

Acknowledgements

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Preliminary Remarks

The following chapters are based on the work of a research team comprised of doctoral and postdoctoral researchers and research directors from three Belgian universities – including Université libre de Bruxelles (leader), Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (partner), and Université de Liège (partner), and national *rapporteurs* from five European countries – including Germany, Sweden, Hungary, Greece, and Italy. Belgium represented the main case study and the other national case studies were chosen based on preliminary research on the policy system, public opinion, and geopolitical position. The selection focused on: relative tolerance towards asylum seekers and refugees in the policy system/public opinion (Germany and Sweden); strong opposition (Hungary); geopolitical position as a main arrival/transit country (Greece and Italy).

The Belgian team conducted field research from February 2017 to February 2019. Research activities included a European cross-national comparative analysis of public opinion and qualitative analysis of mobilization in all the involved countries. In Belgium, further research was undertaken into practices and discourses concerning asylum seekers and refugees, as well as their point of view about the reception system and its actors. The Belgian research team are the book editors, the authors of Chapter I, and the authors of Chapter VII concerning the Belgian case.

Chapter II to Chapter VI have been authored by the national rapporteurs and concern the five European countries mentioned above. National rapporteurs were given specific templates in order to produce their chapter/report. The templates included three main sections. Section 1 focused on migration flows before, during, and after the 2015 reception crisis, relevant political environment, and relevant pre-existing citizens' initiatives. Section 2 focused on relevant citizens' initiatives that emerged from the reception crisis of 2015 (focusing on actors, networks, practices and

their relationships with the political and NGO environment). Section 3 focused on the consequences of mobilization on the political environment, on the politicization of the migration/refugee issue, and on the reaction of formal political parties.

INTRODUCTION

The Refugee Reception Crisis in Europe Polarized Opinions and Mobilizations

Andrea REA, Marco MARTINIELLO, Alessandro MAZZOLA
and Bart MEULEMAN

The Long Summer of Migration

The beginning of 2015 saw the arrival of significant numbers of migrants via the deadliest migration route, according to the International Organization for Migration's own data:¹ the Mediterranean Sea. On 20 April 2015, 800 people drowned in the Mediterranean in Libyan waters, not far from the Italian island of Lampedusa. Rescue workers managed to save only a few people. After this tragedy, Antonio Guterres, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, demanded that European leaders mobilize more search-and-rescue operations to help save people at sea.² The Italian government, however, complained of a lack of solidarity among the other member states of the European Union regarding the urgency of the rescue and relief operations required in the Mediterranean. On 13 May of that year, the EU Commission published its European Agenda on Migration, which notably included the proposal to relocate people arriving via the Mediterranean route from frontline member states to states in the interior of Europe, in order to better distribute the reception and processing efforts for newly arrived migrants. The proposal, contested by the countries of the Visegrád Group (Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary), aimed to respond to the repeated requests from Greece and Italy to be relieved of the burden of having to process and register all the asylum applications for migrants arriving via the Mediterranean under the Dublin III Regulation, which stipulates that the country

¹ Source: Missing Migrants Project: 1,456 dead in 2014; 3,328 in 2015; 4,481 in 2016; 3,552 in 2017, <https://missingmigrants.iom.int>, accessed July 5, 2019.

² *The Times*, "U.N. Refugee Chief: Europe's Response to Mediterranean Crisis Is 'Lagging Far Behind'", 2015, <https://time.com/3833463/unhcr-antonio-guterres-migration-refugees-europe>, accessed July 5, 2019.

that constitutes first port of entry into Europe is responsible for assessing applications for asylum.

During the summer of 2015, the so-called “long summer of migration” (Hess et al. 2016), hundreds of thousands of people fleeing war zones, mainly from Syria, took to the Balkan route (a land route that passes through Turkey, Greece and the Balkans), giving rise to one of the largest movements of migrants in Europe in recent years. The most remarkable feature of this movement was not only the incredible numbers of people who were on the move, but the media coverage it received. All media outlets reported on it extensively, while journalists and researchers (Crawley et al. 2017) themselves joined the exodus to better understand why, and more importantly, how people move. In addition, there was the contribution of migrants themselves to their own visibility. Using smartphones, people documented their own exodus, producing photos, videos and texts and disseminating them through social media. The European public were given live access to this mass movement of people via all media platforms, particularly social media (d’Haenens, Joiris and Heinderyckx 2019).

On 28 August 2015, the Austrian authorities discovered the bodies of seventy-one asylum seekers in a refrigerated truck abandoned near the Hungarian border. UNHCR spokesperson Melissa Fleming denounced the lack of cooperation between the European countries in dealing with this mass movement of people through their territory.³ She also denounced the new business of people smuggling. Via the Balkan route, large numbers of people arrived in Hungary, the first external border of the EU, where they were herded and confined to camps, becoming stranded there as a result of the application of the Dublin III Regulation.

On 29 August, the asylum seekers stranded at Budapest’s Keleti train station decided to set off on a so-called “march of hope” towards the Austrian border in hopes of being able to cross into Austria, and then later into Germany. On 31 August, during a visit to a refugee reception centre in Dresden, Angela Merkel announced, “*Wir haben so vieles geschafft – wir schaffen das*” (We have managed so many things – we will also manage this situation), a declaration that marked the beginning of a shift in German policy regarding the situation. Then, on 2 September, the publication and viral circulation of a photo of the corpse of Aylan Kurdi, a Syrian child washed up on a Turkish beach, provoked an outpouring of “pity at a distance” (Boltanski 1993) in European public opinion towards the arrival of migrants. On 5 September, Angela Merkel decided to suspend the application of the Dublin III Regulation (Blume et al. 2016) and buses and trains were chartered to shuttle asylum seekers from Hungary to Germany, passing through Austria. Asylum seekers were welcomed at German and Austrian stations with applause, gifts and an outpouring of offers of practical help (Blume et al. 2016; Karakayali and Kleist 2016). For the first time since 1989, Europe’s borders opened up, though only partially, as it was only for Syrians that terrestrial border crossings were facilitated.

³ M. FLEMING (2015), Bodies found dead in a truck near border, while asylum seekers flow into Hungary, *UNHCR*, <https://www.unhcr.org/news/latest/2015/8/55e06ff46/bodies-found-dead-truck-near-border-asylum-seekers-flow-hungary.html>, accessed July 5, 2019.

The mediatization and politicization of this massive movement of people contributed to forming reactions to it, both among the European public and within the EU governments, whether the reaction was an openness to the migrants' need for protection or an outright refusal to help. Germany's policy of openness led to a shift in the structure of political opportunities (McAdam 2008; Tarrow 2005), and this shift in political direction in turn pushed asylum seekers to change their own migration routes, preferring to head towards Germany or Sweden (Crawley et al. 2017). The Balkan countries, particularly within the Schengen zone, as well as Austria and Hungary, became only transit countries. Angela Merkel's political attitude also served to authorize the expansion of the Refugees Welcome movement, whose culture of hospitality spread through several European countries (Della Porta 2018; Pries and Cantat 2019).

However, that openness and hospitality, demonstrated in particular in Germany, widened and accentuated the stark differences in attitude among the various European states, as other countries adopted a stance of hostility and rejection towards the asylum seekers. The Hungarian prime minister, Viktor Orbán, an opponent of the German policy, decided to close Hungary's border with Serbia on 15 September 2015. Europe seemed sharply split between the "welcome culture" (Funk 2016) on the one hand, which was spearheaded by Germany and which initially also included Austria and Sweden, and a complete refusal to receive any asylum seekers on the other, an attitude most strongly observed in the Visegrád Group countries, who were calling for a total closure of borders.⁴

The long summer of migration basically instigated a European political crisis. While certain countries demonstrated openness to receiving asylum seekers, others voiced their strong opposition to it, going so far as to erect fences along their external borders, most notably the border between Hungary and Croatia, and that between Bulgaria and Turkey. Schengen border controls were largely re-established and fences were built, even within the European Union itself. In October 2015, Hungary completed the construction of a fence along its border with Croatia; in November 2015, Austria began the construction of a fence along its Slovenian border, while Slovenia built a razor-wire fence along its Croatian border. This practice of militarizing borders (Ritane 2009; Bigo 2003) was intended to prohibit people from crossing the border and was also a way to prevent them from being able to apply for asylum in any European country (Crépeau 1995).

The receptiveness in public opinion towards asylum seekers changed direction abruptly in November 2015 with the terrorist attacks in Paris, and shifted even further with the series of sexual assaults perpetrated in Cologne, Germany during the New Year celebrations at the end of that same year. These two events together gave rise to an increasing fear of the newcomers, whose Muslim identities were linked to the menacing spectres of terrorists and rapists. The closure of the borders along the entire Balkan route definitively trapped asylum seekers in Greece, where transit camps were

⁴ *The Economist*, "Hungary says a border fence with Romania may be next", 2015, <https://www.economist.com/europe/2015/09/16/hungary-says-a-border-fence-with-romania-may-be-next>, accessed July 5, 2019.

set up, for example in Idomeni, before these, too, were dismantled. Finally, the accord signed on 18 March 2016 between Turkey and the EU blocked, once and for all, the mass arrival of asylum seekers.

Who Is a Migrant? Who Is a Refugee?

Alongside the new arrival of large numbers of migrants, numerous debates unfolded in the media and the political arena to determine how best to refer to those who left their countries and travelled to Europe during that summer of 2015.⁵ These debates about proper categorization aimed to establish legitimacy for the reception of asylum seekers, who were mainly coming from Syria. The categorization of “refugee”, especially when referring to a humanitarian reason for leaving one’s country, such as fleeing a war zone (for example, Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq or Sudan), was much more likely to evoke empathy in public opinion (Fassin 2011). Conversely, when the designation of “economic migrant” was applied to those seeking better conditions for their lives, it was viewed less favourably as far as public opinion was concerned. Thus, the category of “refugee” tended to be associated with a “deserving migrant”, while “economic migrant” was more often thought of as an “irregular” and “undeserving” migrant.

The stakes of categorization are strictly political, in the sense that the choice between one term and the other not only determines people’s access to certain rights but also affects the moral dimension of migration policy (Carens 2013). The category of migrant is more a question of sociology, geography or political science than one of law. Following the IOM’s definition, migrant is “an umbrella term, not defined under international law, reflecting the common lay understanding of a person who moves away from his or her place of usual residence, whether within a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently, and for a variety of reasons” (IOM). The legal category is that of “foreigner”. In national legislation, foreigners’ identities are categorized according to one of the four major purposes for seeking entry into new territory: economic, familial, humanitarian and study-related. The mobile foreign person is also given an administrative identity, depending on the legislation of the respective state. The identity of the migrant is thus ascriptive. The receiving state possesses both the power and the sovereignty to classify foreigners and thus determine who does and who does not have the right to enter into and stay on its territory. The classification of migrants according to migratory careers (Martiniello and Rea 2014) is always more complex, because according to the subjective experience of the migrants themselves, their reasons for leaving are often due to multiple factors (Anderson 2014; Crawley et al. 2017). It is therefore the implementation of the migration policies of states that determines the usual categories of “economic migrants” versus “refugees”, or “regular migrants” versus “irregular migrants”.

The category of “refugee” refers to the nomenclature applied by international law. The 1951 Convention (1967 Protocol) defines a refugee as any person who has:

⁵ *The Economist*, “Europe’s refugee crisis. Migration creates a deepening gulf between East and West”, 2015, <https://www.economist.com/europe/2015/09/15/migration-creates-a-deepening-gulf-between-east-and-west>, accessed July 5, 2019.

a wellfounded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.⁶

This categorization is given *prima facie* validity by the UNHCR in territories adjacent to war zones, but is subject to investigation in European countries. In this matter, there are four European directives that regulate European asylum policy (Guild 2009). However, the processing of asylum applications is handled by national institutions that do not apply a unified methodology across the various European countries, but which instead employ different processes for different modes of reception and have varying procedures for access to the labour market, access to housing, etc. Since 2004, furthermore, the status of subsidiary protection was added to the European legislation. The protection is given to third country nationals or stateless persons “who do not qualify as refugee[s] but in respect of whom substantial grounds have been shown for believing that the person concerned, if returned to his or her country of origin [...], would face a real risk of suffering serious harm [...]”⁷ The actions of European states, institutions and agencies, in essence, are not independent variables: their actions, taken together, contribute to the creation of migrations (Geddes and Scholten 2016).

With regard to the origins of the people on the move and the main reason for their exodus, it quickly became clear that the category of “refugee” was the most appropriate to describe their situation, and that the political response anticipated from the EU states was one of humanitarian action. Nevertheless, many media outlets, as well as official bodies like Frontex, described the asylum seekers as illegal immigrants. This false qualification was mobilized in order to fuel the political controversy over what stance to adopt towards the migrants. Crossing borders without the proper documents, such as a visa, does not in itself constitute an illegal act if the one crossing is doing so in order to demand asylum (Crépeau 1995). For this reason, in 2006, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe declared a preference for “the term ‘irregular migrant’ to other terms such as ‘illegal migrant’ or ‘migrant without papers’”. This term is more neutral and does not carry, for example, the stigmatization of the term ‘illegal’.”⁸ Several analyses of both media and political discourse in 2015 show

⁶ UNHCR, *Convention and protocol relating to the status of refugees* (Selected Articles), 1951/1967, Article 1 definition of the term “refugee”, <https://www.unhcr.org/4ae57b489.pdf>, accessed September 13, 2019.

⁷ Council Directive 2004/83/EC of 29 April 2004, *on minimum standards for the qualification and status of third country nationals or stateless persons as refugees or as persons who otherwise need international protection and the content of the protection granted*, 2004, L 304/14, Article 2 (e), <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2004:304:0012:0023:EN:PDF>, accessed September 13, 2019.

⁸ Council of Europe, Parliamentary Assembly, Resolution 1509: *Human Rights of Irregular Migrants*.

that this recommendation was not followed in any systemic way (e.g.: Berry et al. 2015).

“Refugee Reception Crisis” Rather than “Refugee Crisis”

In the media and in political debates, and sometimes even in scientific output (Krzyżanowski et al. 2018; d’Haenens et al. 2019; Bets and Collier 2017), the long summer of migration was referred to as a “refugee crisis” or as the “European migrant crisis”. In this book, we (like many others) argue that it was rather and above all a “refugee reception crisis”. The qualification of “refugee crisis” essentially hinges on the abundant use of superlatives, particularly in the press, to describe the “unprecedented human mobility” of 2015. Even experts in the field of refugee studies could not escape making such apocalyptic statements (Bets and Collier 2017). The media witnessed a surge in the use of terminology that elevated these events into the realm of the exceptional, mobilizing the media rhetoric of the “*jamais vu*” [never before seen] (Bourdieu 1997). For instance, the media made repeated claims that Germany would be hosting one million asylum seekers.

The assessment of the extent of this exodus corresponded to the specific agendas of the institutions producing the information: the media on the one hand and international institutions on the other. News outlets competed with one another to capture readers, listeners and viewers with gripping images and powerful numbers. International institutions such as Frontex, UNHCR, IOM and Eurostat all provided different data that kept count of different units and givens. Frontex counted the number of illegal border crossings within the EU; UNHCR the number of migrants and refugees arriving by country; the IOM the numbers of those who died in the Mediterranean; while Eurostat kept track of the number of asylum seekers registered within the EU.

The stakes of this counting of migrants are numerous. The numerical assessment firstly fuels the public perception of these events as either an encroaching menace or a humanitarian disaster. Secondly, it helps provide a better understanding of the extent of the political action taken by both the EU and its individual states. Finally, it highlights the use and misuse of the data by public institutions, the media and scientific researchers. A good example of the political exploitation of statistics are the tallies kept by Frontex. On 13 October 2015, a Frontex tweet declared: “More than 710,000 migrants entered EU in first 9 months of 2015, Greek islands remain most affected.” These figures were significantly higher than those published by the UN. Nando Sigona, Professor at the University of Birmingham, reacted in another tweet, asking whether these figures included double counting, that is, counting more than one border crossing for the same person. Frontex admitted that yes, they had double counted migrants entering the EU without any consideration of the effects that the diffusion of such information might have.¹⁰ Indeed, it is this double counting that was

⁹ IOM, *World Migration Report*, 2015, http://publications.iom.int/system/files/wmr2015_.pdf, accessed July 5, 2019.

¹⁰ N. SIGONA (2016), “Seeing double? How the EU miscounts migrants arriving at its borders”, *The Conversation*, <https://theconversation.com/seeing-double-how-the-eu->

the origin of the dissemination of hugely exaggerated statistics regarding the scope of these events.

Though the exceptional nature of the migration of 2015 cannot be denied, the estimated figures provided by the media and by international institutions contributed to the creation of a moral panic. What unfolded over the course of the summer and into the autumn months of 2015 fits very well with the definition that Cohen (1972) laid out of the stages of a moral panic: something is perceived as a threat to society; the media depicts the threat in simplistic ways; the symbolic representation of the threat provided by the media arouses widespread public concern; and, finally, policymakers respond to the threat by enacting new policies. A study commissioned by the UNHCR analysing the press coverage of this exodus demonstrates the role played by the media in the framing of the long summer of migration. While a preponderance of humanitarian themes appeared in the national press, the data and the way it was mobilized contributed to framing the exodus of 2015 as a threat, especially in countries where the media is extremely polarized, such as in the United Kingdom.¹¹ The definition of the exiles as a threat was reinforced by the usage of categories such as “illegal immigrant”.

According to data published by Eurostat in 2019, the EU received 1.3 million applications for international protection in 2015, and 1.2 million in 2016. After the agreement between the EU and Turkey, the number of asylum seekers dropped drastically in 2017 to around 700,000.¹² Given the profuse claims of the exceptional nature of events, it must be noted that the reception of just over 1 million asylum seekers represents only 0.2 per cent of the entire population of the EU. In this regard, the EU states demonstrated their eurocentrism by refusing to acknowledge the burden that the reception of asylum seekers, particularly Syrians, was having on neighbouring countries. The countries that actually received the highest number of asylum seekers were mainly Turkey (3 million) and Lebanon (1.5 million). In Lebanon, that number represents 25 per cent of the country’s total population. In Europe, the number of asylum seekers received varied widely between the different states. Four states (Germany, Hungary, Sweden and Austria) together received around two thirds of the EU’s total number of asylum applications in 2015. However, if the numbers are tallied in proportion to each country’s total population, the countries that received the most asylum seekers are Hungary, Sweden, Austria, Finland and Germany. Countries with long histories of receiving asylum seekers took in numbers well below the European average, including the Netherlands, France and the United Kingdom.

miscounts-migrants-arriving-at-its-borders-49242, accessed, July 5, 2019.

¹¹ UNHCR, *Press Coverage of the Refugee and Migrant Crisis in the EU: A Content Analysis of Five European Countries*, <https://www.unhcr.org/56bb369c9.pdf>, accessed July 5, 2019.

¹² Eurostat, *Asylum applications (non-EU) in the EU-28 Member States, 2008–2018*, 2019, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Asylum_statistics, accessed September 12, 2019.

A further misuse of statistics led to the repeated characterization of the long summer of migration as “the greatest refugee crisis since the Second World War.”¹³ Here, too, it is necessary to contextualize events in relation to one another. The events of 2015 were often compared to the crises of 1990 and 2000, which saw a major influx of asylum seekers from the Balkans. However, both the population and territory of the European Union evolved throughout the 1990s and 2000s. Most of the comparisons made were to do with the total number of asylum seekers and not to their numbers relative to the total population. Since 1989, the European continent has been confronted with a number of major waves of migration. The fall of the iron curtain re-established the possibility of East–West mobility. The largest-scale migration was that witnessed by Germany at the beginning of the 1990s, with the arrival of 3.2 million *Aussiedlers*, that is, Germans who had been residing in the Eastern Bloc countries. The war in the former Yugoslavia drove the EU to receive numerous asylum seekers in both 1991 and 2000. During the Kosovo war of 1999–2000, the EU received just as many asylum seekers as in 2015 in terms of total numbers, and proportionally more people than in 2015 if taken relative to the total population of Europe.

Why, then, was the reaction so disproportionate? How to explain the formation of such anti-immigration times (Massey and Magaly 2010)? There are at least four factors that can be identified to explain why the current social and political contexts are unfavourable to immigration. Firstly, while Europe has mainly experienced commodified and labour immigration, the reception of asylum seekers implies that the state may be temporarily suspending the selection mechanism of acceptable immigrants as per the “guest worker” model. Secondly, the sudden and mass arrival of so many asylum seekers, as in 2015, 2000 and 1991, introduces a disruption of the regular arrival of new migrants (those who come for family reunification purposes, as workers, students or asylum seekers) and increases the overall visibility of migration, which then attracts the hostility of far-right parties. Thirdly, the increased visibility of migration is also a consequence of the policy of closing the borders of the EU and the construction of the irregularization of migration (Jansen et al. 2016), that is, the construction of “Fortress Europe”. The increase in “remote control” measures (Zolberg 2006; Bigo 1996; Guiraudon 2002) that seek to control access to new territories even before travellers have left their countries of origin means that migrants are relying more frequently on smugglers and the migration industry (Gammeltoft-Hansen and Nyberg Sørensen 2011) and taking routes that are more and more dangerous, which also consequently makes them more and more visible. Fourthly, public opinion is becoming increasingly unwelcoming of migrants or any victims of war and persecution. To all of these we can add the five conditions of European discontent in 2015 identified by Lucassen (2018) following a historical perspective: the discomfort with the integration of migrants coming from North Africa and Turkey (1970s), the growth of social inequality (1980s), the fear of Islam (1990s), the rise of the radical right (2000s) and Islamist terrorism (2000s).

¹³ *The Independent*, “We are now facing the greatest refugee crisis since WWII”, 30 July 2015, <https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/comment/mary-creagh-we-face-the-greatest-refugee-crisis-since-wwii-10428251.html>, accessed July 5, 2019.

Finally, the long summer of migration can be qualified as mainly a crisis of refugee reception in Europe or even a crisis of European solidarity because of the lack of agreement on how to distribute the task of handling the migration. The EU was incapable of proposing any coherent and convergent policy to manage it. In addition, the two main mechanisms of immigration and mobility policy, the Schengen accords and the Dublin III Convention, were suspended. Contrary to what happened in 2000 with the war in the former Yugoslavia, the EU did not trigger the Temporary Protection Directive.¹⁴ To find a way out of the crisis, the European Commission proposed, on the one hand, a hotspot approach whereby certain locations at the external borders (mainly in Greece and Italy) would be responsible for processing requests for asylum, and on the other, a resettlement system for refugees arriving in Europe shared between member states on the basis of objective criteria (economic power, demographics, rates of unemployment, number of refugees already received, etc.). Given the many political differences within the EU, the plan decided upon in July and September 2015 to resettle 160,000 people over the course of two years was planned to proceed on a voluntary basis. Finally, to put an end to the long summer of migration, the EU signed an agreement with Turkey on 18 March 2016, establishing the right to select which asylum seekers would be granted entry. The agreement stipulated that asylum seekers arriving in Greece by their own means be returned to Turkey in return for a one-to-one resettlement exchange of refugees present in the country. This agreement, based on the principle of outsourcing migration control, led to a significant decrease in asylum applications in Europe after May 2016.

Attitudes Towards Migrants and Refugees: Polarized Opinions

Since the beginning of the 2000s, the problematization of international migration and the reinforcement of EU external borders, in the context of the global financial crisis, have increased the polarization between anti-immigration and pro-immigration attitudes and opinions in Europe (Lahav, 2004). According to DiMaggio et al. (1996), public opinion polarization includes two features: dispersion and bimodality. “Public opinion on an issue can be characterized as polarized to the extent that opinions are diverse” (DiMaggio et al., 1996: 694). However, diversity of opinions is not enough to identify polarization, as it needs to be also characterized by bimodality: “public opinion is also polarized insofar as people with different positions on an issue cluster into separate camps, with locations between the two modal positions sparsely occupied” (DiMaggio et al., 1996: 694).

In a study entitled *How the World Views Migration*, carried out by Gallup (Esipova et al. 2015) at the behest of the International Organization for Migration, research revealed that across the regions of the world – with the notable exception of Europe – people tended to want levels of immigration in their countries to either remain the same or increase from present levels. European citizens had the most

¹⁴ Council Directive 2001/55/EC of 20 July 2001 on minimum standards for giving temporary protection in the event of a mass influx of displaced persons and on measures promoting a balance of efforts between member states in receiving such persons and bearing the consequences thereof (heretofore known as the Temporary Protection Directive).

negative attitudes towards immigration, with 52 per cent of those surveyed saying that they thought immigration levels should decrease. Nevertheless, opinions, even within Europe, were mixed. The regions that wished to see lower immigration rates were Southern Europe (58 per cent), and Eastern and Northern Europe (56 per cent). Citizens of Greece (84 per cent) and Italy (76 per cent) showed the greatest desire to see immigration levels decrease; they were also the countries that were most confronted with the reception of newcomers. Citizens of the UK (Northern Europe) also polled as hostile to rising immigration rates (69 per cent). People in Western Europe (including France, Germany and Benelux) were more willing to accept the current rate of immigration, at 45 per cent, while 36 per cent wanted to see it decrease.

The inaccurate perception of the actual numbers of migrants is one of the reasons behind negative public opinion. As reported in the IOM's 2011 *World Migration Report*, in a study of eight migrant-receiving countries, researchers (Transatlantic Trends 2010: 6) found that respondents were inclined to significantly overestimate the size of the migrant population. Surveys showed that in the United States the public believed that immigrants made up 39 per cent of the population in 2010, far from the actual 14 per cent they represent. The same distortion of perception versus reality was found in a number of European countries as well: in France, 34 per cent versus 8 per cent; in Italy, 25 per cent versus 7 per cent; in the Netherlands, 26 per cent versus 11 per cent; and in Germany, 24 per cent versus 13 per cent. Gorodzeisky and Semyonov (2019) showed that overestimating the numbers of migrants had a negative impact on people's attitudes towards migrants and also heightened their concerns about immigration.

Research on public opinion reveals that anti-immigrant sentiment has increased throughout Europe over the last three decades (Semyonov et al. 2006; Meuleman et al. 2009). The European Commission's Eurobarometer 84 survey, published in November 2015, indicated that immigration, for the first time, had become the number one concern for Europeans (58 per cent). Negative perceptions towards non-European immigrants were most pronounced in Slovakia (86 per cent), Latvia (86 per cent), Hungary (82 per cent), the Czech Republic (81 per cent) and Estonia (81 per cent). Conversely, those countries that had the most positive perceptions of non-EU immigrants were Sweden (70 per cent), Spain (53 per cent) and Ireland (49 per cent). Eurobarometer 85 (2016) revealed that immigration was still the issue that concerned Europeans most, ahead of terrorism and the economic situation.

In the literature, some scholars have shown that individual factors are the most important when it comes to explaining people's attitudes – negative or positive – towards migrants. Multiple studies (Kleemans and Klugman 2009; Espipova et al. 2015; De Coninck et al. 2018) reveal that those with the lowest education levels, the lowest incomes, the highest perceptions of deprivation and highest levels of unemployment were those who tended to demonstrate more negative attitudes towards migrants. However, identifying the dependent variables in the creation of negative attitudes is not enough to understand how these variables work. The group conflict theory (Blumer 1958; Blalock 1967) framework taken up by Van Hootehem and Meuleman in Chapter I of this book provides an oft-substantiated claim (Quillian 1995; Meuleman et al. 2009). This theory holds that intergroup competition is the

foundation of the construction of negative perception among ingroups, who feel threatened by outgroups – such as immigrants and ethnic minorities. Competition for goods, such as work or housing, leads native groups who are at the same economic level as new migrants to develop more negative attitudes towards the newcomers. For example, countries with higher rates of unemployment generally demonstrate more marked hostility towards immigration. If competition for jobs is one source of threat, the endangering of the welfare state is another. The Scandinavian countries with the most powerful welfare states (before they began deteriorating over the last two decades) witnessed the development of a welfare chauvinism (Andersen and Bjørklund 1990). Citizens saw new migrants as jeopardizing the welfare state by abusing it (Van Der Waal et al. 2010; Reeskens 2012). For this reason, people who had traditionally voted left began voting for far-right parties (Kietchell 1997) whose political agendas turned immigrants into the “new undeserving poor” of Western societies (Bommes and Geddes 2000). However, a comparison of the data collected by the European Social Survey in 2008–9 to that of 2016–17 (Heizmann et al. 2018) shows that welfare chauvinism did not increase after the long summer of migration.

In Chapter I of this book, Van Hootegeem and Meuleman analyse the evolution of European perceptions towards immigrants since the beginning of the 2000s, demonstrating a relative stability of perceptions over time. The economic crisis of 2008–9 and the 2015 refugee reception crisis did not create an overall trend towards a more negative climate of public opinion regarding immigration, asylum seekers and refugees. Still, their research confirms the existence of major national disparities in Europe, with a striking difference observed between the countries of Western and Northern Europe on one side, and the countries of Eastern Europe on the other. Since 2012, Eastern Europe has shown the most significant increase in terms of the perception of threat associated with immigration. Van Hootegeem and Meuleman reveal that immigration is perceived as a threat for economic reasons, and because it endangers a sense of national identity and culture.

Contrary to the assertion that is sometimes made, namely that people’s attitudes and government policies towards immigration seem to be generally aligned (IOM 2011), Van Hootegeem and Meuleman highlight the existing disparities in Europe between these two factors. In the countries of Eastern Europe, for example, negative public opinion is in line with the politicization of the issue and the government’s policy stances. Conversely, in Western European countries, the researchers show that institutional support for more generous policies showed a significant increase from 2002 to 2016, even though the rate of negative perceptions remained stable. In those countries, the general atmosphere of negative opinion contrasts with permissive migration policies. The existence of the opinion–policy gap (Morales et al. 2015) is influenced by the intensity of the public debate surrounding migration, as well as its prominence. Public opinion measured by poll data tends to reflect people’s opinions towards the legislative state and not towards actual policy implementation (Ellerman 2006).

Negative perceptions towards migrants are not purely attributable to individual factors, however. If conflict theory is operational at the individual level, it cannot be applied when comparing different countries to one another. Van Hootegeem and

Meuleman's research reveals how the way the issue is framed by the media and in political debates affects preferences when it comes to immigration policy. Belgium is among the most restrictive countries in terms of preferences for asylum policies, but polls indicate no actual increase in negative attitudes. On the other hand, within Belgium there are completely opposite policy preferences being expressed. While attitudes towards migrants in Flanders and in the French-speaking part of Belgium are aligned, public policy preferences are not. The population of Flanders, for example, would like a policy that cracks down on citizens providing accommodation to migrants, while the francophone population is less inclined to support such a thing (EOS RepResent 2019). Despite the alignment of negative attitudes in both parts of the country, the far-right party Vlaams Belang, which is hostile to migrants, is powerful in Flanders and nonexistent in the francophone part of Belgium. Policy preferences are thus more structured by the framing of the issue in political debates and political party propositions than by attitudes towards migrants alone.

Civil Society Mobilization

Research on the links between attitudes towards migrants and policy preferences over the last twenty years has led to a re-examination of the theory of social cleavage structures and how they manifest in European society. Historically, social cleavages are based on social class or ideological differences (Lipset and Rokkan 1967). In recent years, however, immigration, which divides societies into insiders and outsiders, people with or without immigrant backgrounds, has also become a source of social cleavage that not only polarizes public opinion but in fact crosses the boundaries of traditional cleavages (Kriesi et al. 2006; Van der Brug and van Spanje 2009). This polarization of both attitudes and practices, particularly the opposition between hostility and hospitality, was especially prevalent during the long summer of migration.

However, this polarization was already at work even before the arrival of asylum seekers during the summer of 2015. In Germany, the grassroots movement Refugees Welcome began its activities in November 2014,¹⁵ and in 2015, it spread to other European countries: Austria, Greece, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, the Netherlands, Poland, Belgium and Italy. The movement was mainly concerned with the accommodation of asylum seekers, asking why refugees should not be able to live in flat-shares or private homes instead of closed centres. Through the use of Facebook, they facilitated accommodation for newcomers by matching people together. A study carried out by Berlin's Humboldt University and Oxford University (Karakayali and Kleist 2015) found that there was a 70 per cent increase in people volunteering for projects concerning refugees. The majority of the new volunteers were women, mostly between the ages of 20–30, with a high level of education and living in big cities. They cited the state's lack of action as the motivation behind their involvement.

¹⁵ See: #IamHuman, *Grassroots movements and the refugees: Refugees Welcome and PEGIDA*, 2016, <https://wpmu.mah.se/nmict161group1/2016/02/27/grassroots-movements-and-the-refugees-refugees-welcome-and-pegida/>, accessed July 5, 2019.

However, not all citizens were so welcoming of the refugees. Also in Germany, in 2014, a far-right, anti-Islam organization called Pegida (Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamization of the Occident) was established, and the anti-migrant demonstration they called for in Dresden in January 2015 gathered more than 15,000 people. Pegida, with its mission to fight against immigration and denounce the “Islamization” of Germany, was not the only organization operating in Europe with such an agenda; similar groups popped up in a number of other European countries, such as Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Spain, France, Italy, Norway, Poland, Switzerland and the UK (Berntzen and Weisskircher 2016). Though completely opposed both politically and ideologically, Refugees Welcome and Pegida made use of the same contemporary tools for collective mobilization (blogs, Facebook and Twitter).

Nevertheless, hostility towards refugees was less pronounced in the public sphere than acts of hospitality. During the long summer of migration, countless citizens used their own personal vehicles to shuttle refugees from Hungary to Germany, designed smartphone apps to provide train schedules or the location of the nearest hospitals, organized donation drives for clothing and medicine, distributed meals, and, above all, hosted refugees in their own homes (Crawley et al. 2017). Many studies have been carried out on the surge in acts of citizen solidarity with migrants during the long summer of migration by inscribing it in the perspective of the creation of a new social movement (Ataç et al. 2016; Römhild et al. 2017; Sutter and Youkhana 2017; Della Porta 2018; Feischmidt et al. 2019).

This book is a contribution to this debate. It analyses, over time (2015–18), the practice of hospitality and solidarity towards refugees since 2015 by reconstructing the history of the social mobilization, collective action, networks and organizations, mobilized actors and political responses of that time period. This analysis also includes the actions and perceptions of asylum seekers themselves, specifically presented and discussed in Chapter 7 concerning the Belgian case. Some studies have shown that concrete situations engaging asylum seekers or undocumented migrants can lead to positive reactions and opinions based on emotion and compassion (Stattham and Geddes 2006; Ellerman 2006; Düvell 2007). This was most definitely the case during the long summer of migration. Ordinary citizens engaging in day-to-day activities came to witness first-hand the difficulties that asylum seekers were subjected to, whether in terms of administrative and institutional procedures, or the precarity of their social and sanitary conditions.

Some authors see acts of citizenship in these forms of mobilization (Isin 2008; Della Porta 2018), presupposing a politicization of both the actors and their actions. This potential evolution merits interrogation, because nothing, save for normative orientation, indicates that this is the only possible path. It is a perspective resulting from the literature on contentious politics, which considers that the political motives of mobilized actors are prerequisites for collective action. But the mobilization of a considerable number of volunteers and ordinary citizens during the long summer of migration is an entirely new phenomenon when compared to the usual forms of collective action carried out by traditional activists (NGOs, trade unions, No Borders activists, etc.) defending migrant rights. The moral and emotional motivations behind this action deserve to be examined without the creation of a schematic opposition

between depoliticized humanitarian action on the one side and politicized acts of citizenship on the other (Vandevoordt and Verschraegen 2019). While civil society action often falls under Barnett's (2014) classic definition of "humanitarian aid" (with its tenets of impartiality, neutrality, independence and shared humanity), it would nevertheless be wrong to dismiss the meaning that Agier (2011) gave to "humanitarian government" and Fassin (2011) to "humanitarian reason", a modality of paying attention to suffering without providing answers in the form of law and justice.

The recent work that has been done on hospitality (Stavo-Debaugé 2017) is a valuable contribution that helps us avoid falling into the trap of a reductive opposition between humanitarian action and political action. Acts of support for and welcoming of asylum seekers, in particular hosting them at home, are referred to under the general term of "hospitality", whereby the definition can vary from the limited concept of "humanitarian aid" (Barnett 2014) to the more expanded one of "cosmopolitan democracy" (Archibugi and Held 1995). The term "hospitality" was first used because the actions it references relate to fulfilling the immediate needs of asylum seekers, and because the motivations for the action are rooted in emotion and empathy towards asylum seekers (Berg and Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2018). Volunteers and ordinary citizens did not initially mobilize in order to voice a political demand for increased rights for migrants. However, the event of encounter (Deleixhe 2018) between ordinary citizens and asylum seekers might serve to politicize citizens. The organization, coordination and institutionalization of the movement can also contribute to the politicization of citizens who, since 2015, have been invested in acts of hospitality (Della Porta 2018). Finally, the actions undertaken might also be part of what Vandevoort and Verschraegen (2019) call "subversive humanitarianism", that is, morally motivated actions that acquire a political dimension because they are opposed to the government's political orientation. By analysing these acts of hospitality over time, this book also discusses the possible structural modifications of the social movement to support migrant rights depending on the actors mobilized (civil society) and their proposed actions (hospitality).

In cities, actions of hospitality find space, social groups and opportunities to flourish, while at the same time fuelling fears and threats of social, ethnic and spatial segregation. As several chapters show, the opportunity structures specific to each national context serve to either favour or limit how actions of hospitality, particularly those undertaken by civil society, are inscribed in time. Both spatial and local dimensions play a central role here (Glorious and Doornik 2016; Bontemps et al. 2018). These dimensions might be at the root of the well-known NIMBY (not in my backyard) phenomenon, where migrants are associated with both social and cultural threat. In multi-level political regimes where local authorities possess significant autonomy, the disparity between national and local political orientations becomes a political opportunity for the increase in hospitality actions towards refugees. This is particularly apparent in the United States with the development of sanctuary cities (Ridgley 2013), but also in Germany and Belgium, as two contributions in this book demonstrate.

Motivations and Frames of Mobilization

The first common element across the different contributions included in this volume is the fact that the long summer of migration has had an evident impact on civil society in Europe. Regardless of the geopolitical situation of each case, whether they are first arrival, transit or destination countries, a large and diversified set of attitudes and practices emerged, became more or less systematic and structured, and ultimately questioned the relationship between politics and citizens. Only in rare instances did citizen's reactions indeed align with political stances. In most instances, mobilization concerning the inflow of migrants seeking asylum has taken the shape of demonstrations against political decisions or the government's position on the migration issue. Whether they be negative or positive,¹⁶ intended to reject or welcome newcomers, the actions taken by citizens made visible their dissatisfaction and criticism towards the way their political elites and institutions attempted to manage the situation. Overall, if opinions remained relatively stable before and during the 2015 refugee reception crisis, as mentioned above, civil society mobilization increased in all the countries studied, showing specific characteristics in terms of the typology and motivation of the actors involved, the practices put in place, the issues represented, the relationship of mobilized groups with the network of existing organizations and institutions, their structures and profiles, their evolution and transformation over time, and their outcomes.

Concerning the typology of actors involved in the mobilization, one common element to all cases is the participation of individuals without previous experience of active support to asylum seekers, migration-related issues, or even any form of mobilization. This element is integral to the fact that the summer of 2015 marked an unprecedented solidarity wave in Europe, with some cases like Germany standing out with half to two thirds of the population taking action to assist newcomers during the peak of the reception crisis, as highlighted by Hinger, Daphi and Stern in their contribution. Another interesting point is that mobilization, both positive and negative, is generally localized in urban settings, with the exception of certain particularly problematic concentration areas such as the Serbian/Croatian border in Hungary, or the Greek islands hit by mass arrivals. Citizens with a migration background were also active in support activities in Germany, Belgium and Sweden in particular.

Positive mobilization springs from a range of motivations that are relatively stable in all the contexts studied here. Firstly, it is politically driven as it embraces the problem of formal access to rights (Monforte and Dufour 2011), including issues of citizenship and recognition of undocumented people, but also more generalized political elements such as demands for civil/human rights and anti-capitalism. Mobilization linked to this order of motivations is also aimed at having a direct impact on national politics, on the policymaking process and on the implementation of field practices, including in those contexts where institutions show relative "openness" towards asylum seekers. Citizens often have the objective of correcting – or more precisely, suggesting corrections to – state policies, and they mobilize accordingly,

¹⁶ "Positive-" and "negative-" are used here as synonyms for "pro-migrant" and "anti-migrant".

such as in the case of the struggles for the regularization of “*sans-papiers*” described in the chapter about Belgium. Mobilized citizens and civil society collectives also direct their activities towards reforming field practices, including a lack of local communication from institutional actors to citizens in locations with a high concentration of asylum seekers, low-quality reception practices and the management of reception structures.

The political element characterizes negative citizen mobilization only in those contexts where strong far-right groups already existed before 2015. The aforementioned Pegida movement in Germany, the Greek far-right party Golden Dawn and various anti-immigrant paramilitary groups in Hungary are all examples in this category. Although they mostly carried out violent attacks and actions, this kind of negative mobilization only bears the clear purpose of changing state policies in the case of Germany, where the government’s approach was particularly inclusive, at least in the initial period of the reception crisis. In other contexts, and particularly in Hungary, negative mobilization appears to be consistent with state policies. It structures itself as a strategy to integrate field practices aimed at controlling access when the reception system is clearly no longer effective, and even close to collapse. In the case of Italy, furthermore, negative mobilization is always political, but it is only driven by citizen initiatives on rare occasions. As described by Ambrosini in his contribution, opposition to the arrival of asylum seekers in Italy comes mostly from local governments themselves, and it only rarely involves the spontaneous mobilization of citizens.

Secondly, mobilization is driven by motivations connected to specific socio-cultural beliefs. On the one hand, positive mobilization such as participation in volunteer activities is driven by the principle of “humanitarian solidarity”. As noted above, this principle is often identified as a key element in the social dynamics of the refugee reception crisis (see for example Della Porta 2018; Krasteva et al. 2019). The contributions in this volume demonstrate that this kind of motivation does not only dominate positive mobilization in those countries characterized by a positive philosophy of reception and a relatively open approach to migration and diversity (for example, the “*Willkommenskultur*” in Germany or the “exceptionalism” of Sweden). Solidarity is largely the strongest catalyst for collective and individual pro-refugee mobilization, and has an evident impact on practices, particularly in the initial period of the long summer of migration. Donations and emergency help such as the distribution of food and clothes are indeed the most common practices among volunteers and civil society groups involved in support activities. This is also true in those contexts where public opinion is more critical of migration, where institutions take a more restrictive approach, and even in countries like Hungary where civil society is traditionally not very proactive (Milan 2019). As highlighted in existing scholarship, solidarity engagement, especially within the different aspects of migration, often conveys a political message or motivation (Mezzadra 2010), can become an act of demonstration (Walters 2008), and can often take the shape of a “governmental norm” (Fassin 2007). The analyses proposed in this book are no exception. However, the cases of civil society groups and individual citizens involved in humanitarian solidarity mobilization presented here do not show an explicit political stance. On the contrary, they operate independently

from political groups, at least at the beginning of their involvement between 2015 and 2016. They are not generally influenced by formal political groups, although in some cases like Greece and Italy they count militant members of radical left-wing, anarchist and anti-capitalist circles among their participants. Significantly, these trends can be seen as consistent with citizen's critical perspective on institutions highlighted above, in a time of growing scepticism from citizens towards formal political representation.

On the other hand, negative mobilization may also be seen as motivated by socio-cultural beliefs. In this sense, the organizations and citizens who mobilized against the reception and accommodation of asylum seekers share a perspective inspired by the traditional discourse about the demographic threat of the Global South, including tropes such as ethnic substitution, opposition to "foreignization" and more generally an exclusivist conception of the national community. Van Hootegem and Meuleman explain how the perception of cultural threats revolving around national identity, norms and values has significantly increased, especially in Eastern and Southern Europe, during the reception crisis period. Differently from humanitarian solidarity, however, the socio-cultural beliefs embedded in negative mobilization are directly represented by formal political parties or movements. Theodoros Fouskas, in the Greek case, highlights how a process of enhancement of the nation state based on the differentiation between citizens and migrants gives way to manifestations and violent episodes of intolerance. Similarly, Maurizio Ambrosini notes that the principles motivating negative reactions such as the conception of the national territory as "private property", or the envisaging of the national community as the victim of an invasion, are all represented by the anti-immigration party, the Lega, and its leader Matteo Salvini, and are key elements in the recent repositioning of the party rhetoric and agenda along an anti-migrant, ultra-nationalistic stance (Mandin and Mazzola 2016). The Hungarian case, even more explicitly, shows that xenophobic social beliefs are completely integrated into the policy system and the actions and decisions of the Orbán government. Aspects of these tropes, however, especially if connected to material concerns such as threats to the labour market, the welfare system or institutional structures, have generally been absorbed by all political parties and have gained consensus in the bipartisan political debate in Northern Europe as well. As shown in the following chapters, this even happens in countries such as Germany and Sweden, which are perceived to bear a more progressive approach to the migration issue.

The Collective Dimension of Mobilization

Whether driven by political or socio-cultural motivations, positive mobilization seems to have both a collective and an individual dimension. On the other hand, negative mobilization is almost never individual. Evidence here, and the ethnographic sources in the Belgium chapter in particular, show how support for asylum seekers often springs from the individual will to act and contribute. On the negative side, this kind of personal dynamic is not observed. It must be noted that positive engagement is much more widespread, present and regular in the cases studied here, although negative actions are often more visible and mediatized, but are short-lived and only occasional. Acts of violent protest are limited in number, but are relatively recurrent

in those contexts where far-right groups are stronger and more structured. In any case, both positive and negative forms of mobilization mostly pertain to the creation, activation, consolidation, interaction and evolution of groups and networks, and thus it is the collective dimension that remains central to our focus.

The 2015 reception crisis led to the emergence of important civil society organizations, collective citizen initiatives and networks. As discussed in recent scholarship, these groups have strongly affected the relationship between civil and state actors (see for example Verschraegen and Vandevooort 2019). Starting from the long summer of migration, mobilization has occurred through new groups and structures, but also through dormant organizations that reactivated and existing organizations that changed their mission, embracing the issue of asylum seekers and refugees. The nature of their activities and their principles changed over time; they adapted to the changes in the migration situation, the needs of newcomers and the policy structures surrounding them. The studies in this book look at three specific dimensions. Firstly, the focus is on the typology of organizations and interactions within the network of different collective actors active in the reception of asylum seekers. Secondly, they look at the interaction between civil society groups (both formal and non-formal organizations), state actors and structures of governance. Thirdly, they include views on the outcomes of civil society collective mobilization, and the reception crisis as an example of political momentum.

As mentioned above, the typology of organizations involved ranges from new collectives to previously existing groups that reactivated or changed their activities. Concerning these latter groups, not all countries (such as Greece and Hungary, as we will see) could rely on a strong pre-existing landscape of organizations. In Germany, a large part of the support is provided by organizations that are not directly connected to the migration issue, often set up or driven by people with a migration background. Specific established networks always play an important role in the stimulation of citizen participation in support activities. In Italy and Sweden, as we will see, religious organizations and their networks of volunteers activated immediately. Not only did they share information and promote awareness-raising campaigns, they also emerged as first-line actors in the reception of asylum seekers and the resolution of refugee-related tensions in the public debate.

Concerning the first point on the interaction within networks of mobilized organizations, our cases show several interesting elements. Although examples of horizontal cooperation are observed, some of the research reveals forms of conflict between organizations, generated by a lack of coordination and mutual acknowledgement, above all between subjects with different profiles. In particular, informal volunteer groups often clashed with official volunteer organizations. Conflict is observed in the Belgian case, where civil society organizations implemented activities in parallel to the Red Cross, that is, the state-designated actor for managing reception practices. The situation seems to be completely different in Greece, where pro-migrant civil society groups coordinated through a voluntary open assembly. Bevelander and Hellström, in the chapter on Sweden, point out that informal and formal organizations not only cooperated but often merged, and characterize this condition as necessary for the support activity to exist and remain stable.

Secondly, the interaction between civil and state actors and structures is an aspect that deserves much attention. This is because the reception crisis represents a key moment in which civil society has reacted more or less explicitly to the problems, gaps and failures of political institutions and institutional policy measures. In doing so, citizen organizations and NGOs made visible the “organized non-responsibility” (Pries 2018) that characterized the approach of the EU, and the indifference of many European countries during the reception crisis. To begin with, it is important to note that mobilized actors in civil society often changed their motivations and adapted their scope during the reception crisis. In general, groups motivated by solidarity embraced political demands and also shifted to politically driven mobilization, showing that the two categories described above are not exclusive or conflictual, but rather overlapping. This is due to two main factors that are common to all the cases observed. First, participation in solidarity activity lowered over time. Second, several non-formal organizations started to take on a structured form, to professionalize their activity and, in some cases, to politicize it. In Germany, for example, the huge popular participation in support activities at the start of the crisis did not last long. However, support organizations took on a professional profile and were able to keep on running their activities. Similarly, in Belgium, participation decreased but forms of spontaneous solidarity engagement turned into formal organizations characterized by political engagement, shaping specific frames of mobilization towards a form of “political solidarity”.

The relationship between civil society and local or national institutions is not only something that occurred in the field as a consequence of spontaneous engagement. To varying extents, all the country cases demonstrate that forms of cooperation with civil society actors were not only expected but also fostered by governments, following a multi-actor governance principle (Van Heffen et al. 2000). The Protection System for Asylum Seekers and Refugees (SPRAR) in Italy, for example, is structured around the principle that local governments should rely on civil society organizations to manage the access of asylum seekers to the protection system. In other contexts, non-governmental actors are officially designated to manage reception practices, such as in the case of the Belgian Red Cross. As well as cooperation, however, civil society groups and institutions often engaged in open conflict at the local and national level. With regard to the creation and progressive politicization of migration-oriented volunteer organizations in Hungary, which were increasingly critical of the Orbán leadership, the government reacted with specific measures to oppose and limit their activities, such as the creation of an unfavourable tax regime for NGOs, emblematically labelled “Stop Soros”.

Concerning the third focus of analysis, interesting elements emerge in the following chapters regarding the outcomes of civil mobilization and, more generally, the political consequences of the 2015 reception crisis. On the one hand, volunteer groups, local citizen initiatives and civil society organizations supporting reception paved the way for inclusive approaches towards asylum seekers and migration in general. These approaches are characterized by their local dimension, involving specific regions, areas or municipalities, and by opposition (of varying strength) to restrictive state approaches. They are consistent with the establishment of new

paradigms of integration, a trend that recent scholarship has observed to be growing in European local contexts (Geddes and Scholten 2015; Glorius and Doornik 2016), and they bring about a “local turn” in the management of the contemporary migration issue (Ahouga 2017; Zapata-Barrero et al. 2017). All the cases of positive mobilization presented in this book confirm that civil society made concrete efforts to correct, integrate or oppose state policies and field practices.

The crisis in the system of reception across Europe opened what Bevelander and Hellström define here as a “window of opportunity” for citizens not only to mobilize, but also to transform spontaneous collective mobilization into concrete action and to have an impact on political structures and on public opinion. This is true for both positive and negative forms of mobilization. In several instances in Belgium and Germany, mobilized groups of citizens working alongside the state-designated reception actors took on a formal structure and became involved in the decision-making process at the local level. In Germany, however, a strong representation of anti-migration views emerged in 2015, reflecting significant polarization in society. The crisis also allowed far-right groups to over-represent the asylum issue as a primary national threat, and to gain space in the public debate. In the Greek context, as noted by Fouskas, Golden Dawn had a strong impact on the way a widespread idea of Greece as a xenophobic country has been shaped at the national and international level. Similarly, in Italy, the reception crisis has represented an opportunity for different segments of the right-wing and far-right spectrum to coordinate and gather together, with Matteo Salvini taking on the political leadership. In turn, the growth of anti-migration parties along the right-wing spectrum stimulated sporadic but violent actions against asylum seekers and, more importantly, enabled these actions to become tolerated and accepted by public opinion.