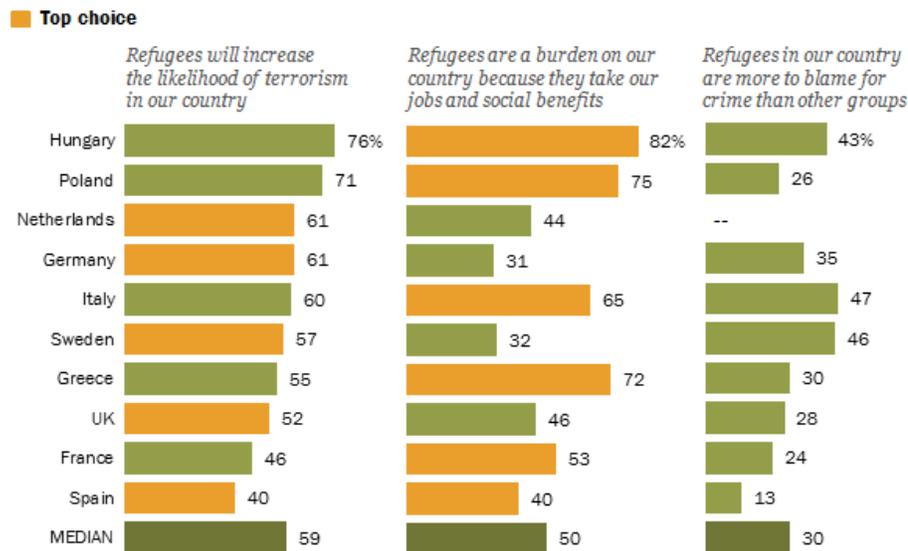


The refugee crisis is being blamed for the terrorist attacks in Europe.
 By Nolan Rappaport

PEW RESEARCH CENTER SURVEY

Connection between the refugee crisis and terrorism. According to a recent Pew Research Center (PEW)¹ survey,² the refugee crisis and terrorism in the European Union (EU) are very much related to one another in the minds of many Europeans. In eight of the 10 European nations surveyed, 50% or more of the people who participated in the survey believed that letting refugees into the EU had increased the likelihood of terrorism.

Many Europeans concerned with security, economic repercussions of refugee crisis



Note: Netherlands excluded on question about crime (Q51b) due to administrative error.

Source: Spring 2016 Global Attitudes Survey, Q51a-c.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Increase in migration to EU countries. In 2015 alone, more than a million migrants applied for refugee status in the EU. Most of them came from primarily Muslim countries, such as Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq.⁴ When the survey asked specifically whether these Muslim migrants supported extremist groups like the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), most of the people surveyed responded that they did not think such groups had widespread support in the Muslim communities. On the other hand, in no country did a majority say “very few” Muslims supported ISIS; and in five countries, a quarter or more said many or most Muslims did.⁵

No correlation was found between fear that refugees were bringing terrorists with them and the number of refugees coming into a country. Poland only has had a few thousand refugee applications in the past year, but 73% of the people surveyed in Poland said refugees were a major threat. In contrast, Germany has had several hundred thousand applications, and just 31% of the Germans surveyed were concerned about the refugees. The situation in Germany, however, has changed since the survey was taken and the number of refugees has

continued to rise. German Chancellor Angela Merkel is under attack politically for letting so many refugees into Germany. According to German government statistics from March, about 400,000 asylum applications were still being processed. And half of the 170,000 people whose requests had been rejected were still in Germany.⁶

Fear of terrorists among the refugees correlated with a person's attitude towards Muslims.

The survey found a correlation in all 10 countries surveyed between having a negative attitude towards Muslims and being concerned about the possibility that there were terrorists among them. For example, in Sweden, 50% of the people surveyed who had an unfavorable opinion of Muslims said that refugees were a major threat to their country, and only 10% of Swedes who had a positive view of Muslims gave that response. In the UK, where immigration was a key factor in the decision to leave the EU, 80% of those who had negative opinions of Muslims expressed concern about refugees, compared to 40% among those who had a favorable attitude toward Muslims.⁷

Which came first? This sounds like a “which came first, the chicken or the egg,” situation to me. Were they afraid that terrorists would come in among the Muslim refugees because they didn't like Muslims, or did they dislike Muslims because most terrorists in the EU had been Muslims?

Political bias. People on the right of the ideological spectrum were particularly concerned about terrorists being among the refugees.⁸ This parallels thinking in the United States. People on the right here tend to be more concerned about a connection between refugees and terrorism than people on the left. I think that political bias of this type is extremely unfortunate. The threat of bringing terrorists into the country among refugees should be evaluated objectively as a matter of national security, not treated as an expression of conservative or liberal political views on immigration.

IS THE FEAR WARRANTED?

U.S. Department of State. Fear of terrorism in Europe is widespread. It is scaring away tourism income that the European countries depend on.⁹ Even the U.S. State Department has issued a travel warning on the threat of terrorism in Europe.

Europe Travel Alert. As part of the State Department's continuous efforts to provide Americans travelling abroad with information about relevant events, we are alerting U.S. citizens to the risk of potential terrorist attacks throughout Europe, targeting major events, tourist sites, restaurants, commercial centers and transportation. The large number of tourists visiting Europe in the summer months will present greater targets for terrorists planning attacks in public locations, especially at large events.¹⁰

The European Law Enforcement Agency (Europol). According to Rob Wainwright, the Director of Europol, in 2015, the EU experienced a massive number of casualties caused by terrorist attacks. France had the most casualties, 148 of its citizens were killed and more than 350 were injured. The attacks were conducted both by unsophisticated lone actors and by well-coordinated, complex military operations. The military attacks were based operationally in the

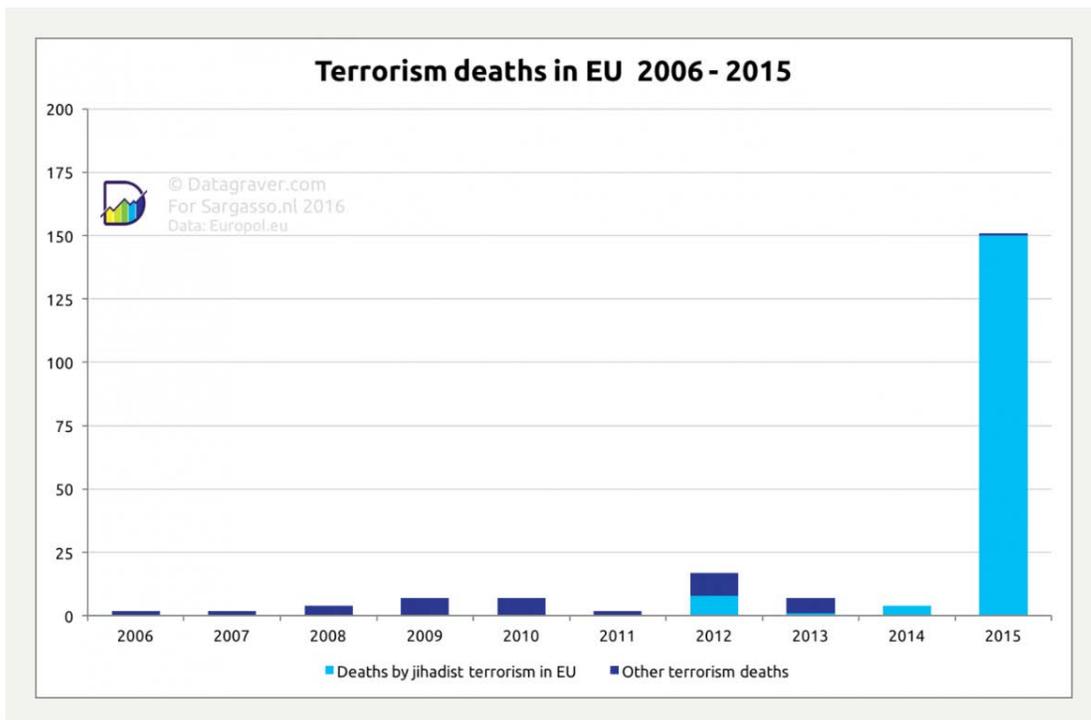
Middle East and implemented by a network of people born and raised in the EU who had proven to be willing and able to act as facilitators and active accomplices in terrorism.¹¹ On January 29, 2015, the Justice and Home Affairs Ministerial Council issued the Riga Statement in which the Council asserts that terrorism, radicalization, recruitment, and terrorist financing are among the main threats to the internal security of the EU.¹²

Are terrorists coming into the EU with the refugees? Europol has not found concrete evidence that terrorist have “systematically” used the flood of refugees to enter the EU. On the other hand, Europol has found that some of the incidents have involved terrorists who used the migratory flows to enter the EU. For instance, two of the terrorists in the November 13, 2016, attack in Paris had entered the EU through Greece among a large number of refugees from Syria.

Radicalization. Europol has found that a real and imminent danger exists that elements of the Sunni Muslim Syrian refugee diaspora will be vulnerable to radicalization once they are in Europe. They are likely to be targeted by Islamist extremist recruiters.¹³ Also, Muslims who are citizens of EU member countries have traveled to Syria and other middle eastern countries for military training and combat experience and then returned to the EU where they are available for terrorist operations.

TERRORIST ATTACKS IN 2015

It’s difficult to determine the extent to which the refugee crisis has produced the terrorism that the EU has been experiencing, but it’s undeniable that there was a huge increase in deaths caused by jihadist terrorists when more than a million refugees flooded into the EU in 2015. This is illustrated by the following Europol graph:



January 7, 2015. Two gunmen attacked the editorial staff of the French satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo¹⁵ in their office in Paris, killing twelve people and wounding eight. It was believed that the attackers had been radicalized by a network of North African youth known as the Buttes-Chaumont group, which is a militant jihadist network that has produced some of Europe's most dangerous extremists.¹⁶ One of them was believed to have been trained by Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). U.S. officials have described AQAP as "the most active operational franchise" of al-Qaeda beyond Pakistan and Afghanistan.¹⁷ AQAP claimed responsibility for the attack.

January 8, 2015. An unarmed police officer was shot from behind and killed while she was handling a routine traffic incident in Paris. The killer also shot a bystander in the face. The next day, the same man killed four people at a Jewish supermarket in a different part of Paris. The police killed him at the supermarket. It was determined later that he had pledged allegiance to the Islamic State (IS), and that he was an associate of the Charlie Hebdo attackers.

February 14, 2015. A gunman attacked a free-speech debate in Copenhagen, Denmark, which was being hosted by a Swedish cartoonist who had been targeted for what his assailants thought were insults to Islam. The attackers killed one of the attendees and they wounded three police officers. Later that day, the same attacker opened fire outside a synagogue, killing a Jewish guard and wounding two police officers. The police killed him.

June 26, 2015. A man attacked a chemical factory in Saint-Quentin-Fallavier. He drove into the factory, decapitated a man and impaled his head on the fence of the company enclosure. Banners with Arabic writing were found nearby. Then he set off several small explosive devices in his car.

August 21, 2015. An individual known to authorities in three EU Member States as a jihadist extremist, tried unsuccessfully to attack passengers on a high-speed train travelling from Amsterdam to Paris. He was armed with an assault rifle, pistol, knife, and large amounts of ammunition. He reportedly viewed IS propaganda immediately before the attempted attack, during which he was confronted by a passenger that he shot, and then he was overpowered by other passengers before he could carry out his attack fully.

September 17, 2015. An Iraqi in Germany that the authorities had classified as a potentially dangerous Islamist extremist, attacked a female police officer with a knife, seriously injuring her. A second police officer killed him to stop the attack.

November 13, 2015. Three teams of terrorists conducted a series of complex and synchronized attacks on carefully chosen targets in Paris, which included a football stadium, a theater, cafes and restaurants. IS claimed responsibility, stating that the attacks were committed in retaliation for French airstrikes on IS targets in Syria and Iraq. A total of 130 people were killed, including 89 at the Bataclan theater, where the attackers took hostages before the police arrived. Another 368 people were wounded.¹⁸

December 6, 2015. A man was arrested by police after stabbing three people at a London Underground station. One victim suffered serious injuries. A witness claimed that the suspect screamed “this is for Syria.”¹⁹

TERRORIST ATTACKS IN 2016

This year has seen an accelerating pattern of attacks in Europe that have been linked to ISIS, and more than half of them have been in places not traditionally under threat of terrorist attacks. This rash of random, low-tech but deadly attacks has eroded faith in government’s ability to protect people against terrorism.²⁰ It has become quite apparent that no one is safe from terrorism anywhere in the EU. Is this going to happen in the United States too?



Terrorists slit the throat of the 85-year-old French Priest Jacques Hamel while he was celebrating mass.²¹

January 7, 2016. A jihadist wearing a fake explosive belt attacked police officers in the Goutte d’Or district in Paris with a meat cleaver, while shouting “Allahu Akbar.” He was shot dead. An ISIS flag and a written claim in Arabic were found among his possessions.

March 22, 2016. Suicide attacks on the Brussels airport and subway killed 32 people and injured hundreds. The perpetrators have been closely linked to the group that had carried out attacks in Paris four months earlier. IS took the credit for the Brussels attacks and threatened other countries taking part in the anti-IS coalition.

April 16, 2016. Two teenage Islamic extremists threw a bomb at a Sikh temple during a wedding in Germany. Three members of the Sikh community were injured.

June 13, 2016. Larossi Abballa stabbed a 42-year-old police commander to death in France. Larossi held the commander’s wife and the couple’s three-year-old son hostage and killed the wife later. Police stormed the house and killed Larossi.

June 26, 2016. Three suspected IS group suicide bombers targeted the international terminal of Istanbul's Ataturk airport, killing at least 36 people and wounding many others.

July 14, 2016. A man driving a truck ploughed into a crowd that was celebrating Bastille Day in Nice along the picturesque French Riviera, killing at least 84 and injuring hundred others. IS claimed the attack. The streets were dense with people when the attack occurred. Witness Tony Molina said he saw bodies of the dead lying in the street, covered in blue tarps and marked so emergency vehicles didn't run over them.²²

July 19, 2016. A 17-year-old Afghan refugee injured at least 20 train passengers with an axe and a knife in Germany. He was shot dead by German police.

July 22, 2016. An 18-year-old German-Iranian gunman opened fire at a busy shopping mall in Munich on a Friday evening, killing at least nine people. This was the third attack against civilians in Western Europe in eight days. The pistol-wielding attacker, identified by Munich Police Chief Hubertus Andrae as a dual national, was later found dead of a suspected self-inflicted gunshot wound to his head.

July 24, 2016. A 21-year-old Syrian refugee killed a woman with a machete and injured two other people before being arrested in the southern German city of Reutlingen.

July 25, 2016. One person was killed and 12 others were injured at a restaurant in Germany in an explosion that occurred late on Sunday, a police spokesman said. The spokesman said he had no immediate information on the cause of the blast.²³

¹ About Pew Research Center. Pew Research Center is a nonpartisan fact tank that informs the public about the issues, attitudes and trends shaping America and the world. We conduct public opinion polling, demographic research, content analysis and other data-driven social science research. We do not take policy positions.

<http://www.pewresearch.org/about/>

² Pew Research Center, Richard Wike, Bruce Stokes and Katie Simmons, "Europeans Fear Wave of Refugees Will Mean More Terrorism, Fewer Jobs" (July 11, 2016), <http://www.pewglobal.org/files/2016/07/Pew-Research-Center-EU-Refugees-and-National-Identity-Report-FINAL-July-11-2016.pdf>

³ Europeans Fear Wave of Refugees Will Mean More Terrorism, Fewer Jobs, *supra* at p. 3.

⁴ Europeans Fear Wave of Refugees Will Mean More Terrorism, Fewer Jobs, *supra* at p. 23.

⁵ Europeans Fear Wave of Refugees Will Mean More Terrorism, Fewer Jobs, *supra* at p. 28.

⁶ Tim Lister, CNN, "One ISIS attack every 84 hours' spurs dread and anger in Europe," (July 31, 2016),

<http://www.cnn.com/2016/07/31/europe/isis-attacks-escalating-europe/>

⁷ Europeans Fear Wave of Refugees Will Mean More Terrorism, Fewer Jobs, *supra* at p. 29.

⁸ Europeans Fear Wave of Refugees Will Mean More Terrorism, Fewer Jobs, *supra* at p. 30.

⁹ Liz Alderman, "Terrorism Scares Away the Tourists Europe Was Counting On," (July 29, 2016),

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¹² Riga Joint Statement, https://eu2015.lv/images/Kalendars/IeM/2015_01_29_jointstatement_JHA.pdf

¹³ European Law Enforcement Agency (Europol), EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report (TE-SAT) 2016 (July 20, 2016), *supra* at p. 7.

¹⁴ Europol Reports: “Terrorism in the EU 2006-2015,” (July 20, 2016), <http://www.datagraver.com/case/europol-reports-terrorism-in-the-eu-2006-2015>

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¹⁸ European Law Enforcement Agency (Europol), EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report (TE-SAT) 2016 (July 20, 2016), *supra*, at p. 22.

¹⁹ European Law Enforcement Agency (Europol), EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report (TE-SAT) 2016 (July 20, 2016), *supra*, at p. 23.

²⁰ Tim Lister, CNN, “One ISIS attack every 84 hours’ spurs dread and anger in Europe,” (July 31, 2016), *supra*.

²¹ Sylvie Corbet and Lori Hinnant, “IS Group Claims Attack That Killed 85-Year-Old French Priest,” (July 26, 2016), <http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/assailants-hostages-normandy-church-france-40882393>

²² Ralph Ellis and Steve Almasy, CNN, “Terror attack kills scores in Nice, France, Hollande says,” (July 15, 2016), <http://www.cnn.com/2016/07/14/europe/nice-france-truck/>

²³ Express Web Desk, “List of terrorist attacks that have struck Europe in 2016,” (July 25, 2016),

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About the Author

Nolan Rappaport was detailed to the House Judiciary Committee as an Executive Branch Immigration Law Expert for three years; he subsequently served as the immigration counsel for the Subcommittee on Immigration, Border Security, and Claims for four years. Prior to working on the Judiciary Committee, he wrote decisions for the Board of Immigration Appeals for twenty years. He also has been a policy advisor for the DHS Office of Information Sharing and Collaboration under a contract with TKC Communications, and he has been in private practice as an immigration lawyer at Steptoe & Johnson.