

Analyzing German Refugee Policy from the Perspective of Double-Layer Games

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze Germany's refugee policy in depth. The purpose of this study is to analyze the German refugee policy in depth, and to comprehensively analyze the complex mechanisms in the process of policy formulation and implementation by applying the two-layer game theory. The two-layer game theory divides the policy process into domestic and international levels, which helps to reveal the multiple dilemmas faced by Germany's refugee policy. At the domestic level, factors such as political party competition, public opinion shifts, and competition between federal and state power are intertwined, affecting the stability and implementation of the policy; at the international level, the responsibility sharing under the EU system, security and anti-terrorism pressures, and geo-strategic situation have put Germany's refugee policy in the predicament of internal and external attacks. Through this study, it is found that the solution to the German refugee problem needs to be synergized at both the domestic and international levels, including the paths of reconciling political differences, curbing the expansion of extreme right-wing forces, optimizing the efficiency of the integration policy, as well as reconfiguring the EU's responsibility sharing mechanism, regulating the legal boundaries of cooperation with third countries, and strengthening the diplomatic synergies of source-based governance, with a view to providing useful references for the solution to the refugee problem in Germany and the world.

Keywords

Two-tier game; German refugee policy; International game; Policy dilemma.

1. Introduction

As a key player in European refugee policy, Germany's policy evolution and practice have always been the focus of international attention. After the outbreak of the European refugee crisis in 2015, Angela Merkel's government put forward the "welcoming culture", which has made Germany a global attention as a refugee-receiving country. However, the ensuing problems of social integration difficulties, the rise of extreme right-wing forces, and the uneven sharing of EU responsibilities have plunged Germany's refugee policy into the dilemma of internal and external intertwining. Against this background, how to analyze the complex mechanism of policy making from the theoretical level and explore effective solution paths from the practical level has become an important topic for academics to study. This study applies Robert Patnam's two-layer game theory to analyze German refugee policy at both domestic and international levels, aiming at revealing the influence of domestic factors such as political party competition, public opinion shift, and the power game between the federation and the states, as well as the influence of international factors such as the EU's responsibility-sharing, security and anti-terrorism pressures, and geo-strategic situation, so as to provide new theoretical perspectives for the understanding of the dilemmas of Germany's refugee policy and the search

for a solution. It provides a new theoretical perspective for understanding Germany's refugee policy dilemma and seeking solutions.

2. Dual-layer Game Theory

2.1. Connotation of Double-Layer Game Theory

The Two-Level Game Theory (TLGT) was proposed by American political scientist Robert Putnam, aiming at explaining the interaction between the national level and the domestic level in international negotiations. The theory divides the foreign policy making process into two levels: the international level and the domestic level. At the international level, national leaders negotiate with other countries on behalf of their country in order to maximize national interests, while at the domestic level, leaders need to face the pressure of domestic interest groups, political parties, and public opinion in order to ensure the legitimacy of their policies and their ability to implement them. The core of the two-level game theory is that the outcome of international negotiations not only depends on the game between countries, but is also deeply influenced by the domestic political environment. This theory provides a comprehensive framework for analyzing complex foreign policy issues, and is particularly applicable to the study of policy areas involving multiple conflicting interests, such as refugee policy.

Two-tier game theory emphasizes the role of national leaders as "bridges" in international negotiations, balancing international commitments with domestic support. If an international agreement fails to gain support at the domestic level, policy implementation may be hindered or even fail. Therefore, leaders must take into account domestic political dynamics, including party competition, public opinion, and the attitudes of local governments, when formulating policies. Two-tier game theory also suggests that the outcome of the game at the domestic level may in turn affect the country's position and strategy in international negotiations. For example, domestic political pressure may force leaders to take a tougher or more compromising stance in international negotiations, thus affecting the final policy direction.

2.2. Application Scenarios of Dual-Level Game Theory - Domestic and International

Double-layer game theory has important applicability in analyzing German refugee policy because the refugee issue involves both domestic political games and international relations interactions. At the domestic level, there is a complex distribution of power and competition of interests between the main political parties, the federal government and the state governments in Germany. Differences between the positions of the ruling party and the opposition parties on refugee policy often lead to instability in policy making and inefficiency in implementation. Changes in social opinion have also had a profound impact on policy. With the increase in the number of refugees, the acceptance of refugees has gradually turned negative in some parts of the population, and this shift in public opinion has further aggravated the complexity of the domestic political game.

At the international level, Germany's refugee policy is influenced by a combination of EU institutions, the international security situation, and geopolitical factors. As an important member of the EU, Germany has assumed a larger share of responsibility in the EU's internal refugee responsibility-sharing mechanism, but this has triggered conflicts and disagreements with other member states. Changes in the international security situation, especially the heightened threat of terrorism, have forced Germany to make adjustments in its refugee policy in order to balance humanitarian goals with national security needs. Germany's geostrategic location makes it one of the main corridors for refugees from the Middle East and Africa to enter Europe, a geopolitical reality that further increases the complexity of Germany's refugee policy.

In summary, two-tier game theory provides an important analytical tool for understanding the dilemmas of German refugee policy. By distinguishing between the domestic and international levels of the game, it can reveal more clearly the multiple conflicts of interest and interactive mechanisms in the process of policy making, thus laying a theoretical foundation for exploring the solution path.

3. Evolution of German Refugee Policy

3.1. Stages of Policy Evolution

The evolution of Germany's refugee policy can be divided into several key stages, each of which reflects changes in the political, social and international environments in a specific historical context. The first stage can be traced back to the Cold War period, when the Federal Republic of Germany gradually established a refugee asylum system based on Article 16 of the Basic Law in response to the problems of exiles from Eastern European countries and Vietnamese refugees[1]. The policy of this period was mainly characterized by the admission of political asylum seekers and emphasized humanitarianism and international responsibility. The second phase began after the reunification of the two German states, with the outbreak of the dramatic changes in Eastern Europe and the civil war in Yugoslavia, which led to a massive influx of refugees into Germany, prompting the government to amend the Asylum Act in 1993 to tighten the conditions for refugee applications and restrict the right to family reunification. The third phase was the comprehensive open-door policy after the European refugee crisis in 2015, when the Merkel government put forward the slogan of "Willkommenskultur" (welcoming culture) and dramatically relaxed border controls and refugee application procedures, making Germany a globally prominent refugee-hosting country [2]. However, with the surge in the number of refugees and the increase in social pressure, the fourth phase came swiftly, and the German government began to adjust its policies by re-enforcing border control, reducing the refugee resettlement quota, and strengthening the social integration requirements for refugees through a series of measures such as the Migration Integration Act [3].

3.2. Reasons for policy shifts

The multiple shifts in Germany's refugee policy have been influenced by multiple factors, among which changes in domestic politics, socio-economic conditions, and the international situation have played a key role. First, changes in the domestic political ecology directly shape the policy direction. For example, during the 2015 refugee crisis, the Merkel government adopted a more lenient policy based on vote considerations and public opinion; however, with the rise of extreme right-wing forces such as the Alternative Party (AfD), the ruling coalition had to adjust its stance in response to the public's concerns about security and integration [4]. Second, the socio-economic situation is also an important driver of policy shifts. The financial burden, housing shortages, and labor market shocks associated with the refugee influx have forced the government to reassess the sustainability of its policies. Competition for resources between local residents and refugees, especially in some areas, has increased social tensions and contributed to policy tightening. Changes in the international situation cannot be ignored. Differences within the EU over refugee burden-sharing, the continued escalation of conflicts in the Middle East, and increased global counterterrorism pressures have all had far-reaching effects on Germany's refugee policy. For example, the poor implementation of the EU's Dublin Agreement has resulted in Germany having to take on the task of resettling far more refugees than any other member state, which has further intensified the need for its policy adjustment [5].

4. Analysis of Germany's Refugee Policy Dilemma under the Double Game Perspective

4.1. Domestic game perspective

4.1.1. Political Party Competition and Policy Making

The major political parties in Germany have significant differences in their positions on refugee policy, and such differences directly affect the direction and stability of policy making. The traditional center-right and center-left parties, represented by the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and the Social Democrats (SPD), had tended to adopt an open refugee policy during Merkel's administration, emphasizing humanitarian values and international responsibility [6]. However, this position was gradually challenged as the number of refugees surged and public opinion changed. In contrast, the rise of far-right parties such as Alternative for Germany (AfD), which is strongly opposed to a lax refugee policy and favors tighter border control and restrictions on migrant inflows, largely reflects the dissatisfaction of some people with the existing policy. Competition between political parties is not only reflected at the electoral level, but also exerts pressure on the formulation of refugee policy through parliamentary debates and policy proposals, resulting in frequent policy adjustments and a lack of long-term stability [7].

4.1.2. Public opinion shifts and social conditions

Public opinion in Germany has undergone significant changes in its attitude towards refugee policy, and this shift has constituted an important obstacle to policy implementation. Initially, German society generally showed sympathy and support for refugees, especially during the "welcome culture" in 2015, when a large number of volunteers and civil society organizations were actively involved in refugee reception. However, with the increase in the number of refugees and the emergence of related social problems, public attitudes have gradually become more conservative. Difficulties in social integration have become a focus of public opinion, with language barriers, cultural differences, and lack of employment opportunities making it challenging for refugees to integrate into German society [8]. At the same time, there are also widespread concerns about security, with extreme cases such as the New Year's Eve sexual assaults in Cologne further exacerbating public dissatisfaction with the refugee policy. These social conditions have not only weakened the basis for policy implementation, but also prompted the government to adjust its policy direction in the face of public pressure, for example, by tightening the conditions for asylum applications and strengthening border control measures [9].

4.1.3. Competition between federal and state powers

In the implementation of German refugee policy, the distribution of power and competition between the federation and the states have a profound impact on the effectiveness of policy implementation. According to the German constitution, the states enjoy a high degree of autonomy in areas such as education, healthcare and social services, which results in the implementation of refugee policy often varying from one state to another. For example, more economically developed regions such as Bavaria and North Rhine-Westphalia have taken on a larger share of refugee resettlement, while other states have shown resistance due to limited resources. While the federal government is responsible for setting the overall policy framework, it relies on the cooperation of the Länder in the actual operation of the program, a power game that often leads to inefficient policy implementation. The states have also challenged the legitimacy of federal policies through lawsuits. For example, the state of Bavaria filed a lawsuit with the Federal Constitutional Court over refugee quotas, which further highlighted the tensions between the federal government and the states over refugee policy. This competition

for power not only increases the difficulty of policy coordination, but also weakens the overall effectiveness of the policy to a certain extent.

4.2. International Game Perspective

4.2.1. Responsibility Sharing under the EU System

Problems with the refugee responsibility-sharing mechanism within the EU have placed Germany in a difficult position by taking on too much responsibility under the EU system. According to the Dublin Agreement, refugee asylum applications should be processed by the EU member state where they first enter, a provision that in practice has led to Italy, Greece and other countries being put under tremendous pressure, while Germany has attracted a large number of refugees due to its relatively loose policies and strong economic power. Although the EU has tried to alleviate this problem by introducing a quota system, the mechanism has encountered a lot of resistance in the course of implementation, especially as Eastern European countries are firmly opposed to the practice of mandatory apportionment of refugees, which has made it difficult to form a unified response strategy within the EU. Germany, as a core country of the EU, on the one hand, hopes to share the responsibility by promoting cooperation at the EU level, on the other hand, it has to deal with the massive influx of refugees on its own, and this dual role puts it in a dilemma in the international game [10].

4.2.2. Impact of Security and Counterterrorism on Refugee Policy

The international security situation and counter-terrorism pressure have had a profound impact on Germany's refugee policy, forcing the government to seek a balance between admitting refugees and maintaining national security. In recent years, the frequent occurrence of terrorist activities and the rise of the extremist organization "Islamic State" (ISIS) have forced Germany to consider potential security risks when formulating refugee policy. For example, in the wake of the 2015 terrorist attacks in Paris, the German government strengthened its efforts to scrutinize refugee status and introduced stricter border control measures. However, such policy adjustments have sparked social controversy to a certain extent, as an overemphasis on security may be seen as a departure from humanitarian principles [11]. At the same time, Germany's need to play an active role in international counter-terrorism cooperation requires it to maintain a certain degree of flexibility in its refugee policy in order to avoid being seen as irresponsible by its allies.

4.2.3. The role of geostrategic situation

Germany's geostrategic location has had a significant impact on its refugee policy, with geopolitical factors playing a key role in the international game. As the center of Europe, Germany not only shares borders with several EU member states, but also maintains close economic and cultural ties with the Middle East, North Africa and other regions. This geographic location makes Germany have to consider the complexity of its foreign relations when responding to the refugee crisis. For example, Germany's cooperation with Turkey is of great significance in the context of the refugee issue, with the Ankara government exchanging economic aid and political support from the EU for controlling the flow of refugees, while Germany hopes to reduce the inflow of refugees through its cooperation with Turkey. However, this cooperative relationship is often constrained by a variety of domestic and external factors, such as the changing domestic political situation in Turkey and divisions within the EU over Turkey's policies. Germany's geostrategic location also gives it an important role in international refugee governance. Whether it is participating in UN-led multilateral mechanisms or cooperating bilaterally with neighboring countries, Germany has to take into account the expectations of the international community while safeguarding its own interests.

4.3. Interaction between the international and domestic levels

4.3.1. Reversal of domestic politics on international action

Germany's domestic political pressures have had a significant impact on its refugee policy actions internationally, even leading to a change in its position on EU refugee policy. For example, at the height of the refugee crisis in 2015, Angela Merkel's government proposed an 'open door' policy, which won widespread international praise. However, with the shift in domestic public opinion and the rise of the far-right, this policy has gradually been questioned. In the face of strong opposition from the CSU and other party factions as well as state governments, Merkel has had to adjust her strategy to support the refugee quota system at the EU level and call on other countries to share the responsibility. This policy shift not only reflects the impact of domestic political games on international actions, but also reveals the limitations Germany faces in international affairs. Domestic political pressures have also forced Germany to act unilaterally in some cases, such as strengthening cooperation on border control with neighboring countries such as Austria and Switzerland, initiatives that may conflict with its image of multilateralism in the international arena.

4.3.2. International commitments underpinning domestic legitimacy

Germany's international refugee policy commitments provide a certain legitimacy base for its domestic policies, but there are obvious limitations to this support. As a permanent member of the UN Security Council and a core EU state, Germany plays an important role in international refugee governance, and its policy ideas are often seen as an important part of the global humanitarian cause. For example, Germany actively participates in multilateral mechanisms led by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and demonstrates its sense of international responsibility by providing, for example, financial support and technical assistance. However, such international commitments are not always universally recognized domestically, especially against the backdrop of the rise of the far-right, where some parts of the population perceive Germany as being too focused on its international obligations at the expense of its own real national interests [12]. In addition, the gap between international commitments and domestic realities may also weaken the legitimacy base of the policy, for example, when Germany promotes the refugee responsibility sharing mechanism within the EU, it fails to effectively address the conflict of interest between domestic states, resulting in poor policy implementation.

5. Reflections on the Path to Solving the Refugee Problem in Germany

5.1. Domestic level

5.1.1. Reconciling political differences

The formulation and implementation of Germany's refugee policy has long been significantly affected by inter-party disagreements, which not only weakened the stability of the policy, but also exacerbated social antagonism towards the refugee issue. In order to mitigate this problem, a cross-party consultative mechanism has become a necessity. By holding regular refugee policy roundtables with the participation of representatives of major political parties, all parties can seek consensus while fully expressing their positions, thus reducing policy volatility. In addition, drawing on the concept of the "winning set" in two-tier game theory, policymakers should strive to broaden the base of voters at the domestic level who are supportive of refugee policy in order to enhance policy legitimacy [13]. For example, when formulating specific measures, a team of independent experts can be brought in to conduct evaluations to ensure that the policy is consistent with the international humanitarian spirit while responding to the core concerns of the domestic public. At the same time, the government needs to strengthen the publicity and explanation of its refugee policy, so as to convey the policy objectives and the

effects of its implementation to the public in a transparent manner, thus winning broader social support.

5.1.2. Curbing the Expansion of the Extreme Right Wing

The negative impact of extreme right-wing forces in Germany's refugee policy cannot be ignored, and they have further torn the social consensus by inciting xenophobia and creating social panic. To curb this trend, strengthening the education system is one of the key initiatives. Schools should add curriculum content on multiculturalism and inclusive social construction, and develop students' understanding and acceptance of migrant groups. At the same time, improving the legal framework to combat extremism is also indispensable. For example, the Assembly Law and the Penal Code should be amended to explicitly prohibit incitement to hate speech and violence, and to impose severe penalties on violators. The government should also step up scrutiny of the sources of funding for extreme right-wing organizations and cut off their economic support chain, thereby weakening their social influence. It is worth noting that these measures need to be complemented by proactive social integration policies to avoid a backlash from the far-right due to policy imbalance [14].

5.1.3. Optimizing the efficiency of integration policies

Improving the efficiency of refugee integration policies is one of the central aspects of solving the refugee problem in Germany. Language training as the first step towards integration should be further optimized. For example, the government can help refugees master the German language more quickly by increasing the teaching hours of language courses and introducing individualized learning plans, so as to lay the foundation for their subsequent employment and social interaction. At the same time, the improvement of employment support policies is also crucial. The government can set up a special fund to provide refugees with vocational skills training opportunities and encourage enterprises to absorb refugee labor, thus alleviating the phenomenon of exclusion from the job market. Integration programs at the community level also need to be strengthened, such as organizing cross-cultural exchange activities to promote interaction and understanding between local residents and refugees. These measures will not only help to improve the quality of life of refugees, but also enhance the cohesion of society as a whole, thus creating favorable conditions for the long-term implementation of the policy.

5.2. International Level

5.2.1. Reconstructing the EU's responsibility-sharing mechanism

The irrationality of the refugee responsibility-sharing mechanism within the EU is an important external factor in Germany's refugee policy dilemma. In order to reduce Germany's burden, the EU needs to establish a fairer and more reasonable responsibility-sharing system. First of all, it should formulate scientific criteria for the distribution of responsibilities according to the economic capacity, population size and geographical conditions of each member state. For example, countries with stronger economies should take on more refugee resettlement tasks, while geographically more marginalized countries can share less responsibility. Secondly, the EU should set up a unified agency for refugee reception and distribution, responsible for coordinating cooperation among countries, so as to avoid systemic failures caused by individual countries shirking their responsibilities. Encouraging member states to actively participate in the implementation of refugee policy by introducing flexible financial incentives is also an effective means to enhance overall efficiency. These measures will help alleviate the situation in which Germany alone bears too much responsibility under the EU system, thus creating more space for the adjustment of its domestic policies.

5.2.2. Regulating the legal boundaries of cooperation with third countries

Cooperation with third countries on the refugee issue is an important way to solve Germany's refugee problem, but its effectiveness and legitimacy depend on a clear legal framework. First

of all, Germany needs to sign binding cooperation agreements with relevant third countries to clarify the responsibilities and obligations of both parties in terms of repatriation, resettlement and financial assistance. For example, when signing agreements with refugee transit countries such as Turkey, it should ensure that they strictly implement the relevant provisions of international refugee law, so as to avoid unilateral interest-driven cooperation from becoming ineffective. Secondly, Germany can promote the establishment of a unified legal framework for refugee cooperation through the EU platform to provide guidance for cooperation between member states and third countries. In addition, strengthening the external supervision of the cooperation process is also an essential part [15]. For example, the introduction of international organizations or independent third-party agencies to evaluate the effectiveness of cooperation to ensure that it meets international humanitarian standards. These measures will help to enhance the transparency and sustainability of Germany's cooperation with third countries.

5.2.3. Strengthening diplomatic synergy in source governance

The fundamental solution to the refugee problem lies in eliminating its root causes, which requires Germany to cooperate with relevant countries through diplomatic means. First of all, Germany should increase its humanitarian aid to conflict areas, providing food, medical and educational support to alleviate the plight of local residents, so as to reduce the number of people displaced by war. Secondly, Germany can promote regional peace processes through diplomatic channels and assist the parties to conflicts in reaching reconciliation agreements, so as to create conditions for the safe return of refugees. For example, in the Sahel region of Africa, Germany can jointly initiate a multilateral dialogue mechanism with France and other countries to jointly explore long-term solutions to regional security issues. Germany should also strengthen its cooperation with international organizations such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and make use of their professional resources and global networks to jointly develop comprehensive solutions to the refugee problem. These measures will not only help reduce the influx of refugees, but also enhance Germany's leadership and influence in the international community [16].

6. Implications of the German Refugee Problem

6.1. Reflections on the capacity of the EU coordination system

The evolution of the German refugee problem not only reveals the complexity of domestic policy making, but also exposes the significant shortcomings of the EU coordination system in responding to transnational problems. As a regional international organization, the EU's member states have obvious divergent interests and uneven sharing of responsibilities in refugee policy. For example, Central and Eastern European countries tend to maintain liberal foreign investment policies to attract investment, while showing strong resistance to the refugee issue, an attitude that contrasts sharply with that of core member states such as Germany. In addition, the responsibility-sharing mechanism within the EU has failed to effectively alleviate the pressure on member states, resulting in Germany facing multiple challenges such as social integration and security maintenance after receiving a large number of refugees. This phenomenon shows that the EU coordination system lacks sufficient flexibility and implementation power in responding to transnational crises.

From the perspective of the negotiating coalition, the interest preferences and identities among EU member states are not fully unified, which further weakens its ability to act collectively on the refugee issue. Randall Schweiler points out that the effectiveness of the Union depends on the degree of convergence of member states' interests and identities. However, on the refugee issue, there are both conflicting economic interests and differences in cultural values among EU member states, which makes it difficult to form a unified policy framework. Therefore, the key to improving the EU coordination system lies in strengthening communication and cooperation

among member states, establishing a fairer and more reasonable responsibility-sharing mechanism, and enhancing the trust and support of member states for EU policies through institutionalized means [17].

In addition, the EU coordination system needs to improve its ability to adapt to changes in the external environment. With the deterioration of the global security situation and the continuing influx of refugees, the EU must revisit its existing refugee policy framework and explore more forward-looking solutions. For example, it can reduce the influx of refugees at the source by strengthening cooperation with third countries and clarifying the legal boundaries of cooperation. At the same time, the EU should also focus on balancing the relationship between national security and humanitarianism, and avoid over-emphasizing one principle to the detriment of the other. Only by striking a balance between internal coordination and external cooperation can the EU better cope with future transnational challenges.

6.2. Balancing humanitarianism and security

The experience and lessons learned from Germany's refugee policy in dealing with the relationship between humanitarianism and security provide important lessons for other countries. On the one hand, Germany adopted an open attitude and actively accepted a large number of refugees at the initial stage, reflecting its commitment to its international humanitarian responsibilities; on the other hand, with the deterioration of the domestic security situation and the intensification of the social integration problem, the German government has had to adjust its policy in order to balance the contradiction between its humanitarian objectives and the needs of national security. This policy shift reflects the core viewpoint of the two-tier game theory, that is, a country needs to comprehensively consider the interests of both the international and domestic levels when making foreign policy.

From the international level, Germany's refugee policy is deeply influenced by the EU system. The imperfect responsibility-sharing mechanism within the EU has made Germany take on too many refugee acceptance tasks, which not only exacerbates social conflicts at home, but also triggers public dissatisfaction with the government's policy. At the same time, changes in the international security situation, especially the intensification of the threat of terrorism, have forced the German government to make adjustments in its refugee policy to ensure that national security is not threatened. While such policy adjustments have eased the domestic pressure to a certain extent, they have also triggered the international community to question its humanitarian stance.

From the domestic level, the effectiveness of Germany's refugee policy implementation has been affected by a variety of factors such as political party competition, shifts in public opinion, and the distribution of power between the federation and the states. Differences in the positions of political parties have led to a lack of stability in policymaking, while shifts in public opinion have further exacerbated the difficulty of policy implementation. In addition, the competition between federal and state power in the implementation of refugee policy has made it difficult to achieve the desired results. The existence of these problems shows that the complex refugee problem cannot be solved by relying solely on humanitarian concepts, and a balance must be found between humanitarianism and security.

To sum up, the experience and lessons learned from Germany's refugee policy show that the state should take full account of the interaction between the international and domestic levels when formulating its refugee policy, so as to avoid an imbalance in the policy due to excessive bias in favor of a certain principle. At the same time, the European Union and other international organizations should also strengthen cooperation to jointly deal with the challenges posed by the refugee issue, so as to achieve a win-win situation in terms of humanitarian and security objectives.

7. Conclusion

This study applies Putnam's two-level game theory to examine Germany's refugee policy, revealing how domestic political fragmentation and international institutional constraints interact to create persistent policy dilemmas. At the domestic level, party polarization, shifting public opinion, and federal-state tensions undermine policy coherence. Internally, Germany's humanitarian commitments are increasingly challenged by rising security concerns and far-right mobilization. Internationally, the EU's dysfunctional burden-sharing regime and geopolitical pressures from third countries further complicate Germany's efforts to lead a sustainable response. The findings highlight that refugee governance cannot rely on either domestic consensus or multilateral cooperation alone; instead, it requires synchronized reforms across both levels. Future research should explore the long-term effects of recent policy tightening on integration outcomes, as well as the potential for EU-level institutional redesign to prevent collective action failures.

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