

Dualizing and Disintegrating Labour Market Policies for Young Asylum Seekers in Austria – The Core of the Populist Right-Wing Welfare State

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Linz/Upper Austria

Hitler went to school in Linz and the extreme-right has a long tradition in the province.



Klagenfurt / Wörthersee (Carinthia)

Cradle of Jörg Haider, the former leader of one of the first successful extreme-right parties in Europe, the FPÖ (in 2000)

Actual Situation

Asylum Applications

2015: 88.340

2018: 13.746 (Syria: 3.300; Afghanistan: 2.120;
Iran: 1.107; Russia: 969)

(1.5 m of 8 m inhabitants are migrants.)

Asylum Procedures in 2018

1st Instance: 3.851

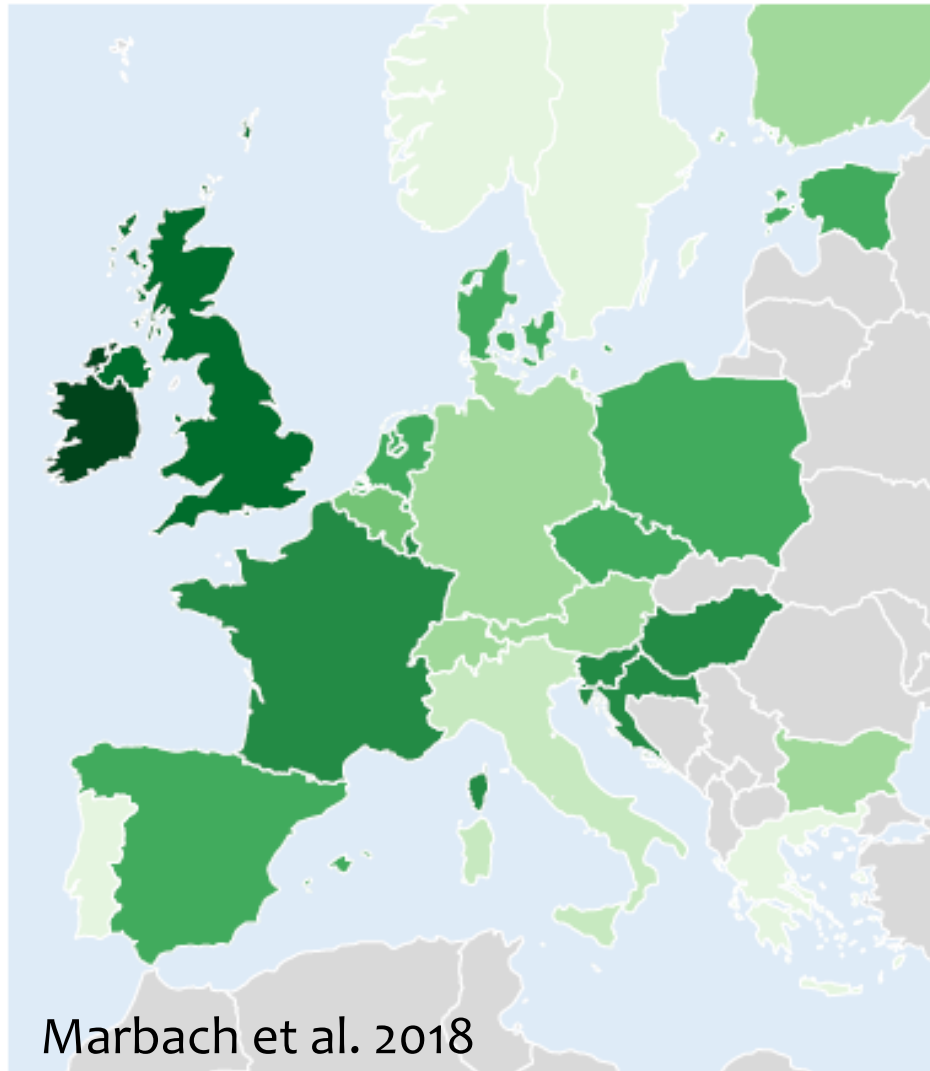
2nd Instance: 28.091

In 2017 procedures took 17 month in average for a decision in 1st instance.

Working opportunities for asylum seekers (during the procedure of recognition) (up to 2017)

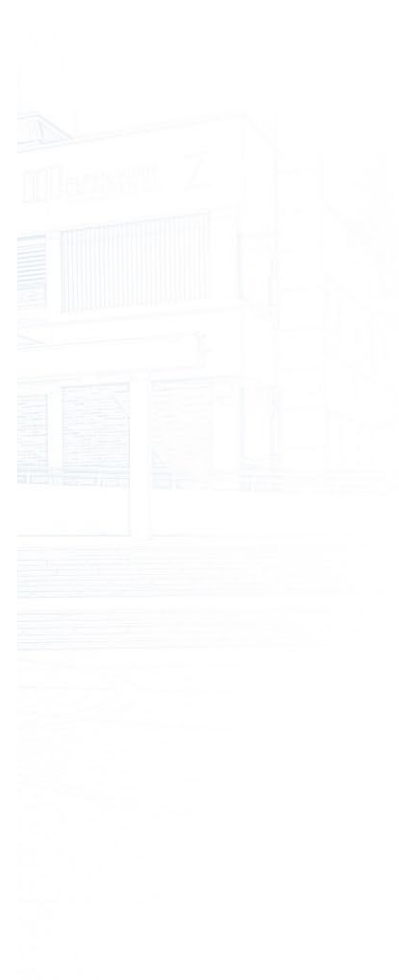
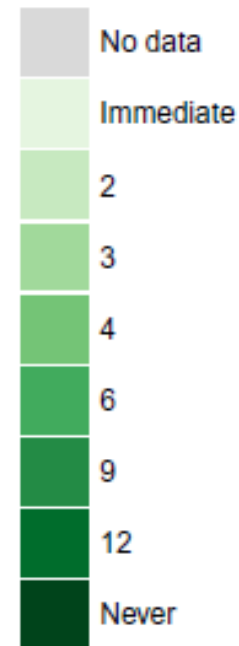
- The opportunities of the law were limited by a decree in 2004. Only seasonal work (farming and tourism) is possible (after three month).
- Young asylum seekers (up to 24) could only start an apprenticeship in an “understaffed profession” (“Mangelberuf”). The employer had to guarantee that she/he could not find a Austrian/EU-Citizen for the apprenticeship – and the PES had to review this. The high administrative barriers seems to be part of a ‘policy of deterrence’.
- Meanwhile the decree and the procedure are in conflict with the EU-Reception Conditions Directive of 2013 ‘... latest after 9 month ...’.

Working opportunities for asylum seekers in EU (Austria is wrongly grouped!)



Marbach et al. 2018

Minimum length of ban (in months)



Working opportunities for recognised refugees and refugees with subsidiary protection

Recognised refugees, beneficiaries of subsidiary protection, and third-country citizens have more or less the same opportunities and duties like Austria people.

Further regulations for refugees of the former social democratic / conservative government (2008–2017)

- The ‘Integration Act’ (2017) implemented mandatory courses of language (up to A2-level), and courses of „knowledge and values“ to become better integrated for recognised refugees, beneficiaries of subsidiary protection, and third-country citizens. The Government was obliged to offer these courses.
- The Law on the ‘Integration Year’ (2017) implemented the duty for recognized refugees, beneficiaries of subsidiary protection, and third-country citizens which do not find a job to participate in language courses on a level higher than A2.

Problems of the Politics of the former Government (up to 2017)

- The courses of „knowledge and values“ and the German courses do not seem to have an impact on the market integration (FIMAS 2017), but keeping asylum seekers away of the labour market during the procedure of recognition indeed has according to research on Germany (Marbach et al. 2018)
- The language courses do not lead to a regular qualification. This is especially problematic as compulsory schooling ends at 15. The recently introduced *Vocational Training Duty* explicitly excludes asylum seekers.
- Even recognized refugees mostly work in low-qualified and low-paid, fixed-term and part-time jobs – labour-market segregation is high, especially in the first job.

Subsumption of the policies of the former social democratic / conservative government (2008–2017)

- For asylum seekers (during the procedures of recognition) policies have always been rather exclusive.
- Policies for recognized refugees combine the idea of social investment with features of a “get-in-line”-ideology.

Changes of the neo-conservative / far-right government (2017–2019)

The Government ...

- cut off the minimum income scheme for Austrian citizens as well as for recognised refugees. If language knowledge on the level B2 can't be proven, only 65% of the maximal amount will be paid out (e.g. €575 instead of €885 for a single person – poverty-line is €1.259). The idea of poverty alleviation was abandoned.
- cut the funds for the language courses that the refugees need to learn German and prove their German language skills.

When presenting the new minimum income scheme, Ex-Chancellor Sebastian Kurz said: “Someone who doesn't want to learn the German language, doesn't want, or cannot work will get less money.”

- abolished the opportunity to start an apprenticeship in a understaffed profession ...

What is 'extreme-right welfare politics?'

- Most measures of the neo-conservative / extreme-right government of the ÖVP and FPÖ are to be classified as 'neoliberal' (E.g. up to 12 working hours per day were allowed instead of 10).
- The cut of the minimum income scheme was combined with new 'familialistic' tax credits for parents. This targeted to (upper) middle-class people.
- Wacquant considers the increasing monitoring of the underclass as part of a neoliberal strategy, and you have examples for that as well: 1-euro-jobs (for recipients of social aid) were discussed and a 'residence obligation' for asylum seekers was introduced.
- However, the abolishing of the apprenticeship in understaffed professions shows differences between neoliberal and extreme-right-wing policies →

What is ‘extreme-right-wing welfare politics?’ – The abolition of the apprenticeship in under- staffed professions

- The abolition was against the economic interests of ‘the capital’ and the country – there are actually no ‘winners’ (because you had to show that other recruiting was not possible); the Chamber of Commerce as well as civil society complained.
- The expansion of the red-white-red card to apprentices was presented as a solution: Third-country citizens (which then have limited social rights) should be recruited to work as apprentices instead of asylum seekers. ‘Foreigners without rights’ seems not to be ‘a problem’.

What is ‘extreme-right-wing welfare politics?’ – The abolition of the apprenticeship in under- staffed professions II

- There is not only ‘dualisation’ between asylum seekers / migrants and Austrian citizens, but also within migrant groups and within the Austrian population.
- Overall, the distribution of social rights is finely graduated; active exclusionary politics outweighed economic reasoning in the case of apprenticeships in understaffed professions. Austria should be made unattractive for further asylum seekers in long terms.
- Producing ‘stressful situations’ in administrative ‘street-level’ procedures is part of intended discriminatory policies.