreign statements that asylum seekers should not enter Hungary, 45% of the adult population considered granting or denying asylum and 9% of respondents indicated friendliness towards foreigners (European Commission, 2015a).

**Chart 1. 5 Proportion of anti-foreigners, pro-foreigners and undecided from 1992-2015 (%)**



Source: (Tarki, 2015)

In the spring of 2015, the Hungarian government put up billboards in various parts of Hungary written in Hungarian and reading, "*If you come to Hungary, you must respect Hungarian culture*" (Zerofsky, 2019). In addition, several other posters were put up, in the form of slogans that read "*If you come to Hungary, you cannot take the workplace from Hungarians*".

In addition to putting up a number of billboards, the Hungarian government also conducted a survey called the national consultation. The national consultation survey is a marketing campaign letter directly sent to every Hungarian household on behalf of the Hungarian government. The survey aimed to find out the opinions of Hungarians towards



refugees and the threat of terrorism. A September 2015 survey showed that 65% of respondents considered immigration a threat. This is a significant increase compared to the results of the May 2015 survey, with 13% of respondents considering migration to be a problem in Hungary (Pradana, 2018).

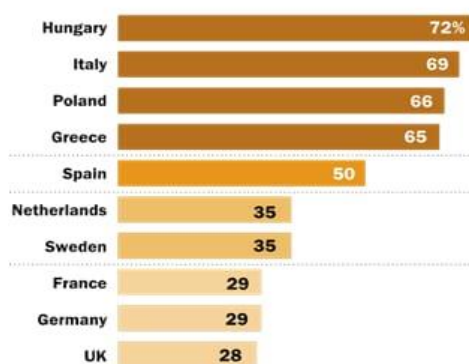
Middle Eastern refugees are associated with various types of crime, including terrorism. In addition, the arrival of Middle Eastern refugees to Hungary is considered to only dilute Hungary's national identity. Hatred of Middle Eastern refugees or Muslim refugees increased rapidly during the 2015 refugee crisis. Hungarians also consider refugees a greater burden and threat than the average European. Islam is often framed in the context of the culture war between the Christian West and the Muslim world.

Anti-Muslim discourse in Hungary was indirectly triggered by a wave of Middle Eastern refugees. The existence of fear-spreading public discourse combined with the presence of refugees in Hungary shocked Hungarians, where Hungarians saw Middle Eastern refugees coming to Hungary as a threat to their lives (Zoltan Pall, 2016). Based on data from the Pew Research Center, in 2016 about 72% of Hungary's population had a bad view of Muslims (Hackett, 2017).

### Chart 1. 6 Negative views of Muslims in some Eastern European countries

#### Views of Muslims more negative in eastern and southern Europe

*Unfavorable view of Muslims in our country*



Note: In Poland, question was asked of a subsample of 686 respondents.

Source: Spring 2016 Global Attitudes Survey, Q36c.

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Source: (Hackett, 2017)

Various Islamophobic acts and remarks have been made by both the Hungarian government and society. The narrative that Hungarians often put forward against refugees or immigrants is "They are different, we don't know them, therefore we hate them" (Kakissis, 2018). Viktor Orban, in an October 2018 speech on the 62nd anniversary of the outbreak of the Hungarian Revolution and the war against communist rule, said that "We do not see these people as Muslim refugees. We see them as Muslim invaders" (Barry, 2019).

Muslims and Hungary have a long history. Hungary often encounters the Muslim world, historically, and many are not peaceful. The traces of the Ottoman occupation of Hungary (1541-1699) still exist in the consciousness of the state. The Battle of Mohacs, on August 29, 1526, was a crushing defeat for Hungary. Hungary was ruled by King Louis II, while Turkey with the Ottoman Empire was led by Sultan Suleyman the Great (Widhayasa,



2021). This victory at Mohacs marked the destruction of the Hungarian monarchy and paved the way for Turkish domination of Hungary.

Memories of past events caused Eastern Europeans to raise alarm against Muslim immigrants (Soraya, 2020). This vigilance has been expressed by Viktor Orban by limiting the number of Muslim communities in Hungary. The Hungarian government and society do not want to live side by side with Muslim refugees because of painful memories of past events.

Public opinion or *mass influencers* see that Middle Eastern refugees are closely related to various crimes, especially terrorism. Various mass media such as radio, television, and newspapers portray Muslims as part of terrorism, and Middle Eastern refugees are definitely a group of terrorists who want to rule Europe and dilute the Hungarian identity (The Guardian, 2016).

The hatred of Muslim refugees during the Middle East refugee crisis was influenced by Hungarian public opinion which saw that Hungary and Muslims had bad relations since the Ottoman Empire. That is, there is historical value that later became the basis for the opinion of the Hungarian public hatred of Middle Eastern refugees. In addition to historical value, there are norms in society that govern who is accepted and what kind of rights and privileges will be given to those who are allowed to enter. In addition, Hungarian society adopting kinship norms can be the basis used to determine who can come and settle and is welcomed by Hungarian society.

Public opinion can be used as a tool in the decision-making process of a policy. Hungary's negative opinion of Middle Eastern refugees later became a support for Hungary's policy towards Middle Eastern refugees. Hungarians express their opinions regarding foreigners during the refugee crisis through Hungarian non-governmental pollsters as well as surveys conducted by the Hungarian government, and from these surveys Hungarian public opinion shows a high percentage of hatred towards foreigners. Then, from this opinion the government or related actors have the tools used to pass a policy. In this regard, the Hungarian government passed a policy of double standards that mistreated Middle Eastern refugees, in consideration of the safety and comfort of the Hungarian people.

### **Defending Christian Values in Hungary**

Orban described the ideology in Hungary's system of government as an illiberal democracy. Orban also used Christian democracy as an ideology in Hungary's system of government. Christianity and Hungary have a close relationship bound by history. This relates to the creation of Hungary by King Saint Stephen based on Christian values (Trajbár, 2021). Christianity has been the main religion of Hungary for the past 1000 years.

Christianity continues to grow to this day in Hungary, with more than a third of the population identifying as Roman Catholic. Since Fidesz-KDNP came to power, the party has proposed a new Hungarian constitution stating in the preamble its commitment to Christianity that reads "We are proud that our king Saint Stephen built the Hungarian state on a solid foundation and made our country part of Christian Europe" (Dorottya Kósa, 2021). Orban has on many occasions stressed upholding Christian values as central to his government, and has won support from many quarters.

Hungary told other Christian countries that preserving Christian values was a government priority, and helping persecuted Christians was a moral obligation (FaithPot Positive Stories, 2021). In order to represent Christian values in its constitution, Hungary has a special program called Hungarian Aid which was established in 2017 for Hungary's humanitarian development (Devex, 2017). It is a program that provides assistance to persecuted Christians in Africa and the Middle East.

In addition to establishing the Hungarian Aid Program, in December 2020 the Hungarian government also amended the Hungarian constitution regarding a law banning LGBT. Anti-LGBT laws prohibit adoption for same-sex couples and legally define a family according to traditional Christian views of marriage, family, and gender, where "the mother is a woman, and the father is a man" (Marton Dunai, 2020). Through the amendments, the state is tasked with protecting children's right to self-identity according to their sex at birth and mandating that children be raised with values based on Hungarian constitutional identity and Christian culture (Associated Press, 2020).

Human displacement in refugee crises does not only involve physical displacement, but there are identities such as values, customs, cultures, and others that are also carried away in the flow of human migration. Regarding the origin of the refugees, most of whom come from the Middle East, have a different Islamic identity and are considered contrary to the values that exist in Hungarian society. The existence of foreigners, will be positioned as a threat to Hungary as well as its society referring to the existing historical value. The acceptance of refugees and Eastern migrants would go against the country's constitution and contradict historical values and force Hungarian society to open up, and in the process would be very vulnerable to social conflict among the people.

### **Rezim Populis Hungaria**

Hungary adheres to a multi-party system, and the one who currently occupies many parliamentary seats is the Fidez Party. The Fidez party has been in power or won the seat of government since 2010. In April 2010, Fidez's party won against the Hungarian Socialist Party, or MSZP, with more than two-thirds of parliamentary seats. This then made Fidez the largest party in parliament and took the Christian People's Democratic Party or KDNP as a coalition partner (Sherin, 2018). Fidez has won seats in Hungary's parliament for four consecutive times, thus perpetuating Orban's rule as Prime Minister and Fidesz as Hungary's ruling right-wing party.

Since returning to power, Fidez and Orban have gradually shifted to increasingly authoritarian and illiberal right-wing positions. Orban did not deny liberalism values such as freedom, etc. It simply does not make liberal ideology the main element of state organization. Instead, Orban adopted a nationalist approach. Orban's act of action in order to implement his illiberal democratic mandate is to curb academic freedom. Central European University became a victim of Hungary's implementation of illiberal democracy. CEU is an American accredited university and serves students from more than 100 countries.

Orban described the CEU as a representation of Western liberalism that he wanted to expel from Hungary. In December 2018, CEU announced it would move its campus to Vienna, as a result of increasingly stringent higher education regulations targeting CEU (Walker, 2018). In the same year, precisely August 2018, the Hungarian government announced its plan to close all gender studies programs in Hungary. Chief of Staff Gergely Gulyas said gender studies also

contradict the ideology of the Hungarian government (Reuters Staff, 2018). Bence Retvari, the human resources secretary also claimed that the content of gender studies contradicts the government's value system on human beings (Zsubori, 2018).

During the 2015 refugee crisis, Orban's political narrative was based on a migration security framework, a clash of civilizations, ethnic, religious and cultural visions. In 2017, through a speech at Baile Tusnad or Tusnadsfurdo, Orban said "*First of all, I feel it is very important for us to maintain ethnic homogeneity. Mixing causes a lot of trouble. We Hungarians are naturally heterogeneous in the sense that we are Europeans. But in ethnic terms, it belongs to certain limits, so, there is still a certain ethnic homogeneity. We come from one civilization, maintaining this is the main problem*" (Capital, 2022). Orban said that mixing people from the same racial group was acceptable but, mixing people from different racial groups was harmful to European civilization.

The Hungarian government in making decisions related to Hungary's double standard policy towards Middle Eastern refugees acts as a *bureaucratic influencer*, that is, the government that is in the system or bureaucratic influence in decision making (Coplin, 2003). Bureaucrats refer to individuals and organizations in government that play a role in assisting decision makers in formulating or implementing policies. In addition, this group of bureaucrats often provides information in the decision-making process and is used as an instrument for implementing these decisions (Coplin, 2003).

Viktor Orban has a major hand in setting Hungary's refugee policy towards Middle Eastern refugees. Orban, who represents himself as Hungary's protector and an actor who represents the opinion of the Hungarian people, informed the public of the threat posed by Middle Eastern refugees. In addition, Orban told the EU that Hungarians do not want the EU to interfere in Hungary's internal affairs, so Hungary's refugee policy must be fully determined by the Hungarian government without any foreign interference. Therefore, Hungary's policy towards Middle Eastern refugees was heavily influenced by Orban's role as prime minister who decided that the policy of rejecting Middle Eastern refugees to Hungary was an effort to protect Hungary.

In addition to Orban, political parties also have a large share in policymaking. The purpose of a political party is to convey or define the demands or desires of the community into a political demand that then influences policy making (Coplin, 2003). The political party in Hungary that has great power is Fidesz. Fidesz's popularity as the ruling party in Hungary continues to grow along with the high percentage of Fidesz voters, so that other parties have not been able to beat Fidesz as the most important party in Hungary. Fidesz holds the most seats in the Hungarian parliament. Fidesz as a *partisan influencer* conveyed the demands of the Hungarian people who rejected the arrival of Middle Eastern refugees. In addition, through Fidesz's nationalism strategy that prioritizes the protection of Hungarian culture from Middle Eastern refugees coming to Hungary, Fidesz's role as a *partisan influencer* in the process of setting Hungarian policy towards Middle Eastern refugees.

Fidesz and Orban with their right-wing political regimes continued to deliver anti-migrant discourse during the 2015 refugee crisis. Controlling the media, criticizing the elite and the European Union, and restricting the movement of NGOs in their countries, especially those funded by George Soros, are some of the forms of right-wing populist actions by Orban and Fidesz. According to the Hungarian government, organizations operating in the country,

especially those that provide support to refugees, only have a negative impact on Hungary's national security and identity. In addition, the government also considers that the support of NGOs and related parties for migration will only cause migration to continue to occur in Hungary.

Orban's populist leadership style and Fidesz's ruling regime are among the reasons Hungary has made policies that discriminate against Middle Eastern refugees, resulting in a double standard against Middle Eastern refugees. Fidez and Orban with their power made a series of policies denying Middle Eastern refugees entry, complicating asylum procedures during the 2015 refugee crisis, criminalizing those who helped Middle Eastern refugees enter Hungary or apply for residency in Hungary and campaigned on the threat of harm that Middle Eastern refugees would bring if they stayed in Hungary. The various actions taken by Orban and Fidez in preventing Middle Eastern refugees from entering Hungary are carried out in the name of the interests of the Hungarian people who want to live safely in Hungary and free from the threat of the arrival of foreigners who can dilute Hungarian culture and traditions at any time.

#### **D. CONCLUSION**

The difference in Hungary's attitude towards Muslim and non-Muslim refugees is influenced by several things. Hungary's discriminatory attitude towards Muslim refugees during the 2015 refugee crisis was caused by differences in ethnicity, religion, cultural identity, ideology, and historical values between Hungary and Middle Eastern Muslim refugees. Hungary, with its constitution based on Christian values, views Muslim refugees as a group of people who will dilute the ethnicity and cultural values of Hungary and European Christianity. The historical value that Hungary still holds firmly related to Ottoman rule in Hungary is a trigger for anti-Muslim sentiment in Hungary and anti-Muslim sentiment is getting stronger with the arrival of Middle Eastern refugees. In addition, under the pretext of putting the interests of the people first, Hungary's right-wing populist political regime used the issue of migration to perpetuate power by implementing a series of policies that discriminated against the Middle East.

Hungary's security from migration has been one of Orban's campaign issues. To deliver on his promise of Hungary's security, Orban built a fence on the border to keep Middle Eastern refugees from entering Hungary and established a stop-soros law that criminalizes anyone who helps refugees during the Middle East refugee crisis. However, border fencing is no longer a barrier to refugees in the 2022 refugee crisis, when Ukrainian refugees enter Hungary. Hungary opened the border fence and relaxed the national asylum system to make it easier for Ukrainian refugees to gain access to asylum in Hungary. Hungary's kind attitude towards Ukrainian refugees is inseparable from the close identity between Hungary and Ukraine as a European and Ukrainian society that is home to ethnic Hungarians separated since the Treaty of Trianon.

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