Causation or Coincidence: the Relationship Between EU Border Policies and Islamic State Attacks

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Abstract

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Continuous armed conflict in Libya and Syria, beginning in 2011, resulted in the movement of large numbers of individuals from the Middle East and North Africa into Europe. The arrival of refugees and asylum seekers coincided with 32 attacks in the European Union carried out by Islamic State (ISIS) sympathizers. Factions within the EU posited that nefarious institutions such as ISIS used the movement of refugees to smuggle fighters into the EU, and that anti-smuggling and anti-trafficking initiatives could be used to prevent institutions such as ISIS from conducting terrorist attacks. However, close scrutiny of the attacks illustrate that the underlying security failure was not a result of anti-trafficking or anti-smuggling measures, but rather the asylum process itself. This paper proves that there is no link between anti-smuggling and anti-trafficking initiatives and the success rate of high profile terrorist attacks in the EU between 2014 and 2017. During this period, foreign terrorist organizations (FTO) did not rely on smuggling or trafficking to gain access to the EU in order to conduct attacks, or to generate revenue to support attacks.
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<th>Full Form</th>
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<tr>
<td>FTO</td>
<td>foreign terrorist organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>GTD</td>
<td>Global Terrorism Database</td>
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<tr>
<td>GTI</td>
<td>Global Terrorism Index</td>
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<td>HPA</td>
<td>high profile attack</td>
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<tr>
<td>IEP</td>
<td>Institute for Economics and Peace</td>
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<tr>
<td>ISIS</td>
<td>Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham</td>
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<tr>
<td>TESAT</td>
<td>Terrorism Situation and Trend Report</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOC</td>
<td>transnational organized crime</td>
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<td>UNHCR</td>
<td>United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees</td>
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Introduction

European member states expressed trepidation over the possibility of terrorist groups using the influx of refugees from the Middle East and North Africa starting in 2011 to smuggle fighters into Europe in order to conduct attacks. A series of attacks instigated by ISIS sympathizers in the EU, including the November 2015 Paris attacks, the December 2016 Berlin truck attack, and the 2017 Hamburg knife attack, were attributed to asylum seekers and refugees, bolstering calls from some political factions to strengthen measures against smuggling and trafficking rings. The alleged tie between refugees and attacks by ISIS sympathizers had a visible impact on the political landscape of the EU: a rise in popularity in the EU of far-right organizations is attributed in part to continuing public preoccupation with the potential dangers posed by refugees.¹ The alleged tie between refugees and attacks by ISIS sympathizers was recognized by EU policy at large. For example, in 2017, official EU reports suggested ISIS was exploiting the flow of refugees to insert jihadist sympathizers in the EU.² It is important to note that while the EU set official policy in relation to refugees and counterterrorism matters, individual member states adopted widely divergent approaches.

In 2015, the European Commission released a new “Agenda on Security” for the EU. In the agenda, “cross-border crime and terrorism” was highlighted as one of the EU’s chief security concerns, with specific recommendations to establish commissions on the ties between human trafficking, border control, and terrorism. While this paper focuses on measuring the impact of the link between terrorism and trafficking

in the context of the European Union and the variant approaches taken by individual
member states, the rhetoric which associates terrorism and trafficking has global
implications. For example, while the U.S. is not directly affected by the refugee crisis,
some political rhetoric has been driven by an assumption of a correlation between the
influx of refugees in the EU and attacks by ISIS. For example, President Barack Obama
made the claim in 2012 that human trafficking is a national security issue. His then-
Deputy National Security Adviser Denis Mcdonough stated, “Human trafficking…is a
source for funding for international terrorist groups, [and] is a source for funding for
transnational terrorist groups. It fundamentally endangers international security.”3 This
approach argues that human trafficking and smuggling in the age of the refugee crisis and
the Islamic State poses a significant threat to state security, and therefore states should
utilize national security tools in order to combat human trafficking. This argument
assumes two foundational truths; 1) national security tools achieve the desired objectives
against human trafficking networks and; 2) disruption of human trafficking and human
smuggling networks degrades the ability of terrorist groups to conduct external
operations. While human trafficking is a gross violation of basic human rights well
worthy of disruption, applying national security tools may prove more harmful than
helpful to the cause, and takes away vital resources from national security enterprises.
Before investing counterterrorism resources in targeting human trafficking and
smuggling rings, the question must be asked whether the endeavor will have any impact
on the ability of terrorist groups to conduct attacks in the Western world.

3 Denis Mcdonough, “Annual Meeting of the President's Interagency Task Force To Monitor and
http://thecnffreedomproject.blogs.cnn.com/2012/03/15/human-trafficking-a-national-security-
issue-obama-task-force-told/
This thesis will explore and test the second assumption this approach to counter-trafficking initiatives: that the disruption of human trafficking and human smuggling networks degrades the ability of terrorist groups to conduct external operations. In order to test this assertion, the thesis looks at two aspects of how trafficking and smuggling can be used by terrorist groups. First, for human trafficking, the thesis will focus on research behind terrorist financing and the cost of committing external attacks to disprove the notion that human trafficking is a significant attack-enabling revenue for FTOs. The income generated by trafficking does not exceed the cost output of an external attack, and thus it cannot be argued that disrupting the line of revenue will degrade a terrorist group’s ability to conduct attacks. Second, for human smuggling, the thesis will look at the data regarding how smuggling is used by terrorist groups to move fighters into territories to conduct external attacks. The refugee crisis in the EU presents an exaggerated threat to border security and anti-smuggling measures, and an excellent lens through which to study potential impacts of policies. Therefore, the principal research question addressed in this thesis will be whether the EU’s anti-smuggling and anti-trafficking initiatives, combined with refugee policies, had any impact on the ability of terrorist groups to conduct external attacks in EU member states between 2014-2017. The results of this thesis will demonstrate that anti-smuggling and anti-trafficking initiatives have minimal to no impact on the rate of high profile attacks (HPAs), and thus do not contribute significantly to national security. For this thesis, HPAs are defined as any physical attack committed by a designated FTO, whether successful or not, regardless of the method used.
Ultimately, the thesis will disprove the assertion that anti-smuggling and anti-trafficking measures have a positive impact on national security which would justify the future use of national security resources in these fields. Terrorist groups do not generate a sufficient amount of revenue from human trafficking for attack funding to be disrupted by anti-trafficking measures. Further, data from the EU refugee crisis and analysis of terrorist attacks in EU member states will show that terrorist groups are not using smuggling routes to attack the Western world, and thus anti-smuggling initiatives have no demonstrable impact on the rates of terrorist attacks.

Definition of Terms

The role of transnational organized crime groups (TOCs) in human trafficking and human smuggling efforts is well-documented, but foreign terrorist organizations (FTOs) have also been known to use both for their own purposes. FTOs and TOCs share many traits in common, particularly a vested interest in generating income. To that end, FTOs, like TOCs, engage in organized criminal activity. However, FTOs can be differentiated from TOCs by end-goal ideologies and political objectives. Namely, while TOCs arguably operate for the purpose of profit, terrorist groups have specific ideological or political goals for which income is an enabler. While a TOC’s success can be tied to a measure of income, terrorist groups cannot be similarly

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5 Because of the crossover between activities of FTOs and TOCs, it is difficult to define where one ends and the other begins. For the sake of simplicity, in this thesis FTOs will be defined as those groups designated by the European Council of the European Union under common position 2001/931/CFSP.

quantified, as income is a means to an end instead of an end in itself. Instead of income, for terrorist groups the ability to conduct HPAs is a measure of the group’s strength and ability to impact political events to further their goals.\(^7\) This means HPAs are a semi-reliable metric for measuring the health of terrorist groups. For the purposes of this thesis, a group’s ability to conduct HPAs in the European Union will be the metric to determine whether measures taken have a provable impact on terrorist groups. This distinction does mitigate the measure of a terrorist group’s grasp of territory, a measure made particularly relevant with the rise of the Islamic State, whose initial popularity was linked to territorial gains in the Middle East. It also does not reflect the ability of the groups to conduct attacks outside of the EU. Data compiled from the 2017 Global Terrorism Index (GTI) shows no EU member makes even the top twenty list of countries affected by terrorist attacks. France, the EU member highest on the list, comes in at 23\(^{rd}\) according to the index.\(^8\) Nonetheless, since the issue at hand is not solely the strength of terrorist groups, but rather their ability to cause harm through the lens of the movement of people through the EU, HPAs within the EU remain the most relevant metric. For this thesis, HPAs are defined as any physical attack committed by a designated FTO, whether successful or not, regardless of the method used. Attack planning disrupted in the nascent stages are not considered HPAs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom (27)</td>
<td>United Kingdom (28)</td>
<td>France (29)</td>
<td>France (23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece (29)</td>
<td>Greece (29)</td>
<td>United Kingdom (34)</td>
<td>United Kingdom (35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland (47)</td>
<td>France (36)</td>
<td>Germany (41)</td>
<td>Germany (38)</td>
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It is important to note that while this thesis will be looking at attacks conducted by jihadist extremists, such attacks only make up a small percentage of total terrorist attacks in the EU. According to data compiled from the EU’s annual Terrorism Situation and Trend Report, out of 201 terrorist attacks in 2014, only 2% (four attacks) were attributable to jihadists. While the percentage grew over the years – by 2017, 33 of 205 attacks (or 16%) were attributable to jihadist extremism – jihadist attacks have never represented a plurality of attacks reported.

As will be developed in later chapters, ISIS developed the most notorious internal human trafficking ring of any FTO to date. ISIS also revolutionized the relationship between criminal activity and jihadist ideology, going so far as to change recruiting practices to specifically target criminal actors. Further, ISIS changed how attacks committed by jihadist extremists are conducted in the Western world, popularizing “lone wolf” attacks and low-budget attacks. The data from 2014-2017
demonstrates that all external attacks conducted in the EU within the time period were either directed by ISIS or by a lone-wolf actor under the philosophy and influence of ISIS propaganda. To that end, this thesis will provide history and context of broader FTO trends before looking specifically at how trafficking and smuggling developed under ISIS. Except where historical research predates the group, the thesis will focus predominantly on ISIS’s activities and structures. This is not to discount the possibility that other FTOs may eclipse ISIS’s status in subsequent years or develop new methodologies which render current practices obsolete, but rather to frame the research in the context of the threats most relevant to the current national security environment.

Separate from the issue of terrorist groups, it is important to note a difference between human trafficking and human smuggling. Trafficking is an inherently exploitative practice. Though specific definitions vary from state-to-state and organization-to-organization, I define human trafficking as “the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation” [emphasis added].” Human smuggling, on the other hand, is understood as “the procurement, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit, of the illegal entry of a person into a state party of which the

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person is not a national.”\(^{10}\) While both are financially motivated, the key difference between the two acts is the use of coercion and exploitation in trafficking.

For the purposes of this thesis, the term human trafficking in the context of terrorist groups refers to a profit-driven initiative undertaken by certain terrorist groups against non-members, whether internal or external. Human smuggling, in contrast, refers to the insertion of members of a terrorist groups into a state outside of the group’s traditional zone of control for the purposes of conducting an attack, regardless of the success of the attack.

*Methodology*

For the analysis of the rates of HPAs, I will be using data compiled from three sources; 1) the Heritage Foundation report titled “The Asylum–Terror Nexus: How Europe Should Respond” regarding attacks committed by refugees; 2) the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) annual GTI reports from 2014-2017; and 3) the EU’s annual Terrorism Situation and Trend (TESAT) reports from 2014-2017. The 2014-2017 time period is being used for three reasons: 1), several of the datasets used in analysis did not collect data prior to 2014; 2), several datasets have yet to publish numbers for 2018; and 3) the peak of the EU refugee crisis was in 2015, and many anti-smuggling policies enacted in response were implemented in 2016, so the 2014-2017 period provides before and after points for evaluating the impact of policies. While ideally a longer period would be observed, there is not sufficient data published to do so.

In June 2018, Robin Simcox of the Heritage Foundation published a report on the link between refugees and/or asylum seekers and terrorist attacks. The report gathered court documents, official statements, and, where needed, unofficial open-source

\(^{10}\) Ibid.
reports across all terrorist attacks from 2014-2017 in order to highlight all attacks in which the suspects were refugee or asylum seekers. It is broken down by year, target state, subject nationality, and target site.

The IEP publishes an annual report known as the GTI. Per the IEP, the GTI “provides a summary of the key global trends and patterns in terrorism based on data from the Global Terrorism Database (GTD). Data for the GTD is collected and collated by the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START); a Department of Homeland Security Centre of Excellence led by the University of Maryland.”\(^{11}\) The GTD, in turn, is an open-source database of all terrorist attacks which have occurred from 1970-2017. The GTD uses three criteria to define an attack as a terrorist attack: 1) the act must be aimed at attaining a political, economic, religious, or social goal; 2) there must be evidence of an intention to coerce, intimidate, or convey some other message to a larger audience (or audiences) than the immediate victims; and 3) the action must be outside the context of legitimate warfare activities. Additionally, per GTD guidelines, the attack must have been attempted, successfully or otherwise, in order to be included; attacks foiled prior to execution do not qualify. The report provides a global outlook on trends in attacks. Information from these reports will primarily be used to put the situation in the EU across the years in a global context, with some information provided by the GTD used to provide more details regarding specific attacks.

My third main source is the EU’s annual report known as the TESAT. The TESAT is intended to provide a snapshot of terrorist activity within the EU for a given

year. It is prepared by EUROPOL and is based on information provided by EU member states and EUROPOL partners. The TESAT also provides analysis of trends in attacks and interactions between terrorist groups. The TESAT covers both international and domestic terrorism. The TESAT defines an act of terrorism as:

“intentional acts which, given their nature or context, may seriously damage a country or an international organisation when committed with the aim of: seriously intimidating a population, or unduly compelling a government or international organisation to perform or abstain from performing an act, or seriously destabilising or destroying the fundamental political, constitutional, economic or social structures of a country or an international organisation.”

Wherever this definition has ambiguities, the TESAT leaves it to the discretion of the reporting member state to define terrorism by their own laws and standards. Because it is an assessment which relies on the reporting of member states, there are some inherent difficulties in normalizing the data. Some member states may have different reporting practices and policies which create inconsistencies in the data. Additionally, the report is subject to the whims of time; there is a noticeable change in the terminology used in the TESAT from year-to-year which creates some difficulty in producing consistent analysis. For example, in 2014 there is a category for “religiously inspired” attacks; in 2015, “religiously inspired” is not a category, but “jihadist extremism” is. How terrorism is defined changes how member states report attacks; it also may change the member state’s willingness to participate in self-reporting. There is also a cultural factor at play; some member states may be more prone to report attacks conducted by perceived outsiders (such as FTOs or jihadist extremists) than by domestic terrorist groups, such as

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separatists or far right and left extremists. Where possible, inconsistencies and biases in data are noted in the thesis.

There are inherent difficulties in accurately compiling data related to human trafficking and smuggling figures. As with most illicit activities, data is extrapolated from other sets of factors, including arrests and criminal trials, and accurate figures are impossible to ascertain in public knowledge. Additionally, terrorist groups occupy a region of government oversight which errs on the side of secrecy. Unlike TOCs, information regarding attacks by FTOs are often shrouded in classification and national security concerns. Figures in this thesis are estimates previously compiled by researchers, extracted from published datasets, taken from news reports, or from information directly released by governments, as outlined above. They are not concrete figures. Evaluations made in the course of this thesis should be reviewed under the limitations of data presented.

**Overview**

This thesis is divided into two main sections; trafficking and smuggling. In the first chapter, I explore the historic and current use of human trafficking as a source of funding for terrorist groups and the funding required for external attacks to determine whether or not the funding of FTOs would be significantly harmed by a reduction in human trafficking. I begin by outlining the historic development of a relationship between FTOs and TOCs and terrorism financing. Then I look specifically at how ISIS, the perpetrator of the attacks which form the focus of this thesis, developed unique practices which enhanced their ability to exploit criminal activity for the benefit of the group. Second, I look at the estimated costs, both historic and current, of terrorist attacks
in order to compare the profits made by human trafficking relative to the cost of an external attack to demonstrate how anti-human trafficking initiatives would not have an impact on the groups’ abilities to conduct external attacks.

In the second section, I will focus on human smuggling. The second chapter, therefore, will provide a broad overview of how FTOs use smuggling routes as both recruitment tools and as avenues for attacks, including the development of the foreign fighter phenomenon in jihadist groups. Additionally, in this chapter I will look at how ISIS specifically used smuggling to facilitate the recruitment of European citizens, and the rates at which foreign fighters are returning to the EU after the collapse of the Caliphate. Having established how smuggling is used in general, Chapter 3 provides a breakdown of the refugee crisis. It begins with a comprehensive look at where refugees settled within the EU, when they came, and where they came from, and is followed by an explanation of EU policies developed in response to the refugee crisis. The chapter looks at anti-smuggling and trafficking policies at the EU-wide level, and then at the refugee policies of each member state individually. Chapter 4 will provide an overview of HPAs in the EU for the period 2014-2017 to see what, if any, impact the number of refugees had on the rate of HPAs, and whether or not the rate of HPAs was affected by the policies enacted by both member states and the EU as a whole. In this chapter, attacks are broken down by year according to data compiled from GTI and TESAT reports, as well as the Heritage Foundation’s report on attacks committed by refugees. In this chapter, the data will prove that no FTO operative used smuggling or trafficking to circumvent state tracking and remain undetected – many formally presented themselves to authorities and pursued lawful avenues of entry. Instead, a key point of security failure is the lengthy
wait times between asylum application and adjudication, and a failure to enforce asylum decisions.

The final chapter, Conclusion, will discuss my final analysis on the question at hand: anti-smuggling and anti-trafficking measures have had no impact on ISIS’s ability to conduct HPAs within the EU, thus demonstrating that these initiatives are not an effective use of national security funds and should not be prioritized over more traditional counterterrorism methods.
Chapter One: Terrorist Financing

There are two ways in which the movement of individual via illegal means can benefit a terrorist group. The first that I examine is the use of human trafficking as a profit-driven initiative for terrorist groups. In this chapter, I begin by defining terrorist financing in general, and then summarize research regarding the historic relationship between FTOs and TOCs, and how this relationship affected terrorist financing. Finally, I will look more in depth at how FTOs engage in human trafficking, with a specific look at the human trafficking rings run by ISIS. Following the research, I will use examine how the profits of human trafficking compare to overall FTO budgets and specifically the cost of conducting external attacks to prove human trafficking has no impact on the ability of terrorist groups to conduct external attacks.

The purpose of this chapter is to first develop an understanding of the scope of terrorist financing in order to provide context for the relative value of human trafficking for FTOs. Secondly, this chapter looks at the cost of conducting external attacks. In doing so, it will be possible to evaluate whether a disruption in funds gained from human trafficking would have a sufficient enough impact on an FTO to prevent the execution of external attacks.

*Defining Terrorist Financing and the Crime-Terror Nexus*

Terrorist financing is the raising, storing, and movement of funds acquired through licit or illicit methods for the purpose of committing terrorist acts or sustaining the logistical structure of a terrorist organization.\(^\text{13}\) In a globalized world, this includes the opportunity for transnational movement of goods, individuals, and money. Security

officials are presented with the daunting task of “following the money” in this nebulous transactional world, burdened with the additional handicap that many of these groups operate in regions of the world where there is poor border and state security.\textsuperscript{14}

Frustratingly, FTOs would not be stopped from operating in the unlikely event governments are able to completely curtail black market operations of FTOs due to the fact that FTOs are not entirely dependent on illicit funds. They use extremely diverse, adaptive financing systems.\textsuperscript{15} FTOs combine illicit and legitimate financing, confusing efforts by law enforcement to prevent their fundraising or even gauge its scale. Some groups control sufficient territory that they can even operate much like a state, ‘taxing’ both citizens and goods traded through the region. Most recently this is typified by ISIS, whose control of territory and subsequent fundraising and organizational structure was considered an evolution in how FTOs operated. However, ISIS is not the first FTO to adapt financing methods to unique situations; the history of FTO financing is rooted in the ability of the groups to change their methods in response to geopolitical pressures.

Historically, terrorist groups adaptively responded to the global finance and political environment. During the Cold War, both sides sponsored insurgent groups as proxies through finance, equipment, and even training. The end of the Cold War also ended the financing of these proxy groups, requiring them to seek supplies and financing through other means.\textsuperscript{16} Inexpensive weapons in the 1990s provided a solution for equipment shortages and enabled them to engage in violent illicit activities – robbery, kidnap for ransom, and extortion – in order to supplement the loss of state-sponsored

\textsuperscript{16} Colin P. Clarke, Terrorism, Inc.: The Financing of Terrorism, Insurgency and Irregular Warfare, Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO, 2015.
financing.\textsuperscript{17} FTOs also began to cooperate with each other, forming new strategic alliances of convenience to weather the loss of state support.\textsuperscript{18} As more decentralized organizations, they were able to form lucrative relationships with criminal organizations, which presented new financing and operational opportunities.\textsuperscript{19} The loss of state support also taught the groups an important lesson regarding the need to diversify income revenue in order to protect against the potential loss of a singular income stream.\textsuperscript{20} The diversification of financing and new relationship with criminal organizations was dubbed “the crime-terror nexus” by some scholars.\textsuperscript{21} ISIS most infamously embraced this paradigm, deliberately recruiting individuals with criminal backgrounds, leading to the embrace of “gangster jihad:” criminals who convert and take up the cause of jihadist extremism.\textsuperscript{22} Individuals with criminal backgrounds in fraud and theft can not only put these skills to use in forging documents, accessing weapons, vehicles, safehouses, and other tools necessary for HPAs,\textsuperscript{23} but also may have already cultivated a familiarity and tolerance of violence.\textsuperscript{24}

\textsuperscript{24} Rajan Basra and Peter R. Neumann, “Criminal Pasts.”
Because this thesis ultimately seeks to address human smuggling-enabled HPAs in the EU, which the data shows to be performed entirely by ISIS inspired actors, I will now look more in depth at ISIS’s funding specifically.

_The Wealthiest Terrorists in the World_

ISIS gained notoriety not only for their brutal tactics and canny recruiting policies, as previously discussed, but also for their impressive fundraising. Officials at the U.S. Department of Treasury note three primary sources of income for ISIS; oil and gas, taxation and extortion, and the wealth gained from taking control of Mosul.\(^{25}\) ISIS is considered unique in that the majority of its revenue is gained within territory controlled by the FTO itself, rather than from external actors or foreign donations.\(^{26}\) See Figure 1 for a breakdown of ISIS’s revenue from 2014-2016, as estimated by the IEP in the 2017 GTI. Many scholars believe that it is likely ISIS will adjust fundraising as territory is continually lost, turning to the more traditional route of external funding,\(^{27}\) a pattern already noted.\(^{28}\) Regardless, ISIS is a prime modern-day example of the adaptiveness of FTOs. In recruitment, operations, and financing, the FTOs pursue a wide variety of options in order to continue their political war.

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27 In 2018, Colin Clarke of the RAND Corporation rescinded statements made in 2017 indicating ISIS would turn to some form of state-sponsored model to fill in the gaps of lost revenue. Per Clarke, ISIS’s insular model was persisting and while some state-sponsored financing may be occurring, ISIS’s model is still largely self-reliant.

In 2015, ISIS was the world’s wealthiest terrorist group.\textsuperscript{29} The group has a strategy of self-funding in controlled territory. However, as the loss of its self-proclaimed caliphate has shown, the group's strategy of self-funding in controlled territory has left them susceptible to any action that impinges on its territory. ISIS’s funding structure was crippled following major territorial losses in Iraq and Syria, as half of its funds were sourced from oil smuggling. Targeted operations against oil refinery operations and cash storage sites hindered ISIS’s ability to operate its ‘state’ and pay fighters. In 2017, ISIS’s revenue was estimated to be a quarter of its 2015 size and continues to shrink. This disruption to ISIS’s fundraising unquestionably helped thwart the activities of the group, especially in its base countries of Iraq and Syria. This demonstrates that deliberate targeting of terrorist financing can have an impact on FTOs, provided the streams targeted by actors represent a substantive percentage of an FTOs revenue.

To emphasize the theme of adaptability, it is imperative to note that despite the relative success of the counterterrorism efforts against ISIS’s holdings, ISIS is not bankrupt. As ISIS lost territory, its leadership is alleged to have smuggled funds out of Iraq and Syria, with some estimates going as high as $400 million.\textsuperscript{30} This money was then used to invest in legal businesses such as hospitals and farms, throughout the region. At the same time, ISIS fighters who have fled outside of Iraq and Syria are alleged to be buying up large quantities of gold.\textsuperscript{31} Further, while the majority of ISIS’s funding is currently rooted in its territorial holdings, its institutional predecessor – al-Qaida in Iraq (AQI) – managed to raise substantial funds from oil by extorting distribution networks.\textsuperscript{32} ISIS has the infrastructure and historical knowledge to transfer from being the illicit

\textsuperscript{31} Ibid.
producers of oil to extorting the lawful producers. Further, the loss of territory represents another business opportunity that ISIS has historically been adept at exploiting; the extortion of construction companies. Cities in need of rebuilding and aid provide a convenient target for terrorist financing.33

Having discussed the overall budget and financing practices of ISIS, I now look specifically at the revenue generated by human trafficking in order to compare its relative value.

The Role of Human Trafficking in ISIS Fundraising

Of all FTOs of the current century, ISIS is most notorious for its internal slave trade. Within ISIS territory, systematic sexual violence is used as a tool of coercion and control.34 In August 2014, ISIS fighters moved into the Sinjar region of Iraq, which was predominantly populated by the Yazidis. The Yazidi religion, while sharing some elements of the Abrahamic religions, is also influenced by Zoroastrianism. Because of the Yazidis perceived status of ‘devil worshippers,’ ISIS moved to systematically enslave or slaughter the Yazidi population.35 While the men were mostly killed, the organized sale of Yazidi women and children began in 2014. The sale of women eventually became an organized affair, with a not-insignificant amount of infrastructure invested in the movement of victims, warehouses to store victims, and the organization of viewings and auctions for victims. Most women were sold to ISIS fighters, some of whom brought

33 Ibid, 6.
victims to other areas in order to sell them on for a profit. Prices at the organized viewings ranged from an estimated US$70 - $1,500 – some were given free as gifts.36

Having outlined both ISIS’s overall budget and its income from human trafficking, I now look at an important cost incurred by FTOs. Fundraising is not only needed for the sustenance of an Islamic State and the salaries of fighters. External operations are an efficient method of exerting political pressure through force for groups which must operate on limited income. In the next section, I look at the cost of HPAs. The purpose is to form an evaluation regarding whether ISIS’s human trafficking is a notable enough source of income to counteract. If the revenue of human trafficking exceeds the cost of an HPA, it can be conceivably argued that disrupting human trafficking would in some way hamper ISIS’s ability to conduct attacks, including in the EU.

The Cost of HPAs

A report of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), an international organization focused on money laundering and terrorism financing, found that singular terrorist attacks are relatively inexpensive compared to the amount of damage that they incur, and are becoming increasingly low tech and cost efficient.37 According to the 9/11 Commissions Report, the September 11, 2001 attacks perpetrated by Al-Qaeda cost somewhere between US$400,000-$500,000.38 In contrast, the 2004 Madrid train

bombings cost approximately US$10,000, and the Cologne commuter train attack in 2006 is estimated to have cost US$500. However, according to FATF, the financing required “to provide for recruitment, planning, and procurement between attacks represents a significant drain on resources. A significant infrastructure is required to sustain international terrorist networks and promote their goals over time.” An individual attack is inexpensive compared to the overall operational costs of the organization. This makes it difficult to gauge the exact impact the loss of a single stream of revenue, such as human trafficking, might have on FTOs.

In 2015, Emilie Oftedal of the Norwegian Defense Research Establishment (FFI), used court documents and media reports to evaluate the funding of 40 jihadist cells that had planned attacks in Europe. Overall, the study found that 90% of the cells provided at least some of their own funding, and half of the cells were entirely self-financed. Of the cells studied, 25% received some sort of funding from an FTO. Most interestingly, per the report the cells moved towards legal activities for funding over time and rejected illegal activity. In the early 1990’s, barely a third of the cells received funding from legal sources, while criminal activity was used as funding in nearly 80% of the cells. In contrast, over 80% of cells operating post-2008 used legal funding, while only 40% used any sort of criminal activity as funding. Figure 3 offers a breakdown of the costs of the terrorist plots planned by the cells studied by Oftedal. Notably, of the attacks with calculable costs, approximately 77% cost less than

US$10,000, and 8% were less than US$100. Two important conclusions can be drawn from this report: 1) funding sources for HPAs, like funding for FTOs in general, fluctuate over time, and 2) HPAs can be surprisingly cheap to conduct. The research also underscores the variability of HPAs in terms of funding sources and cost.

Now that the cost of HPAs has been reviewed, it is time to examine whether a loss of human trafficking funds would affect the ability of FTOs to engage in HPAs.

Conclusions

The shift in overall budget and revenue stream for ISIS over the course of less than a decade demonstrates how difficult it is to predict future behaviors of FTOs. It also makes it difficult to prescribe a single method to counter financing. In 2015, limiting ISIS’s territorial control did limit income for the FTO, and hampered its ability to project power and fight against coalition forces. However, ISIS limped on financially despite the
setback, and is showing signs of regaining lost income, despite being continually deprived of territory. Driving an FTO out of a financial stream might inadvertently create a new financing opportunity for them, such as the war in Syria and Iraq creating the need for construction projects, which can then be extorted by ISIS.

The relatively cheap cost of attacks means FTOs are not as heavily affected by a loss of income, at least when it comes to the question of enabling or inspiring HPAs. Not only is it an obvious boon for the organizations, it is an additional obstacle for security officials. Attacks are enabled to be funded through legal means, such as an individual’s savings or donations. Their low cost renders them harder to detect during the preparation stage. The plethora of online material available to individuals means that a potential attacker does not even need to have contact with a FTO in order to be radicalized. Lectures, bombmaking manuals, even ricin-making guides are available through a simple Google search. In the same time that security officials have affected ISIS’s income so dramatically, deaths from terrorist attacks have increased, and terrorism has spread to more countries. As Camilla Schippa, Director of the Institute for Economics and Peace notes, “Such a shift in tactics mimics the evolutions in terrorism funding and highlights the need to consider longer-term strategies to inhibit the rise of terrorism.”

Though the evidence for trafficking figures for ISIS is largely anecdotal, it seems to demonstrate that this particular human trafficking ring did not generate funds for ISIS, but rather served as a form of morale boost for ISIS fighters. Even in the event that the trafficking of women was external rather than internal, compared to an overall budget of billions of dollars, the $0-1,500 profits made per transaction from human

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43 Camilla Schippa, “This is how terrorists finance their attacks,” November 15 2017, [https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/11/terror-attacks-are-increasingly-self-funded-how-can-we-stop-them/](https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/11/terror-attacks-are-increasingly-self-funded-how-can-we-stop-them/)
trafficking are too small for their loss to significantly affect operations. HPAs are largely self-funded, and the FTOs themselves do not contribute significantly to their funding, so disruption of FTO revenue, even if it were significant, would likely not contribute significantly to a decrease in HPAs. Further, because FTOs have demonstrated the ability to adapt financing methods to suit their needs, should human trafficking become too costly or unprofitable, they will simply find another avenue to raise funds. Loss of income from trafficking would soon be supplemented by a different endeavor. In short, human trafficking does not generate sufficient income for ISIS to affect the rate of external attacks.

However, this does not entirely dismiss the notion that the disruption of human trafficking and human smuggling networks degrades the ability of terrorist groups to conduct external operations. As stated in the beginning of the chapter, there are two ways in which the movement of individual via illegal means can benefit a terrorist group. This chapter focused on human trafficking. The second way the movement of individuals via illegal means can benefit a terrorist group is human smuggling. FTOs use human smuggling to move fighters into territories to conduct external attacks without detection by security forces. The remainder of the thesis will seek to determine whether FTOs have successfully used human smuggling to conduct HPAs in the EU. If so, there is still a justifiable reason to apply counterterrorism resources to combating human trafficking and human smuggling, despite the conclusions reached in this chapter.
Chapter Two: Terrorism and Human Smuggling

In the context of this thesis, the usage of human smuggling by FTOs can be visualized in two ways; the flow of fighters out of the EU in support of FTOs abroad, and the flow of fighters into the EU in order to conduct HPAs. Another way to classify the difference is to look at the flow of fighters out of the EU representing recruitment efforts; the flow of fighters into the EU is used to conduct attacks. There is an estimated 30,000 foreign fighters present in Iraq and Syria fighting on behalf of ISIS,\(^\text{44}\) of which approximately 4,000 are believed to be from EU member states.\(^\text{45}\) The flow of fighters out of the EU is a concern of security organizations and shapes policy, as will be discussed later, but the flow of fighters into the EU is the relevant measure for the question at hand. In this chapter, I first present a brief overview of how human smuggling has been used by FTOs to recruit generally, and then discuss ISIS’s practices in particular. The remainder of the chapter presents an overview on the flow of ISIS fighters into the EU.

Recruitment and the Flow Outward

A foreign fighter is defined as “an individual who leaves his or her country of origin or habitual residence to join a non-State armed group in an armed conflict abroad and who is primarily motivated by ideology, religion, and/or kinship.”\(^\text{46}\) While connections to human trafficking rings for profit are tenuous at best, travelers have

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long used smuggling routes to fight on behalf of FTOs. Daniel Byman of Georgetown University’s Walsh School of Foreign Service traces the origin of foreign fighters to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{47} Abdullah Yusuf Azzam, sometimes called “the Father of Global Jihad,” began proselytizing about his interpretation of what ‘jihad’ meant in Islam – not a struggle against the darker impulse’s of one’s soul, but rather specifically battle with weapons, an obligatory war against Christian, atheist, or “unbeliever” armies occupying Muslim communities.\textsuperscript{48} Azzam was the first to argue jihad was a global burden: where local Muslims were either unable or unwilling to resist, the responsibility fell on the global Muslim community to travel and fight on their behalf.\textsuperscript{49} Together with Osama bin Laden, Azzam established the Services Bureau which, among other duties, assisted with the travel of foreign fighters to Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{50} Azzam was assassinated in 1989, but his ideas regarding global jihad and the obligation of Muslims to travel to conflict zones live on in FTOs across the world.

\textsuperscript{48} Ibid, 30.
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid, 31.
\textsuperscript{50} Ibid, 38.
In general, foreign fighters follow the same simple pattern. First, they travel, usually by air, to a country on the edge of the conflict zone, and then pay a smuggler to bring them across the border and put them in contact with the FTO in order to join their ranks. Some travelers speak to recruiters before leaving; others arrive sans any sort of local contacts and work organically. Exact numbers regarding foreign fighters are difficult to determine. In the Bosnia-Serbia conflict, the number of estimated foreign fighters ranges from 300-5,000, of which 100 were estimated to be from Europe.\textsuperscript{51} The U.S. Department of Homeland Security estimates that in 2015 there were 242 U.S. persons serving as foreign fighters for FTOs. According to data taken from the PIRUS-FF, these foreign fighters were present in groups such as the Taliban, Lashkar-e-Tayyiba, Jabhat al-Nusra, AQ, and al-Shabaab. The majority of foreign fighters, however, traveled

\textsuperscript{51} Ibid, 58.
to join ISIS. In 2013, before the refugee crisis became a real concern in the EU, officials were more worried about the flow of fighters out of EU than the flow of fighters in. ISIS’s recruiting strategy proved chillingly effective in convincing individuals in the Western world to travel to Syria and Iraq and fight on behalf of the Caliphate.

**Building the Caliphate: Smuggling for ISIS**

On 17 February 2015, then-15-year-old United Kingdom citizen Shamima Begum and two friends boarded a Turkish Airlines flight from London’s Gatwick airport to Istanbul. CCTV footage shows the three friends going through a coach station on the way to southeast Turkey. From there, the group crossed the border into Syria. Their path across the border is unclear, but Begum eventually arrived in Raqqa and ten days later was married to Dutch-born ISIS fighter Yago Riedijk.

In July 2014, the then-emir of the Islamic State, Abu Bakhr al-Baghdadi, distributed a video in which he called for devout Muslims all over the world to come to Syria and Iraq and build an Islamic State. Inspired by the message, 19-year-old Lucas Glass, a German citizen, married his German wife and traveled with her to Turkey. Once in Turkey, he paid a smuggler to take him across the border into Syria. There, he enrolled in an ISIS religious school and later joined ISIS police.

Begum and Glass represent typical stories of the foreign fighters leaving the EU to join ISIS. The European Council of the European Union was concerned about

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the flow of foreign fighters out of the EU as early as 2013.\textsuperscript{53} The success of ISIS’s recruitment strategies was such that numerous foreign fighters descended on Syria and Iraq to bolster the caliphate. As of 2016, the United Nations’ Counter-Terrorism Committee estimated nearly 30,000 foreign fighters were present in Iraq and Syria fighting on behalf of ISIS.\textsuperscript{54} In 2015, there was an estimated 1,700 French foreign fighters who had joined ISIS, and approximately 750 German foreign fighters.\textsuperscript{55} In total, the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism (ICCT) estimated approximately 4,000-4,300 foreign fighters from EU member states were fighting with ISIS in 2016;\textsuperscript{56} the European Parliament estimates the number is somewhere between 5,000-5,500.\textsuperscript{57} Exact numbers are difficult to determine, and not all of these foreign fighters used smuggling routes to leave the EU. For both brides and fighters, the paths trod by both Begum and Glass are well-worn. In general, those wishing to travel to join ISIS chose circuitous travel to Turkey, and then found someone to smuggle them over the border into Syria. As foreign fighter travelers became a more recognized problem within the Western world, travel became more difficult. Some travelers bought decoy tickets, booking flights to

multiple places to disguise travel to Turkey, or booking tickets indicating they intended to return to the EU.

The collapse of the Islamic State has pushed the pendulum in the opposite direction. Where once officials were concerned on how to prevent citizens from traveling abroad to fight on behalf of ISIS, now they must contend with the return of foreign fighters to the EU; approximately 30% of foreign fighters from Europe returned to the EU and officials worry the returned population poses a risk of radicalizing others or conducting an attack if they are not properly monitored or tracked.\(^{58}\)

*Go Forth and Conquer: the Flow in Reverse*

In early 2015, at the height of the refugee crisis for the EU, the Libyan government made the inflammatory claim that ISIS was using the refugee crisis to smuggle fighters into the EU.\(^{59}\) Given how FTOs have historically engaged in smuggling, as already discussed, the speculation that the flow of fighters could be reversed is not entirely without merit. In the asymmetrical warfare typical of FTOs versus states, smuggling allows the much smaller forces of the FTO a chance to disrupt opponents in the safety of their own home. Attacks in the Western world are particularly desirous, and the EU is a convenient target as it can be reached via both land and sea and is less geographically isolated than the U.S., Canada, or Australia. That said, It should be noted that in 2018, there were approximately 2,100

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\(^{58}\) Ibid., 32.

terrorist attacks globally; attacks in Europe account for only a dozen of these. The victims of violence instigated by FTOs are largely located in the Middle East and Africa, not the West.

The dissolution of the caliphate sped up the rate of return of many foreign fighters. States have begun to wrestle with the legal question of how to deal with these individuals. In particular, the European Parliament noted individuals who were underage at the time of their travel to support ISIS are arguably victims of human trafficking, as their recruitment was exploitative due to their age, even though they traveled of their own volition. In February 2019, the United Nations Security Council’s Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) released a report exclusively exploring the linkages between human trafficking and terrorism. The CTED wrestled with the difficult legal questions surrounding the return of certain ISIS supporters; mainly, the young women who left the EU in order to become brides for ISIS fighters. They were willingly trafficked to ISIS territory, and many of them were underage when they did so; however, their presence and support for ISIS is a prosecutorial offense, and states are concerned over the potential consequences of allowing radicalized individuals to be repatriated, particularly as some travelers, such as Begum, have expressed no remorse for supporting ISIS. The issue caused friction between member states; the UK and Netherlands were harshly criticized by the European Council for policies which refused to repatriate foreign fighter travelers under any conditions. Some former fighters and brides refuse to

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60 In recent months, this policy has also been criticized by President Donald Trump. In communications, President Trump urged European countries to take some estimated 800 foreign fighters of European citizenship who were captured by the U.S. military. President Trump implied there is a chance that the U.S. will release non-U.S. citizens if their home nation is not willing to take custody.

return home unless the government agrees to not pursue prosecution. In 2019, the issue remains unresolved.

![Figure 6. Estimated Number of Foreign Fighters Who Joined ISIS (by country).](image)

These issues, it must be noted, assume that returning fighters are seeking recourse through legal means. Officials have identified individuals who left the EU in order to fight for ISIS and quietly returned at some point without ever involving raising the suspicion of authorities. Many crossed the border under their own names and their own documents and were undetected by security officials. Others used forged papers to cross the border and return without setting off alarms despite being on terrorist watchlists.
Some of these travelers have subsequently been linked to attacks in the EU, others continue to quietly live their lives.

In the context of this thesis, the usage of human smuggling by FTOs can be visualized in two ways; the flow of fighters out of the EU in support of FTOs abroad, and the flow of fighters into the EU in order to conduct HPAs. Of the manifestations, the flow of fighters into the EU raised the most fears. The flow of fighters out of the EU is generally addressed via de-radicalization and prevention programs. Human trafficking initiatives initiated by the EU focus on the individuals coming in, while social programs and integration programs hope to stem the flow of individuals inspired to travel out.

Glass and Begum, as demonstrated, are not isolated cases. As foreign fighters return to their native countries, officials begin to question how to ensure the individuals do not pose a threat. Further, they worry that in the large numbers of refugees coming across the border, it would be too easy for a returnee or an ISIS fighter to cross the border undetected. The refugee crisis became a fixation for these fears. Before studying how justified such fears may be, it is necessary to look at the EU refugee crisis in more depth; where are the people coming from, where are they going to, and how are they getting there? Across a 28-nation bloc, there are significant differences in border and refugee policies which could have a bearing on the success (or lack thereof) of FTOs using smuggling networks to move fighters into the EU.

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Chapter Three: The Refugee Crisis in Full

This chapter provides background for later analysis of the rates of HPAs. It begins with an overview of the refugee crisis, including a study of when refugees came, in what numbers, where they came from, and where they settled. After establishing these statistics, the chapter discusses refugee and anti-smuggling policies initiated in response to the crisis, first at the broader EU level, and then in a specific member-state-by-member-state basis.

Illegally Present: Refugee Crisis in Numbers

According to UNHCR data, there are currently approximately 71 million “persons of concern” globally as of the end of 2017, the highest number since these populations were first officially tracked in 1955. These include refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced persons, returnees, stateless persons, and others. Refugees and asylum-seekers account for approximately 23 million of the total, of which approximately 3 million are located within the EU. In 2011, the global number of refugees and asylum-
seekers was approximately 11 million. Starting in 2013, the global number of refugees and asylum-seekers steadily climbed, likely as a result of a myriad of global conflicts. Eurostat did not start tracking the total number of estimated refugees until 2014, but in 2011 Frontex tracked a total of 146,349 illegal border crossings, a 37% increase from the year before. This number dropped in 2012, only to spike in subsequent years, most dramatically in 2015. The actual number of crossings is likely higher. When compared to the number of first-time asylum applicants, and the reported number of individuals found to be illegally present, a general pattern emerges; an increase from 2011-2013, a greater increase from 2013-2014, and a massive spike in 2015, with the numbers dropping in 2016 but still above 2014 levels.

By 2017, refugees and asylum seekers appear to have predominantly settled in a select few countries. Later, policies will be discussed which may have influenced this pattern. For now, it is worth noting that these numbers are indicative of

![Figure 8. Illegal Border Crossings and First Time Asylum Applicants (by year)](image-url)

By 2017, refugees and asylum seekers appear to have predominantly settled in a select few countries. Later, policies will be discussed which may have influenced this pattern. For now, it is worth noting that these numbers are indicative of
total persons, regardless of when they arrived, including those who might have settled in the EU prior to the start of the 2011 conflict in Libya and Syria. When the amount of refugees and asylum seekers are compared to the total population for countries, it is clear some member states are carrying a much larger burden than others.

Figure 9. UNHCR 2017 Refugee and Asylum Seeker Estimates for the EU.

The refugee crisis does not solely consist of individuals fleeing conflicts in the Middle East. This is easily apparent in that not all first-time applicants came from the Middle East and other conflict zones. See Figure 10 for a breakdown of top ten countries of origins for first-time asylum applicants in the EU from 2014-2017.
With a general understanding of the scope and numbers of the refugee crisis, it is time to look at how the EU has responded at both the national and international level.

General EU Initiatives

The majority of recent initiatives against smuggling and trafficking were made in response to the refugee crisis. Most notably, the European Parliament met to discuss a common “European agenda on migration” in 2015, which included discussions on how to combat trafficking and smuggling as it related to the refugee crisis. The Parliament proposed a variety of solutions. Some focused on disrupting trafficking networks prior to transit, such as JOT MARE, which was intended to “systematically identify, capture, and destroy vessels used by smugglers.” The European Commission also recommended steps to regulate content posted by smugglers online to attract migrants and refugees in order to prevent their lure. Other solutions focused on the need to provide humanitarian aid to displaced persons. Leaning on resolutions passed by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the EU reaffirmed the intention of providing a “safe and legal” way for refugees to reach the EU without the
exploitation of resorting to smugglers and traffickers. The UNHCR set a target of 20,000 resettlement places for the EU by 2020; the EU notes that member states are unequally contributing to this goal, with some, such as [country], refusing all refugees and even refusing to consider any asylum applications. Finally, the EU passed a resolution to dedicate time at an upcoming summit with the African Union to discuss ways in which borders could be hardened in order to control the flow of irregular migration and protect vulnerable persons who were likely to be trafficked or smuggled.

In 2003, the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) established the European Dactyloscopy (EURODAC), a fingerprint database for identifying asylum seekers and irregular border-crossers. The European Commission bolstered the EURODAC system in 2016; the Commission instituted a comprehensive system to deal with incoming refugees claiming asylum, including a system supported by the EASO, Frontex, and Europol which identified, registered, and fingerprinted all incoming migrants. Frontex developed a database housing personal data of persons suspected of involvement in criminal activities, including smuggling and trafficking of humans. The database logs license plate numbers, VINs, telephone numbers, or ship identification numbers and is shared with authorities of EU member states and Europol. EASO took the lead in processing asylum claims, while those migrants who made no asylum claim were processed through Frontex. Europol, in conjunction with Eurojust, took lead in investigating any trafficking and smuggling networks identified by incoming refugees. Additionally, nearly €60 million was authorized in emergency funding in response to the

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crisis; €5 million were earmarked specifically for the Ministry of Interior to Italy and Greece for “intervention to improve the monitoring of migration flows and fight crimes related to the trafficking of human beings during the surveillance of external borders” and “instrumental needs assessment to cope with migratory fluctuations and investigations on illegal trafficking connected with them.” 65 In EU policy, as emphasized by President Juncker, the fight against traffickers and smugglers was best bolstered by a “strong common asylum policy,” as well as a new European policy on legal migration. This required a committee to discuss the issue across various policy sectors, including development, trade, employment, foreign, and home affairs.

The direct plan against smuggling and trafficking networks emphasized third-country cooperation. In the mind of EU policy makers, the base of most smuggling networks is not in the EU, but abroad. While some efforts can be undertaken to capture those members of the network operating the final leg of the journey, it will not stop future trafficking or smuggling.66 Some efforts focused on funding for member states’ law enforcement efforts aimed at seizure and recovery of criminal assets, and actions against money laundering which had been proven to be connected to migrant smuggling. The Financial Intelligence Units issued a new plan for a data information sharing scheme that highlighted intelligence gathered on financial flows. Additionally, the EU passed laws enforcing harsher penalties for employers who illegally employed third country nationals or knowing engaged in the practice of human trafficking for labor.


66 The EU’s deal with Turkey was not an anti-smuggling initiative. The deal was intended to stem the rate at which refugees arrived along the Mediterranean routes, relieving the burden placed on Greece to house, tend to, and process these individuals. It did not intend to dismantle smuggling or trafficking networks.
In June 2015, the EU launched the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) Operation EUNAVFOR Med Sophia (Operation Sophia) in conjunction with Libyan authorities. As many smugglers and traffickers use Libyan waterways, Operation Sophia is intended to provide training and support for the Libyan Navy and Coast Guard to enhance their abilities to identify and combat traffickers on the seas. According to reports, Operation Sophia has recorded nearly 19,000 migrants having been rescued between January and the end of October 2017 in Libyan territorial waters.  

More recently, in 2017 the EU and Niger founded a Joint Investigation Team targeting human trafficking and smuggling networks. Through EU support to the Nigerien authorities, in the first half of 2017, 101 persons were arrested and brought to court on related charges. The EU intends to expand the Joint Investigation Team model to other countries. Additionally, the EU pledged to provide support to local communities in northern Niger by providing alternative forms of employment other than trafficking. The EU authorized a total of €50 million in funding for this initiative.

The success of these initiatives in stopping human smuggling is difficult to gage. The number of refugees globally is climbing steadily, while the number of refugees and first-time asylum seekers in the EU dropped in 2016 after a dramatic spike in 2015. This may indicate that the initiatives successfully prevented smugglers from bringing individuals into the EU. However, given that the global number of refugees did not experience a similar spike in 2015, the EU could simply be experiencing a temporary lull.  

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or refugees may be seeking other berths. Added to the difficulty in calculating the success of anti-smuggling measures, the metric of measurable populations is those who claim refugee status and are processed by authorities or those who apply for asylum; those who evade authorities and are not caught crossing the border cannot be accounted for. Perhaps what can be said is that the initiatives likely contributed in some way to either encouraging the flow of refugees to find another harbor or discouraging or preventing the travel of refugees to the EU in the first place.

**Member-State Specific Practices**

The refugee crisis sharply divided the EU, as mentioned in the introduction: “Management of the refugee crisis has bruised unity in the 28-nation bloc: Mediterranean countries coping with most arrivals often feel helpless while wealthier northern nations complain people reach their soil unchecked and those on the EU’s eastern flank refuse to host new arrivals.” As highlighted by Figure 9, the burden of refugees fell unevenly across the EU. Some of this is based on geography; some of it can be attributed to national politics. In order to provide more accurate analysis of the rates of HPAs later, a look at refugee policies at the national level in the EU is necessary. Rather than look at every member state, the profiles included are those which experienced an HPA from a refugee (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and the United Kingdom), and the top ten member states ranked by the number of refugees they took in relative to the total country population (excluding those already named, this adds Malta, Greece, and Luxembourg).

Each country’s policy profile includes a chart of how many first-time asylum applications the country received each year from 2014-2017. Factors which go
into the rate of first-time asylum applications include the appeal that the country has to asylum applicants, the volume of refugees who transit the country in total, and the restrictiveness (or lack thereof) of the national government’s policies regarding asylum applicants.

Austria

In response to cases of finding individuals who had died in the back of tracks while they were attempting to cross the border into Austria from Hungary, Austria instituted vehicle inspections along the Austria-Hungary border in 2015. At the time, Chancellor Werner Faymann of Austria supported German Chancellor Angela Merkel’s stance on the refugees and announced the intention of making Austria a permissive route for refugees. Austria was often used by refugees as a waypoint into Germany, and the Austrian government instituted policies to feed, house, and provide healthcare for refugees as they transited.69

Popular support for pro-immigration and pro-refugee policies fell after 2015. Restrictions on the numbers of refugees (both those traveling through the country and those planning to settle in Austria) were imposed in 2016, and fences were built along the borders with Hungary and Slovenia to limit and control the entry of refugees. In the 2017 elections, 58% of the votes went to Austria’s two main anti-immigration parties (Freedom Party of Austria and Austrian People’s Party). In 2018, the General Secretary of Amnesty International in Austria claims that the Vienna government encouraged a negative perception of immigrants and shut down programs which would allow integration of immigrants into Austrian society. The new right-wing government

proposed policies in 2018 which, among other things, ceased food and housing for asylum applicants who had been rejected.\textsuperscript{70}

Moving forward, the restrictions on refugees are likely to be lessened; a scandal known as “the Ibiza affair” involving Heinz-Christian Strache, the leader of the Freedom Party, and Johann Gudenus, a deputy leader of the Freedom Party, caused the collapse of Austria’s governing coalition in May 2019 and may pave the way for a more moderate coalition with more pro-immigrant sympathies.\textsuperscript{71}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{fig11.png}
\caption{First time asylum applicants (Austria)}
\end{figure}

\textit{Belgium}

As a neighbor of Germany and a by-way for refugees on their way to the UK, Belgium is largely a transit point rather than a place to settle for refugees. Outside of a spike in 2015 in applicants, the number of first-time asylum applicants is generally comparable to pre-crisis levels. However, authorities are concerned about the large population of refugees currently lingering in Belgium in the hopes of moving on to the UK. The closing of the refugee camp in Calais, France contributed to a rise in numbers


seen in Brussels. In 2018, Theo Francken, the Secretary of State for Asylum Policy and Migration in Belgium proposed a measure that would allow police to search the residences of individuals suspected of harboring people who are illegally present in Belgium, ostensibly with the aim of disrupting informal camps and refugees in homeless shelters. Policies in this vein are met by protests in Brussels. In general, Belgium’s center-right government is trying to straddle the line between humanitarian considerations and avoiding becoming the next Calais.\textsuperscript{72}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{first_asylum_applicants.png}
\caption{First time asylum applicants (Belgium)}
\end{figure}

\textit{Denmark}

Refugees were never welcomed into Denmark by official parties.\textsuperscript{73} In 2015, at the peak of the crisis, Denmark elected a right-wing government which ran on an anti-immigration platform.\textsuperscript{74} The newly elected government instituted more severe border


controls and cut benefits for asylum seekers. The anti-immigration rhetoric did not abate over subsequent years. Denmark announced plans in 2018 to isolate refugees on an uninhabited island once used to house contagious animals. While Denmark never adopted policies quite as hostile towards refugees as other member states, it has consistently embraced anti-refugee rhetoric.

![Figure 13. First time asylum applicants (Denmark)](image)

**Finland**

Finland, like many other Northern European nations, is rarely chosen as a final refuge for asylum seekers, likely due to its cold climate. However, Finland has demonstrated a willingness to push integration programs and is largely in favor of pro-refugee policies in the EU. They established repatriation centers in order to house refugees. The volume of refugees has increased the wait time of adjudication on official

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status to up to a two-year waiting period, but interior ministry officials express commitments to continuing to evaluate and care for the refugees who enter Finland.\textsuperscript{79}

![Graph of first time asylum applicants (Finland)](image)

\textit{Figure 14. First time asylum applicants (Finland)}

\textbf{France}

France, for a time, was a significant transit point for refugees hoping to enter the UK. In 2015, the “camp” in Calais, France received much international media attention. There were many reports of refugees dying as they attempted to gain entrance to the UK via the Eurotunnel. In conjunction with the UK, France built a fence along the routes entering the UK to better control the flow of population, and also moved to demolish the camps. France established a refugee camp in Grande-Synthe to provide proper housing for those refugees who had originally been located in Calais.\textsuperscript{80}

France is perceived to have lower social benefits and a ponderous asylum process, making it less appealing for those seeking to claim asylum. However, France’s government introduced programs in 2017 which increase integration efforts of refugee


populations. The French government continues to welcome refugees, but has cautioned that it will deport any criminals.\footnote{Annabelle Timsit, “France has a compassionate plan to help young refugees make friends and get jobs,” Quartz, October 26 2018. https://qz.com/1410589/macrons-creative-plan-to-help-refugees-in-france-assimilate/}

\textbf{Germany}

By numbers alone, Germany took in the largest amount of migrants of any other EU country (though not when considered as a percentage of total population). Chancellor Angela Merkel led the charge for the EU’s migrant policy when the crisis first emerged. She advocated for an open-door policy, and pledged that Germany would take in all refugees who arrived. Chancellor Merkel was the strongest advocate for an EU-wide agreement on sharing the responsibility of asylum-seekers. As popular support for the open-door policy waned, asylum status has not been granted as frequently as it was in the past, particularly in cases of family reunification programs.\footnote{Caroline O’Doherty, “The migrant crisis and the very different approaches by the 28 EU states.”}

In 2017, public opinion shifted enough that the right-wing Alternative for Germany (AfD) gained electoral success in the national election. Some have argued the
rise in right-wing populism in Germany is directly tied to a perception that the thousands of refugees from the Middle East pose a cultural threat to Germany.\textsuperscript{83}

\textbf{Greece}

Greece bore the brunt of every wave of refugees. With a domestic economic crisis already under its belt, it was ill-prepared for the 2015 wave. The 2016 EU-Turkey agreement was primarily intended to ease the burden on entry states such as Italy and Greece by lowering the number of refugees they had to process. Greece also advocated for an EU policy that allowed refugees to travel into the EU and choose which country they intended to claim asylum in, as this lowered the number of individuals Greece would ultimately be responsible for processing. Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras remained moderate in policies despite the burden on Greece’s resources, and championed Chancellor Merkel’s efforts to create an EU agreement on sharing the refugee burden. Greece, along with Italy, has been at the frontline of programs designed to rescue and relocate refugees attempting the dangerous overseas journey from North Africa to the

EU, and Greece’s efforts in this field have been recognized by the international community.  

![Figure 17. First time asylum applicants (Greece).](image)

**Italy**

In 2016, over 100,000 immigrants were processed by Italian officials. Italy’s navy spearheaded Operation Mare Nostrum and Operation Sophia (both discussed in general EU policies and initiatives), but more recently Italy has been denying docking for ships carrying refugees rescued from the Mediterranean Sea. The volume of migrants traveling into the EU via Italy is thought to have given rise to reactionary anti-migrant sentiment. In 2016, far-right groups made gains in the national elections. Deputy Prime Minister Matteo Salvini has delivered scathing rebukes to other EU member states for leaving Italy alone in its struggle to process refugees. He also made the inflammatory claim that accepting refugees was tantamount to supporting human trafficking.  

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84 Caroline O’Doherty, “The migrant crisis and the very different approaches by the 28 EU states.”  
85 Ibid.
Luxembourg

Luxembourg is a comparatively quiet voice in the refugee debate. As a small nation, it does not take in many refugees under the EU relocation schemes. Luxembourg has a long history of being pro-immigrant – approximately 45% of its population are foreigners – and the state support for asylum seekers is significant. However, Luxembourg’s high cost of living is said to deter asylum applicants from settling.\textsuperscript{86}

Malta

Malta has one of the highest rates of asylum applicants compared to national population. It is a regular port for individuals seeking to immigrate to the EU

\textsuperscript{86} Ibid.
from Africa. However, when the refugee crisis began to peak in the 2014-2015 period, Malta began turning away refugee boats, diverting them towards Italy. As an island nation with relatively few resources, Malta feels it is not in a position to accommodate large numbers of refugees.\textsuperscript{87}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{fig20.png}
\caption{First time asylum applicants (Malta)}
\end{figure}

\textbf{Netherlands}

Up through 2015, the Netherlands was more in line with Chancellor Merkel than with less humanitarian approaches. However, in 2016 the far-right gained enough support that the moderate ruling party decided to embrace more restrictive policies. Since then, Prime Minister Mark Rutte criticized Italy and Greece for failing to register new arrivals, allowing them to transit unregistered through the EU. The Netherlands is also pushing for tighter EU-wide restrictions.\textsuperscript{88}

\textsuperscript{87} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{88} Ibid.
Sweden

Sweden has the highest number of refugees in Europe per capita. The Swedish government fully embraced Chancellor Merkel’s open-door policy to migrants and continues to have comparatively unrestrictive asylum policies. Nonetheless, in 2015 Sweden enacted somewhat stricter border controls, including requiring transport companies ensure passengers carry valid identification before crossing the border. In 2016, the Swedish Parliament voted to enact slightly stricter asylum policies, such as suspending the right to family reunification. A 2016 internal leak revealed a memo indicating that the high number of refugees was forcing the Swedish government to cut funding from other public services.

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89 Caroline O’Doherty, “The migrant crisis and the very different approaches by the 28 EU states.”
In 1997, then Prime Minister Tony Blair successfully negotiated a “opt out” for the UK from EU immigration and asylum matters. As a result of this, the UK was not bound by any EU scheme, and initially remained aloof from the matter. However, in 2015, pictures surfaced of a young refugee boy – later identified as three-year-old Alan Kurdi – washed up on a Turkish beach. Within days of this photos publication in international papers, then-Prime Minister David Cameron announced the UK would take in 20,000 Syrian refugees. The UK’s refugee support has been criticized for failing to provide sufficient financial support, housing, and work, and for poor treatment of refugees pending adjudication of their official status.

The refugee crisis has had an impact on national politics. There are some indications that the Brexit vote was heavily influenced by anti-immigrant sentiment, which was possibly stoked by rhetoric surrounding the refugee crisis, and that a rise in support for right-wing party UKIP is a direct result of refugee crisis anxieties.

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94 Caroline O’Doherty, “The migrant crisis and the very different approaches by the 28 EU states.”
Figure 23. First time asylum applicants (United Kingdom).
Chapter Four: The Results of Policies on HPAs in the EU

The question remains whether any of the policies undertaken to address the smuggling and trafficking of refugees had a noticeable impact on the ability of FTOs to conduct HPAs in the EU. In a study by the Heritage Foundation, 32 plots conducted or planned by refugee or asylum seekers were identified between January 2014 and December 2017. Per the data collected, 2014 and 2015 were largely quiet years, with the notable exception of the November 2015 Paris attack. The number of plots rose in 2016 and fell again in 2017. Eighty-four percent of the total attacks occurred during the 2016-2017 period. The attacks were conducted by a total of 44 individuals; of these individuals, 35 had some sort of legal status within the EU, either as asylum seekers or refugees. The remaining nine were of an indeterminate status.

Figure 24. Terror Plots by Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Europe
The primary EU legislation to address trafficking was introduced in 2015; therefore, HPAs which occurred from 2016-2017 will be considered as conducted under the influence of the new legislation, with 2014-2015 serving as a reference point for rates of attacks prior to EU anti-human trafficking and smuggling initiatives. In order to ensure
uniformity of data sets, data was pulled from Europol’s annual Terrorism Situation and Trend Report (TESAT). Data for 2018 has not been released as of May 2019, and will not be included in analysis, although it is worth noting that experts are predicting the number of attacks will be lower in 2018 than in 2017, which saw a spike in terrorist attacks reported. Note that some of the terminology and categorization of the data reported by Europol in the TESAT evolved over the four years observed, with several categories of ideology condensed or recharacterized across the years.

To begin, this chapter presents a breakdown of the terrorist attacks from 2014 to 2017, followed by analysis of the key trends. Figure 51 provides a full list of terrorist attacks committed by refugees in the 2014-2017 period, per the Heritage Foundation report.

2014

In 2014, 201 terrorist attacks overall were reported inside the EU, of which four were attributed to jihadist extremism. Only one terrorist attack was attributed to a refugee in 2014. Osamah M. was arrested in March 2014 under suspicion of attempting to establish an ISIS attack cell in Switzerland. Osamah M. – dubbed “the Wheelchair Bomber” – was allegedly affiliated with terrorist organizations since 2004 and posed as a victim of the Syrian civil war to apply for asylum in 2012, which he obtained. Osamah was communicating with three other individuals online, and prosecutors allege the group was attempting to construct a bomb. Osamah was convicted of cooperation with a terrorist group in 2016.

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The TESAT noted that there was no evidence that FTOs deliberately used the flow of refugees to enter EU undetected in 2014. While some identified attackers entered the EU as refugees, they were processed and adjudicated through official protocols. The TESAT posits that the primary threat from jihadist terrorism is based in diaspora populations vulnerable to radicalization. Additionally, the TESAT noted that returning foreign fighters were largely using the same routes they had used to leave the EU and were mostly unassisted and undisguised in their travel except for the infrequent use of false documentation.\textsuperscript{96}

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{Attacks_Sorted_by_Country_2014.png}
\caption{Attacks Sorted by Country, 2014.}
\end{figure}

According to the TESAT, all 109 reported attacks in the UK occurred in Northern Ireland and were all attributed to “unspecified” ideology. The remaining seven “unspecified” attacks occurred in Italy (5), Greece (1), and France (1). It is unclear why the UK chose to report what is likely separatist violence as “unspecified.”

2015

In 2015, 211 terrorist attacks were reported by member states, of which seventeen were attributed to jihadist extremism, and four of which were alleged to be instigated by refugee or asylum seekers. The TESAT notes an uptick in violence inspired by the refugee crisis. Rather than being a result of ISIS secreting in fighters, the violence was linked to both right wing and left wing extremist activity protesting migration policies. In particular, member states reported the right wing extremists attempting to manipulate public sentiment regarding the crisis to further their own political objectives.

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97 Ibid., 8
98 Ibid., 40
The German Interior Ministry reported 800 attacks against buildings used to house refugees. A similar reaction from left wing extremists was noted regarding the establishment of refugee centers. In addition to violence occurred in protesting the centers, left wing extremists were also tied to violence against right-wing extremist protests of the refugee centers: “activists reacted, at times violently, to EU migration policies; on the other [hand], they opposed anti-immigration events organised by far-right groups, for example, by seeking to engage right-wing extremists in violent clashes during counterdemonstrations.”

The November 2015 Paris attacks are the most infamous of the 2015 refugee-attributed attacks. One hundred and thirty people were killed, and another 368 injured in a series of coordinated attacks across Paris. Of the ten attackers involved, eight were EU citizens, predominantly French and Belgian. Two of the attackers remain unidentified, but were linked to individuals who claimed to be Syrian refugees. The EU citizens used the migrant routes to enter and exit the EU unnoticed despite being on terrorist watchlists, traveling the Balkan route, but as citizens, they did not lay claim to any refugee or asylum status. The unidentified attackers, who detonated suicide bombs, were alleged to be of Iraqi descent, according to the claim posted by ISIS at the time of the attack. Per fingerprint records, both bombers had entered the EU from Turkey via Leros and were registered with the proper refugee authorities.

The failed Thalys train attack in August 2015 is, in my opinion, erroneously attributed to a refugee or asylum seeker by the Heritage Foundation report. Ayoub el-Khazzani, variant el-Qazzani, is the son of a Moroccan immigrant. His father

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was granted legal status in Spain in 2005 (NFI), and el-Khazzani had been a resident in the EU since 2007. While el-Khazzani had allegedly traveled to Syria in the months prior to the attack, his status as a resident for seven years does not fit the profile of a refugee or asylum seeker, nor is there any indication he claimed any such status upon his return to the EU.

Figure 29. Attacks Sorted by Country, 2015.
Once more, all 103 attacks reported by the UK were “unspecified.” Unlike the 2015 TESAT, there is no explanation indicating the attacks all occurred in Northern Ireland. However, it is likely that the separatist violence reported in the previous year carried into 2015 as well.

2016

In 2016, the TESAT identified 142 overall terrorist attacks, of which 13 were linked to jihadist extremism. The jihadist extremism attacks occurred in France (5), Belgium (4), and Germany (4). Despite being one of the lowest reported number of attacks, the attacks accounted for the most casualties (374 out of 379) and fatalities (135 out of 142). Riding the shock caused by the 2015 Paris attacks, the 2017 TESAT is the first report to claim definitively that ISIS exploited the flow of refugees and migrants to send individuals to Europe to conduct attacks. At the same time, the report notes that refugees and migrants in the EU are facing increased violence from both right- and left-
wing extremists. Per the report, an average of ten attacks a day were carried out on refugees in Germany in 2016 according to open source reports of statements made by the German Interior Ministry.

The report highlights several cases of alleged asylum seekers and refugees who were suspected of being ISIS sympathizers, including a case in Switzerland and additional cases in the Netherlands. Member states in general more freely reported contact with refugees with previous jihadi ties, though these individuals were not necessarily involved in planning attacks. The perpetrator of the 2016 Berlin truck attack, Anis Amri, was a refugee from Tunisia who entered Italy illegally in 2011. He was due to be deported from Germany prior to the attack, as his asylum application had been rejected. Amri was known to authorities after multiple run ins with law enforcement over non-terrorism related offenses. In July 2016, a 17-year-old Afghan refugee attacked passengers onboard a train to Wurzburg, Germany. According to officials, the suspect arrived in the EU as an unaccompanied minor in 2015. ISIS later released a video in which the suspect, who was shot by officers immediately following the attack, pledged allegiance to al-Baghdadi. Despite these affiliations, the report concludes with the note that there is no evidence FTOs systemically use the flow of refugees to enter the EU unnoticed.

In addition to crimes linked to individuals claiming refugee status, anarchist groups continued to participate in violent protests tied to the refugee crisis, and


\[\text{Ibid., 23.}\]

\[\text{Ibid., 61.}\]
right-wing groups continued embracing anti-migrant rhetoric and were tied to an increase in violence against refugee centers.\textsuperscript{103}

The overall number of terrorist attacks, including those linked to jihadist extremism, fell in 2016 according to the TESAT. The terrorist attacks linked to jihadist extremism were noted to use increasingly low-tech devices and methods. Terrorist attacks were noted to feed one another in that right-wing and left-wing attacks on refugee centers and Muslim population centers increased the vulnerability of marginalized individuals to be influenced by jihadist extremism propaganda, leading to radicalization and potentially an attack. The TESAT noted no link between attacks conducted in 2016 and individuals who were smuggled or trafficked into the EU across all ideologies.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{attacks_sorted_by_country_2016.png}
\caption{Figure 31. Attacks Sorted by Country, 2016.}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{103} Ibid., 43.
In 2017, EU member states reported 205 terrorist attacks overall, a majority of which (137) were routed in ethno-nationalist or separatist movements. In the same year, 33 attacks were reportedly jihadist extremist inspired, and nine were conducted by either a refugee or asylum seeker. The TESAT noted that while there has been an increase in jihadist attacks, there is a decrease in the sophistication of the attacks. Nonetheless, jihadist attacks account for more deaths and casualties than other terrorist attacks. This is the first TESAT to note that the majority of jihadist attacks were committed by home-grown extremists, and that most attackers had no foreign travel or, in some cases, direct links to any FTO. This is mirrored in the Heritage Foundation data, which indicates a positive trend in the number of attackers radicalized within the EU as opposed to abroad. Also noted by the TESAT is that the number of individuals traveling
to conflict zones dropped in 2017, and there was a corresponding drop in the number of returnees.

Nine attacks were attributed to refugees or asylum seekers in 2017, a drop from the eighteen estimated in 2016. Rakhmat Akilov, a rejected asylum seeker from Uzbekistan, carried out the Stockholm bus attack in the name of ISIS in April. Rachid Redouane, one of three individuals involved in the London Bridge attack, was a failed asylum seeker who had applied in 2009. However, it should be noted that by 2017, Redouane had been living and working the EU for nearly ten years, had married an Irish woman in 2012, and had held multiple jobs in the EU. The Hamburg knife attacker, Ahmed Alhaw, was an asylum seeker from Palestine. He was due to be deported prior to the attack. Alhaw had no concrete ties to ISIS or any other FTO outside of watching ISIS propaganda material online. He was known as an Islamist, but not linked to any jihadist activity. Andy Star and Farhad Salah plotted to steer a driverless car with a car bomb at an undisclosed target. Salah had applied for asylum in the UK in 2014, but his application had not been ruled on at the time of his arrest. Similarly, Ahmad Hassan, who conducted the Parsons Green train bombing, applied for asylum status in 2015. Despite admitting to ISIS ties and anti-West sentiments, Hassan’s final ruling was still pending at the time of the attack.104

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Identified Trends

Several trends are apparent in these data. First, the number of member states affected by terrorist attacks in the EU has risen every year, from six in 2014 up to
nine by 2017. Second, an alarming majority of attacks are reported by the UK every year in comparison to other member states. Third, jihadist extremism accounts for only a small percentage of terrorist attacks reported in the EU.

From 2014 to 2015, the number of total terrorist attacks and attacks attributed to jihadist extremism increased, while attacks attributed to refugees decreased. 2015 to 2016, however, saw a decrease in both overall violence and jihadist extremist attacks. At the same time, the number of attacks attributed to refugees and asylum seekers increased by over 400%. From 2016 to 2017, total number of attacks and the number of attacks attributed to jihadist extremism increased while attacks attributed to refugees decreased once more. While total attacks and jihadist extremism attacks have generally increased and decreased in tandem, the rates are not equal. In 2014, jihadist extremism accounted for only 2% of reported terrorist attacks, increasing to 8% in 2015, 9% in 2016, and finally jumping to 16% in 2017. It is possible that social attitudes towards particular ideologies might have shifted over the course of four years, making it more likely for member states to report certain attacks as terrorist attacks or inspired by jihadist extremism where previously they might have attributed the attack to different motivations or not considered it a terrorist attack at all. This partially accounts for the rise in jihadist extremist attacks, though it is doubtful that the shift is attributable to any single factor.

Regarding anti-smuggling measures, from 2016-2017, the years in which the measures adopted in 2015 may have arguably had an effect, the number of terrorist attacks in the EU increased, including the number of attacks attributed to jihadists. However, the number of attacks attributed to refugees and asylum seekers dropped over this period. It can be argued, then, that anti-smuggling measures may have had an impact
on, but did not effectively address, these issues. The adaptability of terrorist networks may be one cause of this failure; the move towards lone wolf attacks and online radicalization circumvents the contribution anti-smuggling initiatives might provide in preventing HPAs.

There does not appear to be a relationship between overall terrorist attacks and the number of reported refugees or asylum applicants. Following the sharp peak of refugees in 2015, new arrivals fell off sharply. The continued downward trend in refugees arriving is not mirrored in a corresponding drop in violence.

![Figure 35. Comparison of Total Number of Terrorist Attacks Reported to Europol, 2014-2017](image)

Additionally, in studying the profiles and stories of the attackers themselves, a point of failure in security responses appears to be in the adjudication of asylum application and the enforcement of immigration rulings. A number of refugees and asylum seekers alleged to have conducted attacks were not “illegally present” – they were waiting official rulings on asylum applications, and had been waiting on results in some cases for years. Some individuals had been rejected, but the asylum process lacked
a mechanism to ensure those individuals who were rejected were subsequently deported in a timely manner.

The countries where attacks occurred have a broad range of national refugee policies. Germany, the country with the most attacks committed by refugees or asylum seekers by far, embraces an open-door policy. It also took in the highest number of refugees and asylum seekers compared to other countries in the EU, although as a percentage of total population it ranks fourth. France, with the next highest number of attacks by refugees or asylum seekers, took in the second highest amount of refugees. However, the next two countries ranked in terms of number of attacks committed by refugees or asylum seekers – Belgium (3), and UK (3) – do not rank in the top five of countries in terms of number of refugees and asylum applicants. Further, countries such as Luxembourg, Greece, and Malta took in a high proportion of refugees yet experienced no terrorist attacks. Luxembourg as a wealthy state is able to provide robust social
benefits to refugees, but given that both Greece and Malta are economically weak states with poor benefits for refugees, it is unlikely social programs alone are a factor. Greece and Malta are also both entry states/transit states for refugees entering the EU. Despite processing a high volume of refugees (separate from the rate of refugees who choose to stay and apply for asylum) and having little in the way of integration programs, Malta and Greece experienced no HPAs from refugees. Further, Italy, another entry point, only experienced one attack.

Table 2. Table of All Attacks Attributed to Refugees or Asylum Seekers from 2014-2017.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Location of Attack</th>
<th>Attack Details</th>
<th>Perpetrators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>Osamah M. was putting together a cell of ISIS supporters to carry out attacks in Switzerland.</td>
<td>Osamah M.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>El-Khazzani opened fire on Thalys train traveling between Amsterdam and Paris. He was subdued by fellow passengers. Bilal C. is believed to have provided him advice on where to travel and how to acquire weapons</td>
<td>Ayoub el-Khazzani, Bilal C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>Paris Attacks: In November 2015, ISIS sympathizers conducted a series of co-ordinated attacks throughout Paris: 1) Suicide bombers attacked outside of a soccer stadium; 2) mass shootings and bombings at cafes and restaurants; and 3) a mass shootings at the Bataclan theater</td>
<td>Ahmad Alkhalid, Kamal Agoujil, Youcef Bouimaiz, Muhamad Usman, Adel Haddadi, Redouane S., Mohammad al-Mahmod</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>Brussels shootout: after the Paris attack, three attacks managed to evade authorities and established a new cell in Belgium. When Belgian police went to investigate a flat, the three suspects ambushed the officers and a shootout commenced.</td>
<td>Sofien Ayari, Salah Abdeslam, Mohamed Belkaid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>“Paris Plus:” Tabaouni was arrested in the wake of the 2015</td>
<td>Abid Tabaouni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
<td>Attacker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>According to court documents, Tabaouni had assembled a cell of ISIS-supporters and was preparing to conduct more HPAs.</td>
<td>Tarek Belgacem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>On 7 January 2016, Tarek Belgacem attacked police officers in Paris. He was shot by police when he failed to obey an order to stop.</td>
<td>Tarek Belgacem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>According to court documents, Farid A. had assembled an attack cell in Germany and pledged allegiance to ISIS. They were preparing to conduct an imminent attack.</td>
<td>Farid A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>(The Heritage Foundation provided no additional data for this entry, including the name of the attacker)</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Shaas al-Mohammad sent ISIS information about tourist groups visiting Berlin's Brandenburg Gate, Alexanderplatz and the Reichstag parliament building, with the intention of conducting an attack on one of the tourist groups.</td>
<td>Shaas al-Mohammad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>German police arrested Arahman on suspicion of planning an ISIS-inspired suicide bomb and shooting attack.</td>
<td>Abd Arahman A.K.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>The 2016 Dusseldorf terrorism plot was to be a series of bombings and shootings similar to the 2015 Paris attacks.</td>
<td>Mahood B., Hamza C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>On 18 July 2016, attacked people with a knife on a train near Wurzburg, Germany.</td>
<td>Riaz Khan Ahmadzai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>On 24 July 2016, a suicide bomber detonated a device outside a wine bar in Ansbach, Germany.</td>
<td>Mohammad Daleel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>(The Heritage Foundation provided no additional data for this entry, including the name of the attacker)</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>(The Heritage Foundation provided no additional data for this entry, including the name of the attacker)</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
<td>Attacker(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Mohamed J. planned a bombing in Germany under the guidance of an Israel-based ISIS member.</td>
<td>Mohamed J.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Mohamed Anbarji set up an ISIS sleeper cell in Lower Saxony, Germany</td>
<td>Mohamed Anbarji, Ibrahim Mallaeh, Mahir al-Hmidi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Jaber al-Bakr planned a bomb attack on the Berlin airport. Al-Bakr had been granted asylum in the formal process.</td>
<td>Jaber al-Bakr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>(The Heritage Foundation provided no additional data for this entry, including the name of the attacker)</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>(The Heritage Foundation provided no additional data for this entry, including the name of the attacker)</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>On 19 December 2016, Anis Amri deliberately drove a truck into the Christmas market in Berlin.</td>
<td>Anis Amri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>Munir Hassan Mohammed plotted to conduct a lone wolf attack in the UK</td>
<td>Munir Hassan Mohammed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>A 24-year-old Moroccan immigrant was arrested on the day of a planned attack on the Russian embassy in Berlin. The suspect was already known to authorities prior to the planned attack.</td>
<td>Mohammed B.H.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>On 7 April 2017, drove a truck into a department store front in Stockholm. The driver, Rakhmat Akilov, had applied for residency in Sweden, but was denied. After losing his job, he hid from police out of fear of deportation.</td>
<td>Rakhmat Akilov</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>(The Heritage Foundation provided no additional data for this entry, including the name of the attacker)</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Ahmed A. attacked individuals in</td>
<td>Ahmed A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
<td>Suspect Name(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>On 18 August 2017, ten people were stabbed in Turku, Finland. The attacker, Abderrahman Bouanane, had applied for refugee status and been rejected.</td>
<td>Abderrahman Bouanane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>On 28 July 2017, Ahmed Alhaw, an asylum seeker from Palestine, attacked several people at a Hamburg supermarket.</td>
<td>Haashi Ayaanle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>Ahmed Hassan built a bomb and left it on a train. It partially detonated at Parsons Green.</td>
<td>Ahmed Hassan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>The 19-year-old refugee was arrested for building a bomb. Alahmad had applied for refugee status in 2015.</td>
<td>Yamen Alahmad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>Andy Star and Farhad Salah plotted to steer a driverless car with a car bomb at an undisclosed target. Salah had applied for asylum in the UK in 2014, but his application had not been ruled on at the time of his arrest.</td>
<td>Andy Star, Farhad Salah</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusion

Human trafficking and smuggling play a role in terrorist financing and HPAs. However, the available evidence does not bear out the assertion that human trafficking and smuggling pose a significant counterterrorism threat in themselves. In the context of the refugee crisis within the EU, the point of failure occurred in processing and vetting procedures. There can be an argument made that the increase of attacks committed by refugees inside the EU in 2016 is due to the overall increase in refugees entering the EU in 2015, but smuggling played no part in enabling these attacks. Attacks were conducted by individuals with legal status within the EU, or individuals who had contact with state officials and avoided deportation procedures. No attack was conducted by an FTO operative who used trafficking or smuggling to circumvent state and EU tracking and remain “under the radar.” A number of attack perpetrators or plotters were known to security forces beforehand, but intelligence gaps hindered their identification. The rising threat from low-cost, extremely decentralized lone-wolf style attacks places a greater importance on early detection of radicalization and combatting online propaganda rather than targeting or limiting the flow of persons into the EU. There is no significant link between anti-smuggling and anti-trafficking initiatives and the occurrence rate of HPAs. FTOs did not, over the four year period observed, rely on smuggling to gain access to the EU in order to conduct an attack. This should not be taken as an attempt to say funding for anti-human trafficking initiatives should be limited. However, where resources are limited, state security funds should focus on more traditional avenues of counterterrorism efforts, and supplement anti-trafficking and anti-smuggling initiatives as lower-priority initiatives.
The refugee crisis has not ended. Ongoing war in Syria, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iraq mean refugees will be seeking safe havens. Inevitably, many of these individuals will travel towards Europe. The humanitarian need for a response to the plight of the refugees is undeniable, though what form aid takes is a matter for continued debate, and will likely never be settled to the complete satisfaction of any parties involved. However, trafficking and smuggling should be addressed as a law enforcement and humanitarian issue, not a matter for national security.