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# The securitization of Asylum

An analysis of the impact of the 2015-2016  
refugee asylum  
policies in Germany

Juan-Pablo Cadena

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The securitization of asylum. An analysis of the impact of the 2015-2016 refugee crisis in asylum policies in Germany

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## **ABSTRACT**

This publication has won the Global Migration Award which is delivered every year by the Global Migration Centre for the best master thesis of the Graduate Institute in the field of migration. This master's dissertation was written by Juan Pablo Cadena Gómez under the supervision of Prof. Keith Krause.

This study is the first to analyze the discourses and practices of securitization and desecuritization around the issue of migration that have conflated in the German political arena during the 2015-2016 so called “refugee crisis”. The study untangles the role that security played in the discursive construction of the crisis in Germany and how it affected the legal and policy frameworks governing refugee flows. Departing from a post-structuralist reading of securitization theory as a political process in which different discourses struggle for becoming the hegemonic regime of truth, the study examines which actors initiated securitizing and desecuritizing moves against refugees, where these moves found resistance, and the result that this dynamic had in the governance of the movement of forced migrants into Germany. The study goes beyond the linguistic construction of the refugee crisis by including in the analysis the socio-historical context in which the political debate on the institution of asylum in Germany was framed, in order to understand the impact of internal and external factors on the political and security outcomes. In this fashion, the study shows that Germany, despite having adopted an open-border refugee policy in 2015, did not desecuritize its asylum policies; on the contrary, it instantiated a new securitization process which resulted in increasing security practices governing the asylum process, making the access to international protection more restrictive than before the crisis, and reducing the rights for asylum seekers and recognized refugees. In this sense, Germany followed the more general securitizing trend observed in the European Union after 2015 of representing the refugee crisis as a security issue rather than a humanitarian crisis.

**Key Words:** Securitization; Desecuritization; Refugees; Asylum Policy; Immigration Policy; Germany; AfD; Angela Merkel; European Union.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	6
2.1. Literature review .....	6
2.1.1. Migration studies.....	7
2.1.2. Securitization Theory .....	10
2.1.3. Limitations of the literature .....	17
2.1.4. Improvements in Securitization Theory.....	20
2.2. Methodology .....	41
2.2.1. Theory .....	41
2.2.2. Research Design .....	48
2.2.3. Method .....	52
3. THE DISCOURSE AND POLICIES OF THE FEDERAL CHANCELLOR .....	57
3.1. General patterns of the discourse construction .....	57
3.1.1. Inconsistency in the discourse.....	57
3.1.2. The link between the national and the EU level.....	60
3.2. The construction of Germany's collective identity .....	61
3.3. The use of security frames to construct the refugee crisis.....	64
3.3.1. First moment: January-September 2015. ....	68
3.3.2. Second moment: September 2015- December 2016 .....	74
3.4. The process of securitization in the Chancellor's discourse .....	78
3.4.1. Securitizing moves in Merkel's discourse .....	78
3.4.2. Changes in the federal legal framework regulating asylum .....	84
3.5. Conclusions .....	105
4. THE CONSTRUCTION OF TEXT ON THE REFUGEE CRISIS BY THE AFD.....	108
4.1. Securitization frames.....	109
4.1.1. Ontological security frames.....	111
4.1.2. Physical security frames.....	117
4.2. Conclusion .....	122
5. THE ROLE OF THE GERMAN MEDIA IN THE (DE)SECURITIZATION OF THE REFUGEE CRISIS.....	126
5.1. The text construction in Der Taggespiegel.....	126
5.1.1. Non-securitizing period: January-September 2015.....	130

5.1.2. Securitizing period: October 2015-July 2016 .....	132
5.1.3. Desecuritizing period: July-December 2016.....	135
5.2. The text construction in Die Welt.....	138
5.2.1. Ontological insecurity frames.....	144
5.2.2. Physical security frames.....	149
5.3. Conclusion .....	151
6. CONCLUSIONS .....	154
6.1. The dominant discourses during the refugee crisis and the policy responses.....	155
6.2. Theoretical implications .....	157
6.2.1. The scope of desecuritization in the German case .....	157
6.2.2. The role of power in securitization .....	160
6.2.3. The role of societal security .....	161
6.2.4. On the nature of securitization as a social mechanism .....	162
7. BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	168
7.1. Secondary sources.....	168
7.2. Primary sources .....	181

## List of Figures

Figure 1. Number of first-time asylum applications in Germany 1986-2016.....	65
Figure 2. Evolution of public perception of the threat of terrorism in Germany. ....	66
Figure 3. Evolution of public perception of the threat of crime in Germany. August 2016 .....	66
Figure 4. Chancellor Merkel approval ratings. July 2015 - February 2016.....	67
Figure 5. Evolution of the Chancellor's discourse in context. 2015-2016 .....	82
Figure 6. Number of securitizing and desecuritizing dispositions in the legal framework regulating asylum in Germany. 2015-2016.....	85
Figure 7. Number of cases of forced and voluntary return of asylum-seekers in Germany 2014-2016 .....	91
Figure 8. Percentage of people granted subsidiary protection in Germany. 2015-2016.....	92
Figure 9. Evolution of the Chancellor's discourse and the government policies. 2015-2016.....	93
Figure 10. Securitization moves performed by AfD representatives, in context. 2015-2016.....	123
Figure 11. Changes in Germany's <i>Welcoming Culture</i> between November 2012 and January 2015.....	127
Figure 12. Public opinion on the problems associated with the refugee flow. December 2015 .....	128
Figure 13. Evolution of politically motivated crime associated with immigration in Germany. 2013-2016 .....	129
Figure 14. Public perception on the threat of Islamist terrorism in Germany. August 2016 .....	135
Figure 15. Evolution of voting intention in Germany (CDU/CSU, SPD and AfD). 2014-2017 .....	137
Figure 16. Public Opinion on Asylum in Germany. November 2015.....	140

Figure 17. Public opinion on the prospects of success of integrating refugees in Germany. December 2015.....140

Figure 18. The greatest security concerns for German citizens at the beginning of 2016 .....141

Figure 19. Public perception on the state of refugee flows to Germany. June 2016.....144

Figure 20. Security policies supported by German citizens to counter crime and terrorism. August 2016 .....150

Figure 21. Securitizing moves in Der Taggespiegel and Die Welt in context. 2015-2016.....152

Figure 22. Securitizing trend in Germany during the refugee crisis. 2015-2016.....163

## List of Tables

Table 1. Description of the Sample .....	52
Table 2. Asylum Statistics in Germany 2015-2016.....	71
Table 3. Securitizing moves performed by the Federal Chancellor 2015-2016 .....	79
Table 4. First-time asylum applications in Germany 2015 and rejection rate.....	87
Table 5. Description of the securitizing dispositions contained in the legal amendments made after September 2015.....	89
Table 6. Detail of the amendments to the legal framework regulating asylum in Germany 2015-2016.....	94
Table 7. Securitizing moves performed by AfD representatives disaggregated by type 2015-2016.....	110
Table 8. Instances of securitizing text in Der Taggespiegel’s discourse .....	128
Table 9. Instances of securitizing text in Die Welt’s discourse .....	138
Table 10. Public opinion on the Federal government’s open-door refugee policy.....	143
Table 11. What are the main reasons for fewer refugees currently coming to Germany? .....	144

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In 2015, a massive flow of forced migrants started to reach the European Union looking for sanctuary and protection and fleeing from the multiple armed conflicts happening in the Middle East, Africa and Central Asia. According to the statistics of the OCDE, 2.6 million entered the European Union between 2015 and 2016 (OCDE 2017, 13). This massive movement of people was generally construed in the media and the political debate in security terms: it was perceived as a social crisis -a *refugee crisis*- and as a traumatic event (Dingott Alkopher 2018). Nevertheless, the EU and its member states responded differently to the situation. The European Commission, presenting the crisis as an existential threat to the European integration project, adopted emergency policies oriented to strengthen its role of gatekeeper of EU's external borders through increased border and management control, interdiction of migration through an agreement with Turkey, and the establishment of refugee distribution quotas for member states (Dingott Alkopher 2018). A group of states, mainly from Central and East Europe -the Visegrad Four: Poland, Czechia, Slovakia and Hungary- securitized the situation presenting asylum seekers as threats to internal security and to national identity, and denounced the EU refugee quota policy as an affront to their sovereignty. Therefore, these countries refused to comply with EU required quotas and adopted illiberal policies and quasi-military measures to restrict the access of forced migrants to their territories as well as to discourage them from applying for asylum. (The Guardian 2016; Dingott Alkopher 2018)

Against this trend, Germany responded to the situation in a completely different fashion. The German government and public opinion did not perform securitizing discourses against the asylum-seekers in the wake of the crisis. On the contrary, in 2015, the German public saw with horror the humanitarian crisis that refugees were experiencing because of massive drownings in the Mediterranean Sea and inhuman treatment and precarious conditions in the EU border countries (Vollmer and Karakayali 2018). At the beginning, the German government maintained a careful position towards the crisis but received strong public and political critique for its apparent inaction (Bock 2018, 379). Thus, on 21 August 2015, the Federal government decided to unilaterally suspend the application of the Dublin Regulation, and on 4 September adopted the open-border refugee policy, when Merkel decided to allow the entry of asylum seekers coming from Austria and Hungary and apply for asylum in Germany. (AIDA 2015b; Bock 2018; Benedikter and Katrolewsky 2016) This policy framed the debate on refugees and asylum seekers in Germany as part of normal politics and refrained from securitizing the refugee crisis (Dingott Alkopher 2018).

In its beginnings, this refugee policy received great domestic support. Some 8 million Germans were somehow involved in welcoming and assisting refugees arriving at train stations in the late summer and autumn of 2015, and an atmosphere of hospitality dominated the country (Vollmer and Karakayali 2018). More than 1 million asylum seekers arrived in Germany between the summer of 2015 and 2016, mainly from war-torn Syria, making the number of asylum applications soar from 173,072 in 2014, to 476,649 in 2015 and to 745,545 in 2016 (Chemin et al. 2018; AIDA 2017). This sudden and massive arrival of refugees caught the German government and society unprepared. The original popular support for receiving refugees started to fade as concerns with the possible alienation of German culture and collective identity, with the perspective of fiscal and economic problems, and with the transformation of its liberal political system surfaced.

The social discontent with the open-door refugee policy aggravated due to the impact of violent external shocks associated with the refugee crisis. In 2015 and 2016, Islamist terrorist attacks related to the war in Syria were proliferating in Europe, mainly in neighboring France, thus setting the scenario for linking the Muslim marker of the asylum seeker's identity with terrorism. Furthermore, right-wing discourses portraying Islam as a misogynist religion gained momentum. In this scenario, the alleged massive sexual assaults denounced in Cologne on 2016 New Year's Eve and the Islamist terrorist attacks of Würzburg and Ansbach on July 2016, all of which were perpetrated by refugees and asylum seekers, heightened the popular perception of the refugee as a potential source of violent crime and terrorism.

Politically, this growing social discontent was not able to be channelized through the main established German parties because the conservative CDU and the social-democrat SPD, being part of the Grand Coalition government between 2013-2017, coincided in general in its desecuritizing approach to the refugee crisis, and because the only dissident party within the coalition, the conservative Bavarian CSU, which clearly opposed the refugee policy, in its condition of CDU's smaller sister party and its reduced regional scope, lacked the strength to impose its will to the other members of the government. In response to the niche left in the political arena against the refugee policy, the *Alternative für Deutschland* (AfD), a marginal populist right-wing party which embraced a mainly Eurosceptic agenda, modify its political program and incorporated as main elements its opposition to immigration and to the government's refugee policy. Thanks to this position and to the evolving context of the refugee crisis, the AfD became a strong political actor, gaining representation in State parliaments and becoming by 2017 the third most voted party (The Guardian 2017).

Within this social and political context, the Federal government promoted and adopted a series of measures aiming at reducing the inflow of refugees, restricting the requirements for the recognition of the refugee status, and deporting those refugees and asylum-seekers that were deemed a security risk. Nevertheless, at the same time the government adopted and maintained a series of measures aiming at integrating recognized refugees into German society on a permanent or on a long-term basis. Due to this equivocal political response, scholars have offered different readings of the refugee-security nexus in Germany during the 2015-2016 refugee crisis.

Some argue, explicitly (Dingott Alkopher 2018) or implicitly (Mushaben 2018) that Germany has moved towards desecuritizing refugees and asylum seekers and justify these desecuritizing moves on ontological security grounds, that is, a lack of perceived threat from refugees and asylum seekers to societal security, a situation that is inscribed in a domestic process of collective negotiation of the German imagined national identity. Dingott Alkopher, for instance, asserts that “Germany’s temporary ‘open door’ policy on refugees [...] was driven by a psychological lack of perceived threat from the ‘immigrant-other’ and a ‘civilian power’ collective identity.” (Dingott Alkopher 2018, 314). For Dingott Alkopher, this socio-psychological condition was the result of a process of renegotiation of the German national identity that had been going on for the past three decades and in which German society has adopted an inclusive, cosmopolitan understanding of its general culture, identifying itself with liberal values and individual rights and freedoms, refusing granting political power to security institutions, and accepting its condition of country of immigration (Dingott Alkopher 2018, 326-327).

Mushaben (2018) coincides with this analysis of a lack of securitizing moves toward refugees and asylum seekers in Germany. By comparing securitizing policies between the US and Germany since the terrorist attacks of September 9, 2001, she concludes that, contrary to the US experience, Germany has engaged in a progressive process of desecuritization towards refugees and asylum seekers, by changing the exclusionary laws that limited all forms of immigration, and by discursively and institutionally creating a “‘welcoming culture’ building on human rights, open borders and pro-active resettlement policies” (Mushaben 2018, 244). According to this author, until 1990, “Germans perceived migration and asylum policies as a threat to ethno-national identity”, but with the end of the Cold War and the process of reunification, German society came to understand its *jus sanguinis* base of collective identity as a limitation to other national needs, mainly economic competitiveness, and subsequently started to develop institutional changes aiming at becoming an inclusive society (Mushaben 2018, 245). In this context, both Dingott Alkopher and Mushaben argue that the refugee crisis of 2015-2016 did not trigger the desecuritizing policies

of the German government, but rather the situation encountered a desecuritizing process towards refugees and asylum seekers, and migrants in general, which allowed avoiding the socio-political construction of the refugee as a threat and enabled the adoption of Merkel's open-door refugee policy.

Against this perspective, Banai and Kreide consider that Germany has not desecuritized migration; on the contrary, these authors argue that despite proclaiming allegiance to human and citizens' rights and the promise of inclusion and equality to foreigners, Germany uses the legal institution of *citizenship* to securitize migration and exclude foreigners from its social and political community (Banai and Kreide 2017, 903). According to these authors, Germany effectively modified its citizenship law in the 1990s in order to allow migration into the country, accepting for the first time in its history the possibility to granting naturalization to foreigners, but it did it in a utilitarian fashion, looking for attracting high-skilled migrants in order to maintain the competitiveness of its economy (Banai and Kreide 2017, 908). This new "internal legal inclusiveness evolved in Germany in interaction with a securitization discourse on immigration, and grew strongly connected to the condition of control over external borders." (Banai and Kreide 2017, 909) Because Germany's borders are entangled with the EU's external borders, and because the EU has securitized them, Germany's securitization of migration is subtler and strategic. Once the EU external borders have been overcome, Germany uses the legal access to citizenship to create new soft internal borders, excluding unwanted migrants from German society. (Banai and Kreide 2017, 904). In this way, Germany's securitization of migration is read by the authors through the exclusionary nature of its legal framework which hamper foreigners' chances of becoming part of German society. Within this framework, these authors argue that securitization in Germany has increased towards foreigners, and since 2001 Muslims in particular to the point of blurring the distinction between "immigration and asylum politics on the one side, and minority politics, regarding an 'indigenous' minority, on the other." (Banai and Kreide 2017, 911).

This analysis resonates with a 2008 article by Diez and Squire which concludes that, giving Germany's citizenship tradition based on an ethnic approach to national identity, after the terrorist attacks of September 9, 2001, this country was more prone to securitize migrants and refugees by linking them to the threat of terrorism than other countries with non-ethnic bases for citizenship. These authors arrive at similar conclusions as Banai and Kreide in that the exclusionary nature of citizen rights in Germany is used as a securitizing mechanism towards foreigners (Diez and Squire 2008, 578):

Specifically, our analysis has suggested that the exclusionary formation of political community is evident in the securitisation of migration, but that the specific way in which securitisation has developed in Germany and Britain in part reflects the longer tradition of citizenship in each case. Specifically, we have suggested that the tendency to directly link migration and terrorism in the German case is indicative of a tradition of citizenship in which distinctions between citizens and non-citizens are explicitly 'ethnicized' despite the recent inclusion of jus soli provisions [...].

Deepening the analysis on the relation between terrorism and the religious identity marker of the refugee, a study by Müller (2017) on the discursive construction of Muslim refugees in British and German media showed that during the 2015-2016 refugee crisis, German media tended to emphasize more the Muslim faith of the asylum seekers arriving at Germany and the EU, than the British media. This emphasis led German journalists to problematize, more than British journalists, the cultural and identarian implications of the influx of refugees. Finally, the analysis evidenced that German media showed a stronger tendency than the British media of linking the arriving refugees to the threat of Islamist terrorism, thus constructing the refugee as a threat to collective identity, on the one hand, and to national security, on the other. This discursive construction of the Muslim refugee during the refugee crisis of 2015-2016 as a societal and state security threat has been argued by other scholars to be the ground on which the xenophobic social movement *Patriotic Europeans against the Islamization of the West* – PEGIDA- and the anti-immigration and Eurosceptic party Alternative for Germany (*Alternative für Deutschland*, AfD) have gained wider national support (Basaraba and Nistor 2015; Boulila and Carri 2017; Dostal 2015, 2017; Hansen and Olsen 2018; Geiges 2018; Grabow 2016; Matthay 2017; Thran and Boehnke 2015; Virchow 2016).

Given the inconclusiveness presented by the literature on the degree to which Germany has effectively desecuritized or not its policies towards asylum seekers and refugees, this study will fill the gap by looking at the discourses and practices of securitization and desecuritization that have conflated in the German political arena during the 2015-2016 refugee crisis. The main question that this study aims at addressing is **¿What has been the role of security in the discursive construction of the 2015-2016 refugee crisis in Germany and how has this construction affected the legal and policy frameworks governing refugee flows in the country?**

For responding it, the study engages first in a theoretical revision of the securitization literature in order to understand the political implications and the causal mechanisms of

securitization processes as well as the conditions in which desecuritization takes place. Second, departing from a post-structuralist reading of securitization theory as a political process in which different discourses struggle for becoming the hegemonic regime of truth, this study analyzes which actors have been resisting the desecuritizing moves that the literature suggests have started in the German Federal Chancellery, and the result in the governance of the movement of forced migrants into Germany. Thirdly, the study examines within its socio-historical context the political debate on the institution of asylum in Germany in order to understand the impact of internal and external factors on the political and security outcomes.

Thus, through the deconstruction of discourse and the analysis of the socio-historical context and the resulting security practices, in this study I show that Germany has not desecuritized its asylum policies and that in the context of the 2015-2016 refugee crisis, despite having adopted the open-border refugee policy, the Federal government and society in general instantiated a new securitization process which resulted in the increasing security practices governing the asylum process, making the access to international protection in Germany more restrictive and reducing the rights for asylum seekers and recognized refugees. In this sense, Germany did follow the EU securitizing trend of representing the refugee as a security issue and thus it cannot be considered an anomalous case of desecuritization, as some scholars argue.

The study is divided in five sections. The first section contains the literature review and the research methodology. The second section encompasses the analysis of the Federal Chancellor's desecuritizing discourse on the refugee crisis and the resulting policies adopted by the Federal government during the 2015-2016 period. The third section deals with the discursive construction of the refugee as a security threat by the AfD and the policies and measures proposed to respond to such a threat. The fourth section comprehends the analysis of the public opinion response to the refugee crisis. The final section contains the conclusions.

## **2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **2.1. Literature review**

The international movement of people has been studied mostly from two disciplines within international relations: Migration Studies and Critical Security Studies. The link between these two intellectual traditions is found in two aspects. First, there is a general view among scholars that transnational migration, understood as the "large-scale movement and settlement of people from one country to another" has become one of the most important issues in international relations since the end of the Second World War, because of its increased dynamism linked with the

process of neoliberal globalization, and because of the challenges it presents to the ability of states to control and govern it (Heisler and Layton-Henry 1993, 149). And second, scholars also agree that immigration policies, in general and globally, have become more restrictive and selective in order for governments to reduce and filter the kind of migrants they want to sovereignly accept (Hatton and Williamson 2005; Cornelius and Tsuda 2004).

### **2.1.1. Migration studies**

Scholars working within the discipline of Migration Studies have approached the restrictive nature of immigration policies from a neorealist understanding of political economy, and from an institutional neoliberal perspective. Working within the former approach, Hatton and Williamson (2005) argue that states define the restrictiveness of their immigration policies under macro and microeconomic considerations. They sustain that states aim at attracting high-skilled migrants and restricting the entry of low-skilled migrants in order to get the most benefit of transnational migratory flows. For that, they argue that states balance the inherent economic costs that migrants face in order to move to the destination country with the economic costs they impose to migrants through immigration policy. Similarly, Fitzgerald et al. (2014) argue that countries compete for attracting the best skilled workforce in order to gain economic competitiveness and that the selection of skilled migrants is achieved through citizenship policies and legislation, which at the same time are more or less restrictive depending on the force of far-right parties in the country of destination. In another influential hypothesis, Ruhs and Martin (2008) assert that states opt for more restrictive migratory policies when facing large numbers of unwanted migrants. In their argument, there is a trade-off between rights and numbers so that states facing large numbers of low-skilled migrants will in response restrict the rights to which those migrants will have access, such as family reunification, welfare provisions, residence duration and work permits. All these authors fail to explain why, despite adopting restrictive policies, there is a well-documented increase of migratory flows, not only from skilled migrants but also from non-skilled migrants, specially towards countries of the Global North.

Scholars working from institutional neoliberalism have tried to address this phenomenon, by breaking the state into its subnational actors (Cerna 2009; Cornelius and Tsuda 2004; Freeman 2006; Hollifield 2004; Joppke 1998) or by analyzing supranational developments that have restricted state sovereignty in controlling migration (De Haas et al. 2016; Sassen 1998). Freeman (2006) and Cerna (2009) have argued that the type of migration policies, and therefore the basis for its selectiveness and restrictiveness, depends on governing coalitions. In this view,

policymakers act as brokers who produce migratory policies depending on the economic or social interests of other organized actors with whom they have formed governing coalitions, such as the private sector, worker unions, civil rights and human rights advocacy groups, diasporas and migrants themselves. Hollifield (2004) argues that countries of the Global North are trapped in a *liberal paradox* by which economic imperatives and demographic realities push them to open themselves to international migration while at the same time the reluctance from domestic forces to accept migrants and the need to maintain the image of sovereignty and control of borders push back states to adopt more restrictive policies towards migration. Building on this notion of the inherent contradictions of liberalism, Cornelius and Tsuda (2004) and Joppke (1998) assert that there is a gap between the aims of restrictive migratory policies and its outcomes, caused by three factors: the economic need to accept low-skilled migrants despite official rhetoric against this type of migratory flows; the limitations of state institutions to effectively implement the controls on unwanted migration; and, the convergence of international liberal institutions which provide rights to immigrants that are enforced by national and international courts when facing restrictions from governments. Sassen (1998) follows a similar argument by stating that the economic imperatives caused by globalization and the expansion of the international human rights regime impose external limitations to state sovereignty, limiting its capacity to effectively implement restrictive migratory policies. De Haas et al. (2016) are among the few scholars that reject the idea that migratory policies have become more restrictive since 1945, and instead sustains that the expansion of liberal institutions have been pervasive, causing a tendency for more open migration policies affecting both skilled and non-skilled migrants. Nevertheless, De Haas et al. do recognize that there is an increasing international tendency towards more selective migratory policies, based on economic, utilitarian calculations.

Because of its focus on economic factors and rational choice, it is not surprising that the literature on forced displacement within Migration Studies is not equally broad. Scholars in this discipline argue that restrictive migratory policies around the globe have targeted mainly refugees and asylum seekers (De Haas et al. 2016; Thielmann 2011; Czaika and Hobolth 2016; Hollifield 2004; Skran 1992), although the reasoning behind has not been well developed. Some scholars argue that these restrictive policies are caused by a general perception that refugees are in reality economic migrants or that they go to destination countries to abuse the welfare provisions (Hatton and Williamson 2005; Neumayer 2005). Other scholars approaching the causes of restrictive asylum policies have stated that feelings of large-scale solidarity, which are reflected in more comprehensive and generous welfare systems, explain why some Western countries are more

inclined to accept a larger number of refugees (Boräng 2015). Others have argued that it is the degree of cultural diversity in a country's population that explains more solidarity towards refugees and therefore less restrictive asylum policies (Oorschot 2006). Finally, scholars such as Thielmann (2011) and Neumayer (2005) sustain that the trigger to forced migration is always a mixture of political and economic reasons, but the choices that forced migrants make on the country of destination are mainly based on economic calculations: the costs and benefits of going to one country and not to another.

This literature is interesting as it brings light on some of the tendencies on immigration and asylum policies in the Global North; nonetheless, it presents ontological and epistemological limitations for answering the questions this study is interested in. First, by departing from a positivist ontology, the literature encounters problems in explaining variations on asylum policies among countries with similar economic and welfare systems and similar demographic trends, facing the same migration challenges, like in the case of the EU countries during the refugee crisis of 2015-2016. Second, because it cannot explain variation, the literature also fails at explaining change within a country in different times. The best approach to variation and change is provided by the theories of governing coalitions; nevertheless, this literature does not provide the theoretical tools for explaining the reasons for certain social groups to identify certain migrants and refugees as a threat. When the literature approaches migrants as cultural and economic threats, it reifies the idea of national identity and present it as a pre-existing social characteristic without problematizing it, while in economic terms, it contradicts itself by not explaining why while facing the need of low-skilled migrants for economic competitiveness and the sustainability of the welfare state, the general population continues to push for restrictive migratory policies towards this kind of migrants.

When talking about restrictive migratory and asylum policies, the literature does not consider the role of security as the mechanism that makes possible those politic choices. This omission makes it impossible for scholars in this intellectual tradition to problematize the use of police, military and security institutions when dealing with migrants and refugees. It also leaves unexplained the trend in liberal states to adopt illiberal policies to contain and deter irregular migration. In short, this literature, by focusing on what calculations drive state policy and migratory flows, fails to consider the conditions of possibility that allow the social construction of migrants and refugees as threats. Moreover, because of its lack of engagement with the social construction of identity and the role of power and authorized knowledge in this process, the literature has not problematized the role of new racism and post-colonialism in the design of restrictive migratory

and asylum policies. Finally, by not considering the security implications, this literature cannot account for processes of desecuritization, or when issues are taken away from emergency politics.

### **2.1.2. Securitization Theory**

In order to answer the main research questions, the literature that is going to inform my theoretical framework is found in Critical Security Studies (CSS), specifically, in the writings of the Copenhagen School (CoS) through the concepts of *securitization* and *societal security*. This literature is valuable for my research due to two aspects. First, CSS has questioned the neorealist claim that security is objective and subjective, and instead has claimed that it is intersubjective. According to neorealism, security is objective in the sense that actual or concrete threats to the state exist, and that these threats have a materiality that can be observed, quantified and evaluated by policymakers for the adoption of defensive measures (Buzan and Hansen 2009). Neorealism also claims that security is subjective in the sense that the material reality, depending on the historical, political and cultural contexts, could generate a sense of fear and of being threatened on a certain state. For CSS scholars, security is an intersubjective process in which social reality is constructed dialectically. By breaking apart with the positivist ontology of neorealism and embracing constructivist and post-structural epistemologies, CSS allows to problematize and study the conditions of possibility by which intersubjective constructions of subjects as threatening and of referent objects as threatened, justify that certain practices be enacted as appropriate political responses (Krause and Williams 1996).

Second, by considering that there are not objective parameters for security, and reflecting critically on the international security agenda that has developed since the end of the Cold War, CSS demonstrated that states were invoking security measures to face different forms of threats which did not fall in the military tradition. Considering that reality is socially constructed, CSS provides the theoretical tools to explain the mechanisms through which issues other than the traditional politico-military have been represented as security threats and thus subject to security measures, such as environmental degradation, drug trafficking, international migration and terrorism. In the same vein, an intersubjective understanding of security allowed revising the mechanisms for constructing other objects of security, putting an end to the state-centric approach of the field. This opened the possibility for studying how governments and societies represent different social institutions as having critical value and as needing to be protected from diverse

forms of threats through emergency measures. Finally, widening the scope of security studies away from the politico-military field has been accompanied by a deepening of the units of analysis. With its constructivist ontology, CSS has allowed to study other actors of security above and beyond the state, like supranational or regional entities, such as the EU, or subnational and local actors such as political parties, organized groups of civil society, the public media, and even individuals (Buzan, Waever and de Wilde 1998).

### **a. The concepts of securitization and societal security**

The Copenhagen School of CSS (CoS) have applied the concept of *securitization* to explain the social construction of migration as a threat to *societal identity* (Buzan, Waever and de Wilde 1998; Waever et al. 1993). Securitization is conceived by CoS as a social process by which a public issue is intersubjectively constructed as a threat to a certain referent object, triggering a political response characterized by its extraordinary nature. For CoS, the process of securitization starts as a *speech act* in which a securitizing actor frames a public issue as a threat and claims the use of security measures to suppress it. This truth claim is defined as a *securitizing move*, and for it to be successful, it has to persuade a relevant audience so that it grants the securitizing actor the authorization to adopt the measures he/she demands to use in order to respond to the threat (Buzan, Waever and de Wilde 1998). In this fashion, securitization is perfected when the framing of an issue as security triggers an emergency response.

The process of securitization has three characteristics. First, it is claimed to be intersubjective because it is the negotiation between the security enunciator and the audience which define the social meaning of an issue. Second, it is a political dynamic characterized by intensity, because the threat is presented as being of an existential nature. According to CoS, security is about the survival of the referent object which has a legitimate claim to continue existing (Buzan, Waever and de Wilde 1998, 36). This existential nature of the threat inscribes the public issue with a sense of urgency. Existential threats have to be tackled with immediacy and are to be given political priority. This intensity assigned to the issue justifies the adoption of extraordinary measures to contain it. Extraordinary measures are presented by CoS as actions that “break the normal political rules of the game (e.g. in the form of secrecy, levying taxes or conscription, placing limitations on otherwise inviolable rights, or focusing society’s energy and resources on a specific task)” (Buzan, Waever and de Wilde 1998, 36). And third, by means of overriding otherwise binding rules, securitization upsets the normal social and political order and the relations among its constitutive units (Buzan, Waever and de Wilde 1998, 26). Under this conception, securitization

has a constitutive nature and becomes an ordering mechanism. For this, CoS presents securitization as a “move that takes politics beyond the established rules of the game” by framing an issue in a “special kind of politics or as above politics” (Buzan, Waever and de Wilde 1998, 23).

Using this conceptual tool, CoS originally disaggregated the field of security into two sectors according to the nature of the referent object: *state security* and *societal security* (Waever, 1993). State security has the principle of sovereignty as its referent object while societal security is concerned with the survival of identity (Waever 1993, 25) According to Waever, “Survival for a society is a question of identity, because this is the way a society talks about existential threats: if this happens, we will no longer be able to live as ‘us’” (Waever 1993, 26). Waever differentiates between social and societal security by arguing that the latter is the security of society at the collective level, that is, at the national level, and not at the individual or subnational level. Societal security is also not understood at the international level because it needs to be enacted by “[...] a social agent which has an independent reality and which is more than and different from the sum of its parts” (Waever 1993, 26). For Waever, this specification is methodologically important, as it is the state (or a supranational entity, such as the EU) who ultimately enacts the securitizing measures for countering societal security threats. In this sense, societal security is state-centric.

CoS has identified societal identity as the main element providing socio-political cohesion to the nation and allowing it to pursue other potential objectives such as political stability, strong social policies and economic growth (McSweeney 1996). Waever argues that the sources of societal identity are infinitely open because it can be formed under “whatever foundation appears as useful, attractive or significant” (Waever 1993, 39). Nevertheless, he sustains that national identity, which involves various mixes of political tradition, ethnic component and cultural markers, remains the prominent societal factor in the process of government and in international relations (Waever 1993, 39). With this general definition of identity as the central referent object, CoS has defined the subjects of societal security as anything that can threaten it ranging “from the suppression of its expression to interference with its ability to reproduce” (Buzan 1993, 43). These threats have been mainly identified as competing identities, when these identities are mutually exclusive, and international migration (Buzan 1993, 43-44). Migration is theorized by Buzan (1993, 45-46) as a societal threat depending on two factors: numbers of immigrants relative to the population of the country of destination, and ethnic and cultural differences with the identity of the native population. Thus, when migrants are numerous and culturally and ethnically different, and are unwilling to assimilate to the collective identity of the native population, societies “can experience processes in which perception of ‘the others’ develop into mutually reinforcing ‘enemy-

pictures' leading to the same kind of negative dialectics as with the security dilemma". (Buzan 1993, 46)

### **b. The application of securitization and societal security to the study of migration**

Heisler and Layton-Henry (1993) have studied the securitization of migration in Western Europe and have shown that, in the context of large numbers of economic migrants and asylum-seekers coming from countries in the Third World and from the former Soviet Bloc during the period 1965-1990, Western European societies perceived immigration as a threat to its ethno-cultural composition and to its welfare system. First, according to these authors, the arrival and settlement of increased numbers of "visibly distinctive people" have caused societal insecurity in Western Europe by disrupting the imagined ethnic homogeneity at the basis of their national identity, and by creating the perception that the state has no control of its borders. In a sense, this construction of the migrant as a cultural and ethnic threat is read by the authors as a reaction to the transformation of Western Europe into multicultural and multi-ethnic societies, a process that has been accompanied by globalization (Heisler and Layton-Henry 1993, 158).

Second, the authors show that the Welfare State is a complex socio-historical construction that, by encompassing political, social and economic entitlements, has become one of the main components of Western European national identity (Heisler and Layton-Henry, 1993: 153). The welfare state inaugurated a new social contract between Western European societies and their states. It "[...] created broader, substantively deeper, more textured forms of citizenship than had existed before [...]" and the economic and political rights that it developed "were based on the proposition that greater participation, fairness and levelling of life chances lead to a collective social good" (Heisler and Layton-Henry 1993, 153). In consequence, the authors argue that migrants are constructed as threat to the welfare system for two reasons. First, because their increased numbers coincided with a period of economic downturn, migrants have been perceived as endangering the sustainability of the welfare state, despite the fact that declining demographic rates make imperative their inclusion into the job market and the welfare system. And second, by not having themselves or their ancestors been involved in the process of building the welfare system, migrants are seen as illegitimate recipients of its benefits (Heisler and Layton-Henry 1993, 154). This approach to the Welfare State as the basis of societal identity in Western Europe resonates with Wæver's definition of national identity as having political and cultural markers which are threatened by massive migration of culturally and ethnically different people.

Huysmans (2000, 2006), working on the same premises, coincides with Heisler and Layton-Henry in that since the 1980s Western European societies have promoted discourses presenting migrants as a destabilizing factor to their cultural cohesion and welfare system. However, he improves Heisler and Layton-Henry analysis by showing that these securitizing discourses and the restrictive migratory and asylum policies that they had triggered overlapped in the 1990s with a further securitizing discourse against migrants and asylum seekers that was brought about by a spill-over effect of the process of Europeanization; that is, of the construction of the European Single Market and its common space of internal security, both processes that involved the establishment of EU's external borders. According to Huysmans, the securitization of the internal market was driven by "The assumption [...] that abolishing internal border controls and facilitating transnational flows of goods, capital, services and people [challenges] public order and the rule of law" (Huysmans 2006, 69). This process has been presented as inevitable because it involved the concession of sovereignty by the state to a supranational institution, which triggered anxiety on the part of national authorities and society. Thus, the downgrading of the faculties of the state on border and migration control had to be compensated by strengthening the control at the external borders of the European Community in order for the new institutional arrangement to enjoy legitimacy. Furthermore, although migrants were traditionally associated with an increase in crime, after the events of 9/11 2001 migration became also associated with terrorism, justifying the hardening of restrictive migratory controls. Nevertheless, Huysmans shows that the migrants *per se* were not presented as actual threats to the public order; instead migration and asylum were constructed as vehicles for potential criminals and terrorists to enter the EU. As such, the securitization of the internal public order was a pre-emptive move that preceded the threat (Huysmans 2006, 69). In the end, because of its symbolic effect and the security practices that it triggered, the securitization of migration through the common immigration and asylum policy reinforced pre-existing discourses of migrants as societal security threats.

In a similar study on securitization of migration in the EU and its member countries, but through the inclusion of post-modern conceptual tools to complement CoS's approach to securitization and societal security, Buonfino (2004) deconstructs the securitizing discourse around migration and shows that it derives from the collective creation of boundaries. As the author puts it, by

creating boundaries between us and others, between Inside and Outside, issues of solidarity, ethics and human rights become secondary to issues of security, thus

endangering the livelihoods of newly arrived and undocumented migrants while stigmatizing already settled migrants. (Buonfino 2004, 28)

According to Buonfino, and contra Huysmans, because the securitizing discourse has become the hegemonic discourse around migration in Western European states, it permeated the construction of the European Union and articulated its policies towards migrants and refugees, subsuming other imperatives such as human rights and humanitarian aid. In this account, it was not the cession of sovereignty powers to the EU which triggered a securitizing reaction at its borders, but a confluence of shared constructions of migration as a threat to the national Self that elevated to the supranational level.

Karyotis and Patrikios (2010) have also analyzed the role of competing discourses around migration in Greece, in order to find the source of (de)securitizing discourses and where they are resisted by other social actors with authoritative power. These authors have analyzed the role of Greek state authorities as actors arguing for the desecuritization of migration and have identified the role of the Greek Orthodox Church as an actor resisting those discourses and framing the migrants as a threat to the religious and national identity of Greek society. The authors show that the representation of the migrant as a societal threat has two causes: the sudden influx and settlement of migrants, many of whom professed the Muslim faith, into Greece in the 1990s and 2000s, and the socio-historical overlapping of Eastern Orthodoxy with Greek national identity (Karyotis and Patrikios 2010, 47). Basing their study on a mixed methodology with discourse analysis and quantitative methods, they sustain that “religiosity is a strong predictor of anti-immigration attitudes, but also that exposure to the religious discourse immunizes churchgoers from the softening effect of the political message” on the benefits of migration (Karyotis and Patrikios 2010, 43).

Other authors, such as Ibrahim (2005) and Lazaridis (2015) have complemented the societal security perspective with post-structural theories in order to study the securitizing discourses against migrants and asylum seekers. Studying immigration policies in Canada (Ibrahim 2005) and in the EU (Lazaridis 2015) these authors have unveiled the new forms of racism that are inherent to societal security. Building on the concept of New Racism, Ibrahim argues that “racism is no longer simply based on a notion of biological superiority”, it has a pseudo-biological basis by which certain discourses try to explain the natural bound of social units, but it is mainly about anthropological superiority, that is, the superiority of some cultures over others. (Ibrahim 2005, 165) Similarly, Lazaridis (2015) discusses the exclusion of migrants in European societies on the basis of their supposed cultural inferiority and sees in the securitizing discourses

in the EU a “survival of the notion of a *classe dangereuse* and the rendering of the various riots that have taken place in Europe during 1980s and 1990s as manifestations of incivility, together with an emphasis on the lack of integration of minorities [...]” which were the ground on which the reification of the migrant as a cultural danger, mainly those of Muslim faith, took place after the terrorist attacks of 9/11 2001. (Lazaridis 2015, 2) In this context, Lazaridis has identified a process of *abjectification* by which migrants have been excluded from the European political community, which takes place through the use of legal mechanisms such as residence and citizenship rights. It is through constructing the migrant as an *abject* that subjectivities “are transformed by law and through law [...] in a process that is non-linear, and differs according to one’s differential inclusion and/or exclusion in the host country”. (Lazaridis 2015, 6)

Continuing with the analysis of the ethno-cultural dimension of identity and its overlapping with internal public after the terrorist attacks of 9/11 2001, Diez and Squire (2008) argue that variation between the level of securitization among EU countries according to the migrant-terrorist nexus depend on the citizenship tradition of each country. Studying Britain and Germany, these authors, as was already mentioned above, found that the more ethno-national tradition of citizenship in Germany has provoked a stronger securitization of migration by constructing migrants and the Muslim diaspora as cultural inferior and inclined to terrorist activities. Boswell (2007), refutes this idea and argues that in Europe, in general, contrary to what happened in the US, there was not speech acts linking migration to terrorism after 9/11, so that “public debates on migration control in Europe have remained relatively unaffected by the anti-terrorism agenda.” (Boswell 2007, 590) This author argues that the reason behind the lack of linking migrants to terrorists was found in the framing in Europe of migrants as economic migrants or as asylum-seekers scaping both material scarcity and armed conflict. Thus, the representation of the migrant as an Islamic fundamentalist pertaining to organized terrorist groups had no anchor on the European imaginary. Furthermore, Boswell sustains that European political elites “had an obvious interest in keeping open mobility for the purposes of business, tourism and study”, thus “there was no strong incentive to encourage a discourse that could have negative repercussions for business-friendly policies on entry and access to labour markets.” (Boswell 2007, 600)

Studying the processes of securitization of migration and asylum in South Africa, Ilgit and Klotz (2014) show that the construction of the migrant and the refugee as a societal threat is not an exclusive North-South post-colonial dynamic, but also a phenomenon found in South-South migration. Applying the CoS approach and testing the hypothesis that securitization is a discourse that takes over contesting or resisting discourses, and that, when hegemonic, it produces policy

outcomes and becomes institutionalized, they found that immigration is in fact constructed as a societal security threat in South Africa. But contrary to the European case, it is not based on ethno-cultural notions of identity, but on nationality and the struggle for economic resources, mainly, jobs. In this account, the migrants and asylum seekers, coming mainly from neighboring African countries, have been represented as bogus refugees and irregular workers taking jobs away from the legitimate population. Another difference they find with Europe is that state authorities have not performed securitizing moves against migration, because of the weight of the Apartheid in its political tradition; nevertheless, when other social groups have promoted securitizing discourses and acted violently against migrants, South African authorities have tacitly allowed hate speech and violent action.

This account is consistent with the findings of Adjai and Lazaridis (2013) who also studying the South African case, found that despite the fact that “Post-apartheid South Africa was built on a culture of inclusiveness, tolerance and human rights [...]” forms of New Racism are located at the base of the high levels of xenophobia that are observed on its society towards migrants coming from other African countries (Adjai and Lazaridis 2013, 192). Coinciding with Ilgit and Klots, these authors argue that the basis for this security construction of the migrant as a societal threat is found on the struggle for political and socio-economic resources. Nevertheless, contra the former, the latter argue that South African society has articulated discriminatory discourses and policies against migrants not on the legal notion of nationality, but on the construction of an imagined South African identity based on superior cultural values that result from its political stability and economic success as compared to its African neighbors (Adjai and Lazaridis 2013, 199).

### **2.1.3. Limitations of the literature**

The review of this literature shows that the concepts developed by CoS and their application to the study of migration present contradictions and theoretical voids. The first problem identified is that there is no systematic empirical connection between the speech act and the migratory and security policies it triggers; that is, between the *specific* emergency measures demanded by the securitizing actors to an audience and their subsequent implementation. Some scholars focus on securitizing moves mainly as speeches and declarations from state authorities in which migrants are represented as threats, (Adjai and Lazaridis 2013; Huysmans 2000; Ibrahim 2005), or on the lack of such speeches (Ilgit and Klotz 2014; Boswell 2005), but there is no focus on the security scenario in which the securitization move was successful; that is, there is no clear identification of the specific securitizing actor and the audience and the moment in which they interacted. Other

scholars considering securitization as a political and social process of struggle among competing constructions of the migrants and refugees, rather than focusing on speech acts, have concentrated in discourses (Karyotis and Patrikios, 2010; Buonfino, 2004). Nevertheless, this approach has left out of the securitization study the problematization of the audience as an analytical unit.

Second, the lack of consensus in the literature of whether securitization is a speech act event or a process of struggle among competing discourses produces additional theoretical and empirical problems, mainly a lack of systematic engagement with all the units of analysis that take part in securitization; that is, securitizing actor, existential threat, referent object and audience. For instance, most of the literature presupposes the role of securitizing actor to be performed by state authorities, and as such, they do not look for spaces where alternative securitizing discourses may emerge. When this problem is considered together with the of lack of engagement with the audience, the literature fails to differentiate between the political and security loci. In other words, it cannot provide an account on when the issue has been politicized, that is, debated in the public sphere in a dialectical process of social construction of meaning, or if it has been relocated to the sphere of security, where there is little debate on the nature of the issue and decisions are sovereignly made with little public account. Furthermore, the lack of engagement with the analytical units of securitizing actors and audience hampers the capacity to understand where securitizing discourses start and where they are resisted, and as such, to unveil relations of power in society as well as the nature and source of that power. As a consequence of not problematizing the units of analysis, most of the studies focus on the policy results in order to find securitizations, and neglect the understanding the process through which security practices are debated, confronted, supported and finally decided. An exception of are the studies of Karyotis and Patrikios (2010) and Ilgit and Klotz (2014). These cases are interesting because they problematize the role of non-state actors at the subnational level as securitizing actors, thus contending Waever's and Buzan's state-centric approach. This opens other important questions such as who is authorized to speak security? What is the role of institutional power in a successful securitization? If a non-state actor is the securitization actor, how can we tell securitization has happened?

Third, there literature shows a contradiction between securitized migratory policies and the sense of urgency, that is, between the extraordinary character of such responses and their temporality. The literature shows a general trend towards the construction of migration and asylum as a threat; nevertheless, the political responses have not been problematized nor theorized in order to understand what made them extraordinary. For instance, the literature does not answer

why restrictive migratory and asylum policies should be seen as security measures. For once, the literature approaches migratory policies in general, as if they applied to every non-citizen, thus failing to account its variation according to country of origin and, with the exception of Ibrahim (2005), Lazaridis (2015) and Adjai and Lazaridis (2013), the inherent post-colonial and racial relations of power. Furthermore, according to CoS concept of securitization, the adoption of restrictive migratory policies should be regarded as an exceptional moment, because they are implemented for facing extraordinary issues, and thus this sort of measures should be limited in time. Nonetheless, authors such as Huysmans (2000, 2006) show that restrictive migratory measures have been in place in Europe for decades. As such, the exception has actually become the new norm which is a theoretical contradiction in the CoS approach.

Fourth, there are problems when considering identity as the referent object of the securitization of migration. This problem originates in the lack of consistency on what defines the identity of a national community and who has the authority to establish its limits. The literature shows the construction of certain identity markers as objects of societal security, mainly ethnic homogeneity, religion, citizenship, cultural superiority, and the welfare state. Nevertheless, there is not a coherent theoretical explanation on why these and no other markers are definitional of identity and why are they threatened by migrants and refugees. In this sense, the studies tend to rely on grounded theory to explain the securitization of migration, thus focusing on the specific national and international contexts, despite the fact that there is an observable trend in the world towards restrictive migratory and asylum policies. In this sense, there is a commonality in viewing migrants and refugees as threats to national societies that has to be addressed. My intention is not to say that migration is *per se* a security problem nor to reify the idea of national identity as a common founding feature of states as institutions; instead, I contend that there is a general international approach to immigration in security terms and that in its roots there is a regime of truth of global reach which has socio-psychological and institutional bases.

Finally, and related to the last point, the literature reviewed gives the impression that the only option for migration and asylum is to be progressively securitized as there is very few studies discussing directly or indirectly the desecuritization of this phenomenon (Dingott Alkopher 2018; Karyotis and Patrikios 2010). This opens some important questions relating to the mechanisms through which an issue such as migration can be desecuritized; and, whether it is the migrant or the refugee as the stranger, or the Other, the subject of securitization/desecuritization or whether it is the institution of migration that is the societal security subject. For addressing this questions, societal security has to be understood both as securitization and as othering mechanisms, and

the politics behind it have to be unveiled so that desecuritization could be theorized and studied empirically.

#### **2.1.4. Improvements in Securitization Theory**

##### **a. The sociological approach to securitization**

CoS has theorized the mechanism of security from contradictory meta-theoretical approaches, as both a speech act and an intersubjective process. As a speech act, the concept of securitization is developed from the works of Austin and Searle on the philosophy of language (Balzacq 2011; Stitzel 2007). According to this epistemological stance, securitization is an *event*, a performative utterance through which a social fact is created (Stritzel 2007, 361). For Austin, a speech act is this an illocutionary act that has certain effects in the social world if performed correctly (Balzacq 2011). This implies the confluence of felicity conditions -*facilitating conditions* according to CoS- which are (Stritzel 2007, 364): 1) the correct articulation of the grammar of security -presenting a referent object as threatened in its survival by a specific subject and demanding emergency measures-; 2) the social conditions providing authoritative power to the enunciator to speak security; and, 3) the construction of the threat -the attribution of meaning to the subject- has to be intelligible -embedded in an existing system of meaning-.

In this fashion, CoS understands securitization as a self-referential act and not as an intersubjective process. Although CoS introduces an intersubjective condition for the process of securitization to be perfected by requiring an audience to listen the claims of the securitizing actor, agree with his claims and authorize the adoption of emergency measures, the conception of the securitizing move as a speech act by which the simple pronunciation of the utterance produces the security effects makes the role of the audience unnecessary. Austin's theory of speech act does not need the approval of any audience for the act to cause effects, rather it needs that the act follows a structured grammar, that it be legitimate on the basis of the authority of the speaker and the sincerity of its aims, and that its effects define the future behavior of the participants (Balzacq 2011, 5). Applied to securitization, the fact that it does not need an audience turns the speech act event into a sovereign decision framed in realist Schmittian politics, happening in illiberal, non-democratic political loci where the recognized authority of the enunciator suffices to declare an issue as a matter of security and foster its compliance by all participants.

Thus, when CoS introduces the *relevant audience* as a unit of analysis in securitization, it aims at breaking with the realist political notion inherent to the speech act as a political event, and

adds constructivist ontology to securitization, in order to present it as an intersubjective process of construction of meaning. In this sense, securitization is no longer a speech act event and becomes a process. As such, securitization implies ontological changes in the notion of actor and power. Theory of performative utterances of Austin considers agents as pre-existing and fixed in a structure of power. This understanding is important for actors to enunciate a legitimate utterance that will produce the required effects. If such authority is not positionally given and preceding the context in which the act takes place, it would not affect the behavior of the participants. Changing the understanding of securitization from a speech act to a constructivist process opens the possibility to understand agents and structure as co-constitutive and not pre-existing the context. In this sense, securitizing actor and audience are both socially constructed by the securitization process and need not to occupy institutional power positions for being capable of inscribing with new meaning to the natural or social reality. This means breaking with state-centric understandings of security politics.

Nevertheless, in mixing two contradictory ontologies such as those found in constructivism and in philosophy of language, the intersubjective part of securitization remains undertheorized in CoS account and limited to a synthesis of illocutionary acts -the securitizing move- which could in some cases produce perlocutionary acts, that is, persuading the relevant audience on feeling, thinking and acting according to the demands of the securitizing actor (Balzacq 2011, 5). In this attributed role, the audience is a passive actor which accepts or rejects the securitizing move, which is a restricted understanding of a process of social construction of meaning. As a consequence, CoS theoretically and empirically does not transcend the limits of institutional power when studying securitization, and its intersubjective approach can at best be applied only to democratic republican settings in specific procedures, where the executive branch has to persuade the legislative branch to authorize a securitizing move and this has to be implemented through legal acts. Not surprisingly, the methodology for analyzing securitization using CoS approach consists on looking at securitizing speeches and declarations and then at legislation and policies, as we have already seen in the literature.

A final implication of the meta-theoretical contradiction and theoretical limitations discussed has to do with the adoption of emergency measures as a result of the speech act event. Once the illocutionary and the perlocutionary acts have securitized an issue and it is dealt within a state of exception, how does it go back to the realm of normal politics? This problem conducts us to think that securitization for CoS was thought to be applied in the tradition of realism in international politics, mainly to interstate or civil war, where the extraordinary politico-military

measures adopted by the state end when the threat has been neutralized. But what happens when the securitized issues are not subjects per se, but vehicles of potential threatening subjects to operate, such as migration (Huysmans, 2000)? When the state of emergency ends? How the process is intersubjectively de-constructed as security?

These problems have led to different refinements of securitization by scholars using sociological theoretical approaches. CoS's concept of securitization is not a theory, but a mechanism, and thus can be complemented with different theoretical tools for providing it with explanatory power. Stritzel (2008) proposes a theoretical approach in which securitization is not a speech act event, but an iterative process of intersubjective generation of meaning embedded in specific socio-linguistic and socio-political contexts. For Stritzel, securitization needs to be analyzed through "(1) the performative force of the articulated threat texts, (2) their embeddedness in existing discourses, and (3) the positional power of actors who influence the process of defining meaning" (Stritzel 2007, 370). This author rejects the idea that securitization is a speech act event that inscribes fixed meaning on a subject, and instead argues that it should be understood as the construction of text through iterated social/political processes in which linguistic structures evolve in time (Stritzel 2007, 374). This means that the meaning inscribed in text is fluid, constantly renegotiated and subject to change according to the context.

For Stritzel, securitization is a constitutive process where securitizing actors and audiences create and re-create themselves constantly. This implies that power is not institutionally given, breaking with the CoS's conception of it as symbolic and reduced to the capacity of persuasion. Instead, in this account power is *relational*; it is "the ability to influence a process of meaning construction" and can only be generated intersubjectively and contextually (Stritzel 2007, 373). According to this view,

[...] an actor cannot be significant as a social actor and a speech act cannot have an impact on social relations without a situation that constitutes them as significant. It is their embeddedness in social relations of meaning and power that constitutes both actors and speech acts. (Stritzel 2007, 367)

Understood as an embedded and continued process of text construction, securitization is successful when the socio-linguistic and socio-political contexts facilitate the intelligibility of an inscription of meaning by a speaker who is seen as with the authority and knowledge to persuade an audience to allow the adoption of extraordinary measures to contain the constructed threat. (Stritzel, 2007).

Using the approach proposed by Stritzel, and introducing a constructivist epistemology in the study of securitization, Bourbeau (2011) developed a comparative analysis of the securitization of migration in France and Canada. Approaching securitization both from the sociological and linguistic centers of gravity of the theory, Bourbeau analyzed the factors that enable and constrain an agent in his/her effort to present an issue as a security threat and thus he is able to theorize that a successful securitization process does not only elevate an issue from the realm of politics to the realm of security, but it does so with different levels of intensity, depending on the enabling or constraining power of contextual factors operating over the securitizing agent.

Balzacq (2011) has also critiqued the linguistic, internalist view of securitization of the CoS where an illocution following the grammar of security by an actor having institutional power is enough to produce perlocutionary effects on the audience. As an alternative, he also follows the externalist view of Stritzel and argues that security utterances have to be connected to the context in order to be studied. This author contests the main ontology behind CoS approach by which language produces the social reality arguing that this is only one part of the picture, the other being the existence of a reality external to language that affects the social world whether it is inscribed with meaning through language or not. For that, Balzacq differentiates between institutional threats as those that are linguistically constructed and brute threats that do not depend on the mediation of language to exist (Balzacq 2011, 12). The realization of the difference between institutional and brute facts leads Balzacq to propose a scheme where securitizing moves are successful only when they relate to a material and social context. Thus, it is the context that favors or activates certain inscriptions of meaning and not others. In this sense, “every securitization is a historical process that occurs between antecedent influential set of events and their impact on interactions; that involves concurrent acts carrying reinforcing or aversive consequences for securitization” (Balzacq 2011, 14).

In addition to the inclusion of the analysis of socio-historical contexts, Balzacq adds a new layer to the sociological proposal of Stritzel, by arguing that securitization is a process occurring within a field of practices “which substantiate intersubjective understandings and which are framed by tools and the habitus inherited from different social fields” (Balzacq 2011, 15). The author incorporates this additional sociological layer due to increasing evidence that there are other forms of securitization that are carried through security *dispositifs*, that is, through emergent security fields structured by the routinized practices of security professionals (Balzacq 2011, 16). These security *dispositifs* are at the same time activated by the policy tools that result from successful

securitizing processes. In this fashion, Balzacq develops a sort of categorization of securitizations happening at the macro and micro levels of state power, with the illocutionary and perlocutionary acts at the macro-level of policymaking and the resulting dispositif making small securitizations in a day-to-day basis, at the micro-level of policymaking.

This last aspect that Balzacq adds to his proposition of securitization theory was developed earlier by scholars working in the field of security from a sociological perspective, who are more well known as the Paris School of CSC. The difference is that this school does not consider the macro-securitization processes and focuses only on the micro-level. The Paris School addressed the flaws and contradictions of CoS approach to security by going beyond the linguistic nature of securitization and thus studying the field of security practices. This approach has been very popular for the study of migration. Bigo, one of the most influential scholars from the Paris School, has used this approach to address the problem related to the growing tendency in liberal democracies to perpetuate states of exception, especially after 9/11, 2011. By questioning why after ten years of studies on the process of securitization of migration this issue has not been de-securitized and restored to the normal political debate, Bigo (2002) argues that security is not the end of a linear linguistic process that enacts a temporal state of exception to deal with a threat, but a continuous state of unease. This approach changes the understanding of security from the construction of *threats* to the constant enactment of *risks* and from the performance of a speech act to the performance of a field. Using Bourdieu's theory of structural constructivism, Bigo sustains that the "securitization of the immigrant as a risk" is based on the notion of security as a *field* performed and structured by security professionals, who, by virtue of their specialized knowledge and the authoritative power that their institutional and social positions give them in the eyes of politicians and the public in general, have the right and the legitimacy to speak and do security (Bigo 2002, 65). This network of relations among security practitioners and the knowledge they create forms what Bourdieu has defined as the *habitus* and it is the structuring parameter by which the field is framed and its borders set. But this field is not harmonic nor symmetric. Security practitioners and institutions struggle for become dominant and claim the right to exclusivity for speaking security. As a consequence, those internal power struggles and the inscrutability of the security field create the conditions of possibility for the security practitioners to expand their practices to other issues, away from traditional security concerns and into new fields such as international migration. In this line, scholars have studied the securitization of migration in the EU (Bigo 2002; Léonard 2010; Neal 2009) Greece (Lazaridis and Skleparis 2015), Australia (Humphrey 2013) and Canada (Robinson 2017).

In sum, the sociological approach is an important improvement in securitization theory because it introduces three areas that were left out by the focus on linguistic structures of CoS: a) the co-constitutive nature of securitizing actor and audience; b) the socio-historical context that influences the social inscription of meaning and facilitates that some (securitizing) discourses become dominant and trigger policy responses; and, c) the capacity of security practitioners to expand their operations to other social dynamics thus inscribing them with symbols of security. These theoretical contributions are going to inform the approach of this study to securitization, nevertheless, the Paris School theory presents two main problems that makes it less useful. On the one hand, it presents methodological limitations because for studying the field of security and the habitus of the practitioners, the researcher has to be inside it. Even if the field can be known, the habitus is more complex to study. Because it emerges from the routinized practices of security practitioners, it becomes a sort of organizational culture that can only be comprehended through ethnographic field work, and because it deals with security, and thus, with practices of secrecy, it is restrictive for people outside the field. And because habitus is a form of practical knowledge that is apprehended through the body and once interiorized, it becomes natural and part of the unconscious mind (Pouliot 2008), it is difficult to be acquired in a short period of time.

Most importantly, the sociological approach presents a theoretical and ethico-political problem. Although Balzacq and Bigo recognize that the field is the unintended perlocutionary consequence of the policy tools that result from securitization, the Paris School focuses almost exclusively in the securitizations that the practitioners of the field generate. In this sense, it theorizes securitization as an apolitical process. For the Paris School, there is not securitizing actor making the securitizing move and no audience to consider it and authorize the extraordinary measures. On the contrary, securitization is the result of an expansion of security practices to non-security issues without political debate and political decisions. The origins of this understanding can be found in Weber's theory of bureaucracies. For Weber, "Bureaucracies are political creatures that can be autonomous from their creators and can come to dominate the societies they were created to serve, because of both the normative appeal of rational legal authority in modern life and the bureaucracy's control over technical expertise and information" (Barnett and Finnemore 1999, 707). In the Paris School's theory, this Weberian approach is translated in an understanding of the security field as containing security bureaucracies struggling to increase their portfolios as a way of enduring as institutions, and competing to be recognized as the legitimate authorities in the production of specialized knowledge as ways of increasing their power on society.

This view of securitization as a micropolitical process determined by the organizational behavior of security bureaucracies is flawed, because it neglects to consider the macropolitical processes that determine bureaucratic action. State security agencies and security practitioners do not decide the scope of their operations without the authorization or the mandate of popular elected representatives or their agents. Securitization processes might not involve dramatic scenes of securitization involving heated national public debates as when declaring a war, but certainly they always involve political moves and decisions that can take a bottom-up or a top-down direction. For understanding these processes, the speech act event as the origin of the securitization process has to be overcome and replaced by a co-constitutive understanding of securitizing actor and audience according to the context. This is well shown by Salter (2008) when discussing the unsuccessful demands of state agencies controlling airport transit to perform counter-terrorist operations. Salter makes possible to understand these unspectacular, routine, day-today security decisions, or “little security nothings” (Huysmans 2011), by adopting a broad conception of audiences, according to the co-constitutive nature of the securitization process. Normatively, when securitization is considered exclusively an apolitical side effect of the logics of the security field without taking into account macro political processes, it runs the risk of justifying the fading of legal responsibility of elected representatives and state authorities in securitization processes, jeopardizing public accountability and fostering impunity in cases of abuses against people’s rights. Thus, the present study rejects this approach and considers securitization as a fundamental political choice which by breaking with normal politics and having access to extraordinary powers, involves legal responsibilities for elected state representatives.

#### **b. The socio-psychological approach to societal security**

The theory of societal security has received critiques because of the use of identity as the referent object. According to CoS, “Society is defined as the social unit that provides the primary locus of identification for its members [...]” according to objective markers and a subjective repository of shared meaning. (Theiler 2002, 251) In this vein, societies consider their identities secure when its markers, costumes and myths can be reproduced within acceptable conditions; if this reproduction is threatened, societies perceive that the survival of the imagined community is at risk and thus securitize their identity and adopt defensive measures that go beyond the politically or morally acceptable in normal circumstances. (Theiler 2002, 251) This approach has been critiqued by McSweeney (1996) who considers that the CoS approach to the concept is objectivist, based on the idea that identities are fixed and the product of objective realities. McSweeney

accuses CoS of reifying dominant discourses about identity by treating them as transhistorical and apolitical, thus justifying its securitization and legitimating xenophobic feelings. This reification leaves outside the analysis two aspects: who is speaking for society and defining its identity, and what are the relations of power and interests behind. For McSweeney, “[...] identity is not a fact of society; it is a process of negotiation among people and interest groups.” (1996, 85) Thus, identity is the result of a labelling process in which different discourses compete at the political level to define the imagined community according to a different set of interests. In this sense, identity is fluid and influenced by the historical context. In this manner, McSweeney proposes to think about identity as a process of *identification* which is always political and decision-based, thus opening the door for studying the impacts of securitization on this politics of identification. (C.A.S.E. 2006, 463) Nevertheless, the question of why identity is securitized and under what conditions remains open.

For answering these questions, Theiler has proposed to approach the societal security from a social-psychological perspective which allows to study “[...] the relationship between individuals and society, and on the dialectic between psychological processes on the one hand and social processes on the other [...]”. (2003, 258) For that, Theiler uses the structural understanding of identity developed by CoS and complements it with Social Identity Theory to reflect on the psychological relation between individuals and society. Contesting McSweeney’s critiques to societal security as reifying identity and society, Theiler argues that although identity is in fact not fixed and a cultural and historical product of redefinition and reimagination of what bounds society together, once constructed, it becomes deeply sedimented in social practices, beliefs and institutions. (Theiler 2002, 253-254) In this fashion, identities do change but in slowly processes of renegotiation that are contextually embedded. Being identity a sort of structure, Theiler is able to problematize the relation between individuals and the imagined community with which they identify.

Hayes (2012) has also incorporated social identity theory for complementing the theory of securitization and revisiting the theory of democratic peace. Hayes thus argues that the presence of a shared democratic social identity among societies of different states creates the sense of belonging to a same in-group, thus limiting the capacity of political elites to construct fellow democratic states as security threats. This approach to the relation between self and the in-group coupled with the understanding of identity as a social construction sedimented in social institutions is useful to explain processes of securitization in which national identity or some of its markers is presented as a referent object that must be defended, because it escapes the indefinite debates

on the nature and role of *culture* or *ethnicity* as the basis of identity. (Waeber 1993) At the same time, this approach goes beyond the limited scope of identification as a political game. In fact, Social Identity Theory provides a basis for explaining how individuals construct their identities by relating to an imagined community from dynamics that happen at the psychological and emotional level, and how, by fixing their identities to certain socially shared markers, they construct social identities as referent objects that need to be defended in the face of threatening circumstances.

Other scholars have also made use of socio-psychological theories to study the link between security and identity, although focusing their research mostly on the cognitive processes of construction of Self and Other, and distancing themselves from CoS's societal security approach. Mitzen (2006) pioneered this approach to CSS that is known as Ontological Security. Basing her approach in Giddens's sociological understanding of the psychological process of ontological security, the author defines it as the "[...] security not of the body but of the self, the subjective sense of who one is, which enables and motivates action and choice." (Mitzen 2006, 344) This conceptualization implies a subjective and relational construction of identity. First, identity is defined through the construction of a narrative of the Self which involves markers, values and social positions that need continuity and a constant social environment. Second, identities need the development of routines and stable social relations in order to underwrite the capacity of agency. According to Mitzen, routines "[...] serve the cognitive function of providing individuals with ways of knowing the world and how to act, giving them a felt certainty that enables purposive choice." (2006, 347) When these routines and the social environment in which they are embedded suffer a disruption, such as in cases of trauma, a sense of uncertainty emerges which, by upsetting the cognitive-affective organization of the world, renders the individual incapable of exercising his/her agency and as a consequence produces a discontinuity in his/her sense of identity or sense of Self. (Mitzen 2006, 348-349) In this sense, the attachment to routines and to the social order is considered a precondition for identity.

Mitzen has used this approach to explain the apparently irrational choices that states made in engaging in security dilemmas, arguing that even self-destructive routines are providers of ontological security. Other authors such as Steele (2005) has used the approach to analyze foreign policy arguing that the maintenance of consistent identity narratives provide the basis for the way in which states interact with others in the international system, and that the choice of actions that do not comply with the self-concepts they create, cause a disruption in their collective self-esteem. Zarkol (2013) follows a similar approach to explain the Turkish and Japanese denials of genocide, on the one case, and crimes of war, on the second. According to this author, the

reason lays in the willingness of these countries to be seen as equals by Western countries and thus in the need of maintaining a self-narrative that is consistent with the prototype of the democratic, liberal and civilized West.

Rumelili (2015) makes an important contribution by differentiating ontological security and physical security as two different although interconnected aspects relating to the security of the state. For Rumelili, “Ontological security is security-as-being while physical security is security-as-survival.” (2015, 53) This differentiation is useful to distinguish relations of Self and Other that are constructed as existentially threatening, that is, relations that are based on the risk of death, such as in armed conflict, and that need a process of securitization; and those relations that are threatening to the sense of a “[...] stable, certain, and consistent social existence [...]”, where the Self “[...] remains in control about its identity and capacity for action [...]”, that is, those that cause ontological insecurity. (2015, 59) With this approach, Rumelili contests Mitzen’s argument that ontological security is about the construction of identities only through routines in stable social contexts and instead incorporates the characteristic of security as a mechanism of othering. In this sense, for Rumelili, securing an identity is a process by which the Self first defines itself in opposition to Other through the attribution of identity markers and second through constructing discourses and rituals that reify those differentiating markers:

Identity is constituted not through any routine, but specifically those that articulate difference and distinctiveness. Precisely because identity lacks a pre-given, objectively identifiable essence (Campbell, 1992) we secure ourselves as beings mainly by discourses and practices that differentiate ourselves from Others. [...] I underline that ontological security rests on the reproduction of a rich set of identity markers that distinguish Self from Other on the basis of multiple dimensions and not only of more basic type (i.e. friend/enemy) distinctions. (Rumelili 2015, 56)

According to this conceptualization, the search for ontological security is not about containing threats to identity survival, as in Weaver’s societal identity proposition, but a concern with its stability. For Rumelili, “[...] ontological security is associated with those dynamics, processes, acts, and politics that centre around the reproduction of narratives, habits and routines and the maintenance of a system of certitude.” (2015, 58) This last aspect taken together with the differentiation from physical security is of great importance for the present study. Because ontological security is achieved by maintaining a system of certitude and the stability of an identity narrative, a disruptive event of the social environment such as massive immigration, does not necessarily lead to a process of securitization. In fact, Rumelili shows that a moment of ontological

insecurity could be overcome in two forms: progressive and regressive. The progressive response happens by opening the Self to a renegotiation of the identity narrative and its anchoring institutions. In this case, ontological security is not achieved through a process of securitization, but through a reformulation of the imagined collective identity in a way that the Other is not constructed as an existential threat. Therefore, the Other does not become an enemy. This decision has important implications for the desecuritization of public issues and will be analyzed below. The second response is reactionary and happens when the national group suffering from ontological insecurity and identity instability takes the decision to engage in a securitization processes of the Other as a physical threat in order to bring back certainty about the nature of the world and to fix the boundaries of the collective identity. In this sense, the political response through securitization looks for the cohesion of the social group restricting the identity narrative and constructing the Other as an existential enemy.

Using a similar understanding of securitization in bringing ontological security, but breaking with the focus in the state as the only unit of analysis, Croft (2012) studies how other units at the sub-national level fix imagined collective identities through constructing the Other as an existential threat. Working on the securitization of Muslims in Great Britain after 9/11 and the London bombings of 2005, and using a constructivist approach to CoS's concept of securitization, Croft argues that, because ontological security concerns the ways in which the behaviors and beliefs of individuals are intersubjectively constructed, relationally and in opposition to others, collective identities can be formed through the insecurity of others. (2012, 220) In his study, Croft shows how by linking Islam with terrorism, the Muslim identity has been securitized and this has served to fix the markers that define the imagined British national identity. In this fashion, the construction of the Other as a threat serves as a form of defining the national Self in a process that "[...] helps to provide social solidity to the identities that are at the heart of the biographical narrative that ontologically secure individuals have." (Croft 2012, 228)

Kinnvall (2004) brings more light into the quality of securitization as an othering mechanism. For Kinnvall, ontological security is not about routines or stable social contexts, as in Mitzen, nor on the continued differentiation between Self and significant others, as in Rumelili, but on cohesive social relations that individuals built within society. These social dynamics are based on the trust individuals develop on the continuity of the existence of the social group to which they belong, which is at the same time based on specific identity markers.

Trust of other people is like an emotional inoculation against existential anxieties- a protection against future threat and dangers which allows the individual to sustain hope

and courage in the face of whatever debilitating circumstances she or he might later confront. (Kinnvall 2004, 748)

Nevertheless, according to Kinnvall, the collective identity to which individuals adhere and in which they built their social relationships is not the sum of all the individual's identities. On the contrary, for Kinnvall collective identity is not pre-existing and already given, rather it is a social process of becoming in which linguistically articulated discourses and social practices are constructed in order to articulate the idea of the collective self. In this way, ontological security is presented as a *thick signifier* which allows

[...] analyzing what goes into this story or narrative about the self, about ourselves. It means investigating the structural reasons for why individuals experience insecurity as well as the emotional responses to these feelings of ontological insecurity and existential anxiety. A thick signifier approach highlights the intersubjective ordering of relations-that is, how individuals define themselves in relation to others according to their structural basis of power. (Kinnvall 2004, 748)

With this basis, Kinnvall argues that when episodes of disruption and trauma in which the cohesion of existing social relations seem threatened and the future of the subjectivities created within the group uncertain, individuals tend to securitize those subjectivities by accentuating identity markers, constructing the Other as enemy and presenting him as inferior, as an *object*-other and as a non-human. (Kinnvall 2004, 753-754) In this approach it is possible to identify elements of ontological security as developed by Guiddens, Mitzen and Rumelili, as well as of societal security, as developed by the Social Identity Theory school. Thus, as a result of increasing ontological insecurity, individuals will adhere to dominant discourses that construct and reproduce certain powerful markers of the imagined national identity, such as religion and nationalism, in order to look for cohesion in society against a common enemy-Other. In this context, the search for ontological security will cause insecurity in those subjects constructed as Others, opposing the national Self.

The securitization of subjectivity is, however, always an intersubjective process, structurally as well as psychologically, which implies that an "other" is invariably involved in the process. Increasing ontological security for one person or group by means of nationalist and religious myths and traumas is thus likely to decrease security for those not included in the nationalist and/or religious discourse. (Kinnvall 2004, 763)

In a more actual study, Kinnvall has developed further the relation between ontological security and nationalism and xenophobia, from a postcolonial perspective, which touches upon the

analysis of New Racism theory and also on the role of sovereignty and borders as providers of order and certainty to the nation. Using psychoanalysis, she argues that “the search for ontological security is intimately connected to a “[...] ‘national fantasy’ in which imaginations of borders as bounded space often hinges on an obsession with the limits of sovereignty.” (Kinnvall and Cash, cited in Kinnvall and Mitzen 2017, 252) In this sense,

the emphasis is on the indeterminate nature of ontological security as a need that actors believe they have in order for them to experience a notion of wholeness and mastery of self. Here desires and imaginations of what Lacan (1978) has referred to as master signifiers of “the nation”, “the people” and “the other” act in ways that secure an illusion of a “stable self” and an “equally stable other. (Kinnvall and Mitzen 2017, 252)

Browning and Joenniemi (2013) following a similar constructivist and non-state-centric approach argue that ontological security is not about securitizing a certain identity but a process of identification. For these authors, ontological insecurity leads individuals to connect to particular identities and articulate certain identity claims. (Browning and Joenniemi 2013, 32) In this approach, the process of securitization in a context of ontological insecurity does not bring about stability by freezing and closing down identities, because identities are not pre-defined and fixed, rather they are being constantly reproduced and renegotiated. Thus, in contexts of ontological insecurity, the securitization of identities actually opens them up and puts them through a process of reflexivity and re-articulation in which those identities change and adapt to the evolving social and material contexts. (Browning and Joenniemi 2013, 33) In this sense, if securitization of identities does not fix them, as a logic follow up their desecuritization does not destabilizes them either. Giving this premises, Browning and Joenniemi argue that the search for ontological security is not about fixing nor destabilizing identities, but a process of engaging in

practices of identification as part of ongoing attempts to capture a sense of being and to locate the self in the world. Such attempts, however, are never finalized as “dislocatory events” will undermine established identifications and compel subjects “to identify with new objects and discourses to fill the lack made visible”. (2013, 34)

Despite the different epistemologies that inform both societal security and ontological security, and the need of a more systematic engagement with the theory of securitization, there are important commonalities in both approaches that are valuable for the refinement of our understanding of securitization. This commonalities are: a) the role that collective identities play in an actors’ agency, that is, in defining the interests, behaviors and beliefs of individuals; b) the tendency of societies to sediment their imagined collective identities through routines, social

relations and institutions such as nationalism and religion; and, c) the role of securitization as a process of *othering*.

Nevertheless, in this last point, the literature presents a general vacuum in the theorization of the production of internal cohesion and definition of the Other as threatening and non-threatening. This is due to the fact that the scholars reviewed, with the sole exception of Rumelili, conceive the socio-psychological mechanism of othering as a side-product of the definition of the self, without considering its political connotations. This void deprives the socio-psychological approach to understand the quality of securitization as an extreme form of categorization of Self that aims at intersubjectively constructing the Other in Schmittian terms of friend and enemy. This extreme form of categorization not only serves to frame a certain identity community as Other, or not us, but also as threatening our core identity markers and our anchoring institutions. Conceived this way, the mechanism of defining an Other not only de-personalizes the individuals of the out-group, but because of the emotional implications of categorizing the Other as enemy, it tends to accentuate the perceived negative markers of this identity community, in a way that it is not objectified anymore by the in-group, but *abjectified* and dehumanized. (Kinnvall 2004)

Thus, security is not only a mechanism of othering but a political choice of abjectifying other identity communities, constructing them as enemies, so that extraordinary measures that break the normal political rules be taken to cancel them as existential threats without awaking questions of legitimacy and proportionality. This construction of the Other as abject goes hand with hand with a reconstruction and renegotiation of the imagined collective identity. In this way, I follow Browning and Joenniemi in that the search for ontological security is a process of identification, a process of constructing the national identity and redefining its markers in the context of a crisis or disruption of the perceived social stability in the political community, and in which different identity discourses struggle to become dominant. In this sense, the process of identification is political and has to be fought into the political debate, which involves political parties and social movements manifesting their own articulations of meaning or their support for a specific identity construction.

### **c. The problematization of *desecuritization* and its theoretical underpinning.**

The literature on desecuritization is still limited when comparing it to the numerous studies made on securitization. Proposed originally by Waever together with the concept of securitization, desecuritization has been defined as “[...] the shifting of issues out of emergency mode and into the normal bargaining process of the political sphere.” (Buzan, Waever and de Wilde 1998, 74)

Some scholars (Aradau 2004; Benhke 2006; Hansen 2012; Roe 2004; and Salter 2008) have criticized this definition as “technical, managerial and instrumental”, neglecting the political and ethical implications of desecuritization. (Huysman 1998, quoted in Hansen 2012, 527) Nevertheless, this approach is consistent with the theorization of securitization by CoS as a speech act and evidences that lack of a theoretical engagement with the politics of security. Even its sociological refinement does not address the political nature and consequences of securitization, and thus it remains limited to explain increased tendencies in securitization, but does not addresses the normative side of securitization. According to Aradau, “[...] insufficient attention to politics in the theory of securitization undermines the concept of desecuritization both analytically and politically.” (2004, 389) Thus, engaging with desecuritization has to start with the realization that it is a political decision, and thus it involves responsibility. Only the reflection on the political foundations of securitization can we understand how desecuritization, or the bringing back of securitized issues to the normal political bargain is possible.

Williams (2011) is one of the scholars who has unveiled CoS’s political approach to securitization. This scholar argues that “[...] security as particular kind of speech-act [...] is underpinned by an understanding of the politics of enmity, decision and emergency which has deep roots in [Carl] Schmitt’s understanding of political order.” (2011, 515) In this reading, the mechanism of securitization by construing the subject of security as an existential threat casts this subject as an enemy. If this construction is accepted and extraordinary measures are authorized, a web of allegiances, or friendship relations, make it possible for the political reaction to follow. In this sense, security is a mechanism that defines enemies and friends. Furthermore, securitization as a formal speech-act is a decision, understood in a Schmittian sense of an explicit political choice and act that leads to the breaking of the normal political order. This rupture causes a state of emergency which Williams assimilates to CoS proposition that securitizing speech acts results in the adoption of extraordinary political measures. Furthermore, Williams sustains that when a community securitizes its identity, it enters a process of challenge, denial or suppression of the negotiability and flexibility of identity, fixing its markers and excluding competing identity narratives. In this “[...] process of dividing between ‘us’ and ‘them’, the concept of societal security echoes the determination of friends and enemies [...]” found in Schmitt’s concept of the political. (2011, 520)

Huysmans also understands securitization as embedded in political realism, but he goes beyond its theorization as a Schmittian mediation between friend and enemy and addresses the role it plays in maintaining specific political orders. He departs from the idea that security is a

strategy for the mediation between life and death, “that is, a cultural practice of establishing meaningful life in the face of death.” (1998, 234) As a strategy, it serves to face a double fear: the fear of biological death at the hands of other individuals or social groups, and the fear of uncertainty. In the first sense, security is a practice of postponing death by first producing social institutions for countering enemies, and in the second, for producing knowledge to diminish uncertainty -understood as the symbolic representation of death- and produce cognitive order about the natural and social world. (Huysmans 1998, 236) For this conceptualization, Huysmans uses Baudrillard’s genealogy of death to explain that modernity has brought the believe that society can produce knowledge about death as with any other natural fact in order to postpone it to its maximum. Being death an object of instrumental knowledge formation, security becomes its mediator by categorizing physical and ontological dangers. In the first sense, Huysmans argues that security drives individuals to form social groups and differentiate others according to friend-enemy logics. In this mediation, security leads social communities to develop institutions to protect themselves, giving origin to political communities.

This Hobbesian and Schmittian view implies that security has a constitutive nature, and in this sense, the construction of the enemy is essential for the very own existence of the political community. (Huysmans 1998, 238) In the second, ontological sense, Huysmans argues that security mediates not only the figure of the enemy, but also the figure of the stranger. Contrary to the enemy which is external to the political community, the stranger is both inside and outside it, challenging its capacity to categorize him and thus questioning its possibility of ordering itself. (1998, 241) In this fashion, the stranger is subjectified as a threat because it materializes uncertainty. For Huysmans security then plays an important legitimizing role for the state understood as the materialization of the political community, both for providing physical security against external enemies, and to provide certainty by serving as an internal mechanism of ordering.

This realist point of view in which security plays a constitutive and ordering role for the political community has led some scholars to argue that desecuritization is a political impossibility. According to Dillon (1996), “[...] modern politics is a security project” because “the first order of politics is to secure identities, boundaries, concepts, meanings, histories, truths [...]”. (quoted in Behnke, 2006, 64) Discussing the possibilities of desecuritizing societal identities, Behnke sustains that the process of political community formation implies the establishment of boundaries and the exclusion of others, and moreover, it is anchored in the production of insecurity as the necessary condition to bring about political institutions. In this fashion,

[...] desecuritization can never really happen. The production of insecurity and the designation of issues and actors as threats to the state, the community, the society, is part and parcel of the re-iterative, performative production of national identity. States can never be secure, as such stasis, that is, the cessation of securitization moves, would mean their death [...]. (Behnke 2006, 65)

For Behnke, desecuritization should be best understood as the fading away from collective imagination of former threats because they are not contextually relevant anymore, and as their replacement with other more current subjects of security. (Behnke 2006, 25)

In a similar vein, discussing the role that security plays in the access of minority groups to differentiated rights, Roe sustains that desecuritization of minority identities is not logically possible nor politically desirable, because minority rights are predicated “on an inherent condition of securitization”, that is, they are achieved through representing minority groups as threatened by, and at the same time threatening to the identity of the majority. (2004, 280) Then, if minorities are to be desecuritized, this action will have to break the Self-Other, friend-enemy relation with the majority group, and this would imply that their identities must be assimilated within the majority. Such a loss of identity distinctiveness will imply the immediate “death of the minority itself”. (Roe 2004, 280) In this sense, in Roe’s argument desecuritization of an identity community as a physical threat implies provoking on that community ontological insecurity.

Contesting these views, Rumelili (2015) has argued that ontological security and physical security can be achieved through desecuritization and that both aspects are not mutually exclusive. Working on communal conflict, this author sustains that desecuritization of an identity community as a physical threat, as in cases of protracted conflicts, could be achieved without destabilizing the ontological security of the parties despite the fact of changing the routines and identity narratives they have established in direct relation with the conflict. For that, Rumelili proposes a method by which identity formation is deconstructed into internal and external processes. The internal process has to do with the social construction of self-narratives, which is a process of renegotiation of the collective identity among the members of the identity community. The external process is the definition of values and markers of the collective Self in opposition to the collective Other. With this two-level differentiation and under the assumption that identity formation is a social process of identification, Rumelili is able to propose a desecuritization strategy in which the collective identity of a community that is engaged in conflict with another is first, at the internal level, re-imagined in order to overcome the war-led narratives of the Self, and second, at the external level, redefined in its markers without recurring to the construction of the

Other's identity as antagonistic. Because the Other is always a side-product of the process of identification, Rumelili sustains that he does not have to be cast in terms of enmity. Thus, by breaking the friend-enemy dichotomy and proposing a two layered analysis of desecuritization, Rumelili opens the way for disrupting the Schmittian antagonistic nature of politics and consider the relations of allegiance as a possibility to deal with other community identities. This approach is in essence similar to the common in-group identity model (Cudahar and Dayton 2011), a social identity recategorization strategy by which two conflicting collective identities are re-imagined and their boundaries redefined and merged under another more inclusive superordinate identity. The objective is to surmount the friend/enemy distinction by fostering new positive relations between the former conflictive communities under the assumption that belonging to the same collective identity triggers positive images of the in-group members as well as new social and emotional ties. Nonetheless, both approaches are limited to the linguistic construction of identity and neglect to consider the translation of discourse into practices and institutions. Therefore, desecuritization strategies through the redefinition of the ontological foundations of the Self or through the recategorization of identities under a supraordinate category would not bring an end to communal conflict unless the war-time routines and economies, as well as the security practices institutionalized due to the conflict are transformed and disarticulated.

In a different approach, Aradau argues that desecuritization is not only possible but also ethically and politically imperative for the preservation of democratic institutions. Recognizing the Schmittian nature of securitization, she argues that

Desecuritization as the democratic challenge to the non-democratic politics of securitization has to be inscribed institutionally and needs to create a different relation from the one of enmity, a relation which is not rooted in the exclusionary logic of security. (2004, 400)

For achieving this transformation of politics away from security, Aradau puts forward the concept of emancipation. Contrary to the understanding of the Welsch School of CSS, Aradau argues that emancipation is not the replacement of referent objects from the interests of the powerful to the interests of the excluded, but a profound democratic transformation

[...] extensively defined in terms of equality and fairness, voice and slow procedures open to public scrutiny. Emancipation is infused by a fidelity to 'democratic politics', to the possibility of contestation and the openness of the locus of power. Secondly, emancipation engages with the question of authority and how to 'democratize' institutional loci by invoking universal principles already present in a democratic regime. [...] Thirdly,

emancipation activates a different logic based on universal address and recognition. (2004, 401)

In this theorization, desecuritization as emancipation is a political decision by which subjects excluded from the political community through logics of securitization are dis-identified as threats and included in the community through the use of universal democratic principles and values as anchoring institutions. Nevertheless, desecuritization cannot be achieved by those excluded from the political community themselves, despite their appeal to universal principles, instead it has to be a process of internal transformation on the basis of solidarity and new inter-communal relations. As put by Aradau, "Emancipation is a ternary strategy [...]. It is those that belong to the political community that can dis-identify from the institutional practices which have turned others into dangerous others and argue for a contrastive form of identification." (2004, 407) This proposition has been critiqued by its lack of engagement with the role of security as constitutive of the institution of the state and of the political community's identity. Furthermore, as Behnke (2006) has observed, her theory of emancipation does not fully transcend the exclusionary nature of politics because the physical inclusion in a community implies the recognition of difference and its suppression, thus, inherently it is a form of ontological exclusion in which, moreover, asymmetric power relations and a superior-inferior notion are present in deciding who is included and in what conditions. Furthermore, it does not address the problem of institutionalization of security measures, that is, its evolution in practices and bureaucracies.

Williams also approaches desecuritization departing from the recognition of the dangers that securitization presents to democratic politics. Williams (2011), contrary to Aradau, develops his approach focusing on the locus of politization in the security spectrum. Williams argues that securitization has the potential to be avoided or reverted as a political and ethical decision. Using Habermas' theory of communicative action, he suggests that securitization as a speech act enters the realm of discursive legitimation in which actors engage in truth-seeking dialogs using argumentative rationality, thus opening the door for securitizing moves to be contested and invalidated. In this way, Williams identifies politization as the realm of communicative action and affirms that in order to avoid entering the Schmittian realm of the political, public issues should be kept in the realm of argumentative rationality. (2011, 523) This approach is interesting but, because its narrow understanding of securitization as a speech act event, it implies that desecuritization should take the same linguistic form in order to take an issue into the normal political bargaining. Salter echoes this understanding of desecuritization as a formal linguistic process that is successful when accepted by an audience. (2008, 341) Nevertheless, it is a

problematic approach because securitization, by creating a state of exception, concentrates decision-making over the securitized issue and takes it outside the sphere of public debate, thus cutting the possibility of argumentative rationality and communicative action for bringing it back to the normal political bargain.

Huysmans escapes this logical contradiction by breaking with the concept of securitization as a speech act and presenting it as both a discursive construction and a set of practices. He argues that desecuritization could be achieved through three strategies: objectivist, constructivist and deconstructivist. (Roe 2004, 285) The objectivist strategy departs from the notion that securitization is made through the use of knowledge to define a subject as a threat, such as statistics, myths, stereotypes; thus, desecuritization consists in contesting this knowledge with different, positive information in which the subject is not presented as threatening. The constructivist strategy rests not on the truth or falsity of a threat, but in unveiling the processes by which securitization works in order to contest them. "This [constructivist] strategy builds on a separation between understanding and handling. One first has to understand the causal processes, and then one can start, with the help of acquired knowledge, to try to handle the process." (Huysmans 1995, quoted in Roe 2004, 286) The third strategy resonates with the approach of Aradau because it is built on the need of des-identification of the threat and the construction of a new narrative about his identity based on identity markers that are common or universal. In the same line with Aradau, Huysmans uses Rancière's political philosophy to argue that, in the case of the migration, the deconstructivist strategy consists on recounting the story of the migrant from a different economic, political and social context to which the native population could relate in its day-to-day life, thus presenting him as a worker, a father or a consumer. For Huysmans it is a strategy for affecting and altering the *political aesthetics of everydayness*. (Huysmans 1995, quoted in Roe 2004)

Hansen (2012) also rejects the idea of securitization being a speech act, but provides a more comprehensive approach to desecuritization than Huysmans, by abstracting four desecuritization strategies from the existing literature on the subject. The first one is *change through stabilization* and is theorized on the politics of détente during the Cold War. In this strategy, there is a change in the security discourse built between two parties by which they recognize themselves as legitimate interlocutors and establish dialogue and a truly political engagement. (2012, 539) This approach is a softer form of desecuritization because it does not change the antagonism between the enemies, and instead puts the origins of securitization in the back, making it possible for them to reappear. The second is *replacement* and it is based on

Behnke's reading of security as an ontological need for the state. Thus, it is predicated on the displacement of a security issue by the securitization of another. Nevertheless, this approach does not break with the non-democratic aspect of security and in deed perpetuates it. The third is *rearticulation* and is a deeper form of political process because it "refers to fundamental transformations of the public sphere including a move out of the friend-enemy distinction." (2012, 543) This strategy resonates with Rumelili's approach to desecuritization, as a constructivist strategy aiming at ending the ontological foundations of the friend/enemy dichotomy between two identity communities, and it also resembles the socio-psychological strategy of identity recategorization under a supraordinate category. In this sense, it suffers from the same limitations as far as it is limited to the linguistic aspect of identity formation, neglecting its materiality. The fourth strategy is silencing and it happens when, as a political decision, an issue that was securitized then disappears from the security discourse. This approach is not well developed and it is based in a particular case: MacKenzie's study on the reintegration of female soldiers in the post-conflict reconstruction of Sierra Leona and the tacit negation of their participation in the war because of traditional patriarchal constructions of women as non-violent.

Finally, although not presenting it as a desecuritization strategy, Hansen confronts the important dilemma of the institutionalization of security practices and insists that it is always preceded by a political decision. Thus, for deactivating the security *dispositif*, these practices are susceptible of being questioned in the public sphere "in which case political actors, who are formally responsible, confront the choice to lend their legitimacy –and political capital to the securitisations upon which those practices are based [...]". (2012, 532) This approach recognizes that the security *dispositif* and the policy tools that generate it inscribe with symbolic meaning to the subjects to whom they are applied. (Balzacq 2011) For instance, it is not equal to put civil servants to do immigratory controls at entry ports than putting the military personnel to do the same task. Different policy tools inscribe with different meaning to the subjects of its implementation. Thus, it is important to disarticulate the security *dispositif* to alter the identity construction of the Other away from the enemy trope.

A final point is that at the basis of Hansen's approach, securitization and desecuritization are both actions that take place in liberal, republican and democratic environments in which political authorities are responsible and accountable to the public for the decisions they made. This recognition is important because, by opening the door for security discourses and practices to be deconstructed, questioned and contested, society can promote a process of disarticulation of security *dispositifs*, and linking this process to a political strategy of rearticulation of Self/Other

identities and enemy/friend relations, it can create the conditions of possibility for a sustainable desecuritization of issues such as migration, which should be investigated further.

## **2.2. Methodology**

On the basis of the literature reviewed, this study of the security politics around the refugee crisis of 2015-2016 in Germany is going to build on a post-structuralist approach of societal security and of securitization. My approach to societal security is informed by the psycho-sociological theoretical contributions of Theiler (2002), Kinnvall (2004) and Rumelili (2015); while my approach to securitization and desecuritization is informed by Williams (2011), Stritzel (2007) and Hansen (2012).

### **2.2.1. Theory**

#### **a. Societal security**

I conceive societal identity as an intersubjective and contextually-embedded process of self-categorization that happens at the individual and at the social level, and that acquires a relatively stable dimension by being sedimented in social and formal institutions and by being mediated through material objects. In this fashion, societal identity develops a structure-agency dialogue. By being entangled in the collective imagination and in formal institutions, societal identity becomes a structure in itself that affects the behavior of agents. For example, national identity as an expression of societal identity is a collective construction based on cultural and ethnic markers that gain materiality by being institutionalized within the state through bureaucratic practices and legal instruments such as citizenship and immigration laws that define who is part of the national political community. Furthermore, the relations between members of the political community and non-members is mediated through non-human subjects, such as identity cards, passports, social security numbers, voting rights, domicile registration and so on. Additionally, by being a social construction embedded in socio-historical contexts, societal identity is always subject to change and evolution, although in a slow-paced, long-term basis because of its sedimentation in the collective imagination and in formal institutions and practices.

The intersubjective process of identity formation is brought about by the mechanisms of categorization and accentuation. Through categorization, individuals tend to systematically classify the social world into groups, identify with one of such groups, internalize their values, beliefs and views of the world, adapt their behavior to in-group prototype, and develop social ties and emotional attachment to the members of the in-group. (Theiler 2002) The process of

categorization also involves the definition of the boundaries of the in-group, which are imagined on the basis of different socially constructed markers such as ethnicity, values, myths and beliefs. The side-product of defining the in-group boundaries is the categorization of the out-groups and the construction of stereotypes to identify them and define them as not us. Thus, internalizing the collective identity of the in-group and making it an integral part of the self-categorization, individuals also acquire the collective construction of out-group stereotypes.

Through accentuation, individuals tend to develop a more favorable image of the in-group and a more negative view of out-groups. According to Theiler (2002):

we tend to see those who are placed in the same category - including ourselves - as more similar to each other than is actually the case while we overestimate the differences that separate us from members of other groups. In other words, we conceive of others and ourselves partially, in a 'depersonalised' manner, as 'undifferentiated items in a unified social category'.

Creating stereotypes and identifying with an in-group prototype has two important reasons. They serve to satisfy cognitive and emotional needs. Firstly, categorization makes the social world intelligible and subjectively meaningful because, as group membership shapes identities and behavior, it reduces uncertainty and provides a relatively stable social environment. Accentuation, on the other hand, serves to provide a feeling of belonging to a social group and to increase the self-esteem thanks to a more "favourable image of the [in-]group that reflects favourably upon the self [...]" (Theiler 2002, 262) In this context, securitization is a political strategy that could serve two ends. First, it is an extreme mechanism of collective self-construction and othering. By identifying another identity as a threat, securitization stresses and further accentuates the markers and the boundaries that define the collective in-group identity and, at the same time, represents the values, beliefs and other markers that define the out-group stereotype in a negative, antagonistic way. Second, by representing the Other's identity as inimical and threatening our collective Self, it renews the social and emotional ties that hold the in-group together. As put by Theiler (2002, 264):

[...] the very act of defending the group (through fences, wars or whatever) is itself a group-signifying and group-affirming one. By engaging in it, people externalise and affirm the existence of the group and their membership in it to each other and to themselves. Intersubjectively they come to experience the group more intensely and as more real [...], the group becomes more strongly internalised and more salient, and occupies a still larger part of the self. [...] In this way, the group as social representation that - mediated by

securisation – conditions conflictual behaviour on the one hand, and intergroup conflict as a social process marked by this behaviour on the other, can become mutually constitutive. Secondly, securitization is a form of providing ontological security to the individual and collective Self. This is rooted in the fact that, once individuals have identified themselves with a group, internalized its common lifeworld and acquired the relevant social identity, they have a strong drive to preserve it for maintaining a continued sense of Self. But because identities are social constructions which have to be performed in order to acquire continuity, they are fluid and evolve according to the changing socio-historical context and to the renegotiation of its markers and boundaries by the members of the in-group. In this sense, the process of identity construction always involves a sense of ontological insecurity which is mediated by progressive and reactionary discourses around the collective Self and its continued reproduction according to the power relations of the members producing those different discourses. Progressive discourses will argue for identity evolution through the reformation of its markers and boundaries, while reactionary discourses will tend to maintain the socially agreed existing boundaries and markers of the in-group. Nevertheless, rapid or abrupt changes in the social context brought about by an emergent event could lead to a process of polarization of such discourses, as far as “The introduction of traumatic events is likely to raise anxiety [...]and may jeopardize the collective sense of self.” (Kinnvall 2004, 752) In this context, securitization becomes a reactive strategy for facing the traumatic event and decreasing the ontological insecurity produced by it. This is an extreme response politically justified because “[...] perceived threats to the group -such as to its relative status or to its very existence-” are “threats to the self, and for the individuals concerned protecting the former means protecting the latter as well.” (Theiler 2002, 262)

Applied to international migration, this reading can be coupled with Huysmans’ understanding of securitization as the mediation between life and death, certainty and uncertainty, and order and chaos by defining the subjectivity of the stranger as threatening and thus inimical. In this way, the stranger is not objectified but abjectified. According to Kinnvall, abjectifying is a deeply subconscious form of othering by which “the enemy-other is not only created by the self, but has been a previous part of the self. This unconscious self is neither an object nor a subject; it is an abject [...] from which one does not protect oneself as from an object.” (2004,753) The difference between abjectifying the other is important for understanding the construction of the Other in lines of friend/enemy in the absence of politics. According to Schmitt, the segregation between friends and enemies can only happen in the context of politics, but for politics to operate, there must be an interaction between two antagonistic parties on a specific public issue. As

migrants do not engage in this political interaction, they are not constructed as enemies in the political struggle, but in the psychosocial process of abjectifying the other, and in Huysmans' terms, by questioning the capacity of national institutions to bring certainty and order to the social community. In this sense, "Abject becomes a major ingredient of collective identity formation when the familiar "stranger" is suddenly recognized as a threat." (Kinnvall 2004, 753)

This threat to the sense of collective Self is rooted in the capacity of the stranger-other to question the institutions in which the identity of the Self is embedded, and in this way the construction of an abject-other becomes a means to securitize subjectivity as it reduces anxiety. (Kinnvall 2004, 754) Abjectifying the other, according to Kinnvall is a process that happens in times of high uncertainty when society, in order to bring ontological security back, calls for the state to use its institutions and powers to "ordering the other both structurally (e.g., immigrants as 'bogus' asylum seekers) and psychologically (by turning the stranger into an enemy)", thus constructing a discourse of exclusion. (2004, 754) But by constructing the stranger-other as an enemy, the discourse tends to de-humanize him. According to Kinnvall:

This process of turning the stranger into an enemy is an attempt to securitize subjectivity in times of uncertainty. Within this process, self and other are both seen as essentialized bodies, which means reducing self and other to a number of cultural characteristics. These characteristics, although constructed and fabricated, come to be seen as natural, unified features describing the group. In this process of securitizing subjectivity, hate becomes the link among the present, the future, and a re-created past. (2004,755)

In this context of emotional and political construction of the other as a despised enemy in times of uncertainty, the search for ontological security is found in the accentuation of certain identity markers that are institutionalized and evoke imagined roots of the national self. These institutions are religion and nationalism. For Kinnvall, nationalism and religion are expressions of a re-created past which vainglories the present and future of the national identity. Therefore, they are "[...] powerful identity- signifiers in times of uncertain structural conditions, with the implication that they are likely to become more persuasive rallying points than other identity signifiers." (Kinnvall 2004, 758) Furthermore, nationalism and religion are conservative institutions in which race and gender relations are also articulated and which in times of drastic change, as in the current times characterized by the fast pace of globalization, are used as shelter against the spread of multiculturalism and feminist and gender movements. Besides being conservative institutions that anchor the imagined national self, both institutions

[...] provide answers to questions concerning existence itself, the external world and human life, the existence of 'the other,' and what self-identity actually is. In providing answers to these questions, they also institute a notion of "truth", implying an automatic exclusion of those who do not adhere to such a "truth". (Kinnvall 2004, 759)

Departing from this framework, and in the context of the massive and sudden movement of asylum-seekers and refugees to Germany, this study presents the following argument on the role that security politics play on the process of collective identity renegotiation:

**First claim:** In the face of an event of abrupt massive immigration into a country due to an external crisis, the subsequent disruption of the social environment will provoke a state of ontological insecurity in society leading to the securitization of the collective identity.

### **b. The political nature of securitization and desecuritization**

I depart from the understanding that both processes are based on political decisions that produce and effect in the public sphere and in social relations, and as such they have deep impacts in democratic institutions. I follow Williams's (2011) understanding that securitization relates to Schmitt's concept of politics as the antagonist relationship between actors by which they divide social groupings in friends and enemies in relation to a given public issue. As argued by Schmitt, "Every religious, moral, economic, ethical or other antithesis transforms itself into a political one if it is sufficiently strong to group human beings according to friend and enemy." (quoted in Williams 2011, 516) For Schmitt politics is not only about antagonisms and alliances, most importantly it is about the emotional intensity inherent to politics that opens the possibility for the friend-enemy dichotomy to end in mortal conflict. This is what Schmitt defines as the *political*, or the essence of politics. (Williams 2011, 517) Because securitization is conceived politically as an intense form of antagonism by which subjectivities are constructed as existentially threatening, it provides the theoretical basis for explaining the socio psychological mechanism of othering in its most extreme form, that is, constructing enemies according to questions of life and death, thus opening the possibility for mortal conflict.

Second, securitization as a process that ends up and justifies the adoption of extraordinary measures coincides with Schmitt's *decisionist* theory of sovereignty.

For Schmitt, sovereignty is defined by the act of *decision*, by the capacity to decide contested legal or normative disputes within the state, and particularly to decide when a threat to the prevailing political order has reached a point where it constitutes an

emergency and requires the suspension of normal rules and procedures so that the political order can itself be preserved. (Williams 2011, 516)

In the framework of securitization, Williams argues that when the invocation of an issue as an existential threat is accepted by the relevant audience, the outcome is the adoption of actions outside the normal bounds of political procedure. (Buzan, Waever and de Wilde 1998) In other words, the securitization outcome is the establishment of a state of exception around a specific issue, justifying and legitimizing the adoption of measures under the notion of emergency which transcended the realm of normal politics and enter the realm of security or *the politics of exception*. (Williams 2003) This conception has been used in the construction of traditional national security doctrines in which fundamental rights are suspended by the State, and it also resembles the logic behind the current legal figure of *state of emergency* by which states suspend some rights although within limits that guarantee human rights provisions.<sup>1</sup>

Even in its most liberal formulation, securitization implies a restriction of democratic politics by concentrating the power to decide on an issue in the executive branch, without public debate and without providing information to society. Furthermore, by exiting the political normal order, it opens the door for adopting illiberal policies against subjects categorized as threats. Thus, in order to recover the democratic control over securitized issues, I follow Hansen's approach to desecuritization in which this author deconstructs the politics of security into two levels: its locus and its ethical dimension. According to Hansen, "Politics' thus has a double status: it refers to a political, public sphere of engagement, and it refers at the meta-level to the moves –and choices– between the politicised and the securitized." (2012, 528) The first aspect is based on Habermas' commitment to communicative action and to discourse ethics by which political actors engage in an argumentative negotiation, making validity claims and providing with the foundations and the reasons for such claims in order to reach a consensus. (Hansen 2012; Baxter 1987) In this view, speakers are held accountable for their truth claims, so they must be sincere in their intentions and arguments. Finally, when the consensus is reached after the argumentative negotiation, it is materialized in a common lifeworld in which the previous views of the speakers and audiences are changed and a new intersubjectively constructed regime of truth is reached. (Baxter 1987)

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<sup>1</sup> The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966, in its article 4 regulates the use of state of exception as follows: 1. In time of public emergency which threatens the life of the nation and the existence of which is officially proclaimed, the States Parties to the present Covenant may take measures derogating from their obligations under the present Covenant to the extent strictly required by the exigencies of the situation, provided that such measures are not inconsistent with their other obligations under international law and do not involve discrimination solely on the ground of race, colour, sex, language, religion or social origin. (United Nations General Assembly 1966)

The second aspect of Hansen's argument relates to the ethico-political choices of constructing the Other in the lines of friend-enemy, and the locus where the mediation of difference is going to take place: the public sphere or the secretive sphere of security. (Hansen 2012, 528) Hansen recognizes that securitization is a highly political action in which an issue is taken away from the public sphere and Self/Other relations are constructed in antagonistic terms. Because she theorizes desecuritization as a Derridian *supplement*, it is also by extension a highly political action in which two decisions are made: first, reinvigorating the public sphere by decentralizing the political decision-making process and facilitating "[...] the engagement of a wider range of actors than if an issue is constituted as one of securitization [...]"; and, second, "[...] loosening of the friend-enemy distinction [...]". (Hansen 2012, 533) In this form of theorizing desecuritization, bringing back an issue from the emergency mode involves taking away the right of the authorities to prevent that information to be shared in the public sphere. Departing from the understanding that identities are constrictions that do not pre-date politics but are constituted discursively in the public sphere, desecuritization also must instantiate a non-threatening and non-inimical representation of the identity of a collective Other. (Hansen 2012, 533) In this fashion, "[...] the ability of politicisation to transform relations between Selves and Others is not only a matter of dialogue and persuasion in a Habermasian sense, but of questioning the very subject constructions that are on offer." (2012, 533)

Linking this theoretical approach to the desecuritizing strategy of rearticulation -that is, bringing securitized issues into the public sphere and transforming the Self/Other mutual construction in non-antagonistic terms- and linking this strategy to a process of disarticulation of the security dispositive in order to tackle the materiality of the discourse construction and its symbolic representations, this study will follow the next claim:

**Second claim:** A desecuritization process needs to end in the disarticulation of existing security practices in order to be successful and sustainable. But in order to be successful, the process has as necessary conditions the confluence of an enabling socio-historical context, a return of the security issue to the public debate, and a change in the relation between Self and Other away from antagonistic terms.

I also depart from the understanding that securitization and desecuritization are not speech-act events, but socio-political iterative processes of construction of meaning and action. For this understanding, I use a hybrid approach to securitization as a linguistic and sociological process. Following Stritzel (2007) and Rumelili (2015), I understand the securitization of migration and its unmaking as processes that involve the construction of text through the political struggle

of different securitizing and desecuritizing discourses, which frame migrants as physical and/or ontological threats, or as non-threatening in any sense, and which lead to the adoption of different political measures.

Securitizing discourses will construct identity as a referent object and migration as a security subject, while desecuritizing discourses will contest these securitizing constructions and will present identity of the collective Self as non-threatened and the migrant-Other not as an antagonist subject. These discourses will be embedded in linguistic structures and in material and social realities that will determine which type of security discourse becomes dominant and thus produces the desired political and policy effects. I understand context as both a socio-linguistic system of meaning in which discourses find their support and by which some of them and not others become intelligible and accepted as truth; and, a socio-political structure in which some agents are endowed with more power than others, thus making them more capable of positioning discourses as dominant. On the last aspect, I consider power as being relational more than positional. I agree with Stritzel in that power is the result of the re-iterative process of interaction between speaker and audience. In this sense, although positions in an institutional structure are important, they are not sufficient for granting authoritative power to speak and negotiate security. Within this constructivist understanding of power, this study will explore the following claim:

**Third claim:** In the securitization process, authoritative power is intersubjectively, historically and contextually generated, thus making pre-existing and institutionally defined power an insufficient condition for a successful securitizing move.

Finally, I argue, following Coté (2016), that being securitization and desecuritization intersubjective processes, the speaker-audience relationship cannot be unidirectional, leaving the audience a passive role. According to Coté, securitization is an “[...] iterative process between the securitizing actor and an active audience.” (2016, 554) In this sense, discourses constructed by the speaker are subject to contestation and modification by the audience, which at the same time, can perform securitizing and desecuritizing moves that could influence the decisions of the (de)securitizing actor. This approach provides the Habermasian notion of argumentative rationality and communicative action to the process of desecuritization, where truth claims are contested and modified before a new regimen of truth socially accepted emerges and policy measures are adopted accordingly.

### 2.2.2. Research Design

The socio-historical context in which this study is going to take place comprehends the refugee crisis in Germany during the period 2015-2016. This time frame has been chosen because it encompasses the intensification of the arrival of refugees resulting from the armed conflict in Syria and Iraq at the EU. It also encompasses the adoption of the open-border policy towards refugees by the German government in the summer of 2015 and the increase of xenophobic manifestations in German society and its political arena. Furthermore, in those two years, several law instruments were adopted in order to handle the refugee influx in the country and to respond to the perceived security concerns. This context allows the study of security politics associated with immigration. This period of time is also sufficient to observe the intense political debate in Germany and, according to some scholars, the transformation of the political environment in the country due to the resurgence of the populist far-right. (Benedikter and Karolewski 2017; Dostal 2015, 2017)

Within this time frame, and in order to identify the securitizing and desecuritizing actors and analyze the securitizing and desecuritizing discourses, the analysis is going to be performed mainly on speeches of Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel and official press releases from the Federal Office of the Chancellor. In this vein, I gathered and used in the analysis 176 documents issued by the Federal Chancellery through its web page, all of which related to migration, asylum and refugees. Of these 176 documents, 89 were press releases and 87 were transcriptions of Merkel's speeches and press conferences.<sup>2</sup>

The securitizing actor identified is the far-right party Alternative for Germany (*Alternative für Deutschland*, AfD), whose main political discourse has been based on an anti-immigration stand which led it to confront the open-door policy of the German government. For deconstructing AfD discourse, I used their 2016 political manifesto, extracts and declarations of AfD leaders found in the German press and official press releases of the party. This information was gathered from different sources. I used the database Lexis-Nexis to gather news articles containing declarations and interviews of AfD leaders for the period January 2015-December 2016 in the following newspapers: *Aachener Zeitung*, *Die Welt*, *Berliner Zeitung*, *Sächsische Zeitung*, *Die Tageszeitung TAZ*, *Nordwest-Zeitung*, *Stuttgarter Zeitung*, *Rheinische Post*, *Der Bayerwald-Bote*, *Der Tagesspiegel*, *Kölnische Rundschau*, and *Die Zeit*. The search string used was *Höcke OR Lucke OR Gauland OR Weidel OR Meuthen OR Petry AND AfD AND Migra! OR Asyl! OR Zuwander! OR Einwander! OR Flüchtling*, which contained the names of the most important and mediatic

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<sup>2</sup> All the documents are official and were found in German language. Quotes of these documents used in this study were translated by the author.

leaders of the party. This resulted in 74 press articles which were all used in the analysis. Finally, AfD discourse analysis was complemented with a review of the 2016 political program and 349 press releases found at their web site (<https://www.afd.de/pressearchiv/>). This information was available only from December 2015 to December 2016. Of the 349 press releases, 34 were used in the analysis because of their direct relation with the refugee crisis.<sup>3</sup>

I have selected Chancellor Merkel and the AfD as the main actors constructing opposing views of the refugee crisis for the following reasons. First, I have limited the selection to formal political actors given that, in a liberal democracy as Germany, political parties and government authorities occupy a locus in the political arena that enables them to construct texts which represent the desires and sentiments of sectors of society that identify with the parties' values, visions and political programs. Second, under my theoretical approach to social power as relational and historical, I have identified Chancellor Merkel and the AfD as the actors that were intersubjectively empowered to engage in the politization and eventual securitization of the refugee crisis due to the socio-historical context that the crisis provoked. In fact, both the Chancellor and the AfD are the formal political expression of the most radical positions around the refugee crisis: open-borders and no upper-limits for refugees in the first case, and closed borders and security measures on the second case. The rest of the political parties are somewhere in between, including the Chancellor's own party, the Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union (CDU/CSU) and her government's coalition partner, the Social Democratic German Party (SPD). In the case of AfD, the support the party gained after the summer of 2015 is correlated with the emergence of the refugee crisis and the party's pre-existing xenophobic and anti-immigration positions, which were since then intensified for political purposes (Benedikter and Karolewski 2017; Dostal, 2017). Before 2015, AfD was a marginal, reactionary, protest party with a predominantly Eurosceptic program. After the refugee crisis, it became the third political force in the country (The Guardian 2017).

The analysis of the audience's response to the discourse construction on the refugee crisis by the Federal Chancellor and by the AfD was made through looking at editorial and commentary articles found in three of the most read national newspapers: *Die Welt* and *Der Taggespiegel*. According to the Department of Germanic Studies of the University of Chicago, *Die Welt* has a daily circulation of 250.000 copies and its editorial line is conservative. *Der Taggespiegel* has a

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<sup>3</sup> The interviews, articles, and official press releases were found in German language and the quotes used in this study were translated by the author. The AfD political program was found in English language.

daily circulation of 150.000 copies and its editorial line is liberal. In this fashion, they occupy the 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> place of the most circulated written media in the country.<sup>4</sup> Although this selection is not the most ideal, it responds to availability for research. These two newspapers can be accessed through the Nexis-Lexis database which allows to use a search-engine to look at specific themes. Due to the limited time slot for this study, the use of the database allowed to look at thousands of articles published in the two-year period between 2015 and 2016, in a rapid fashion. The *Bild* tabloid, which is the most read newspaper in Germany was also considered for this study. Unfortunately, the Nexis-Lexis database only provides access to its articles since 2017. Die *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, which according to the University of Chicago is the second most circulated newspaper, with a daily circulation of 450.000 and a liberal editorial line, was also included in the study, but the editorial articles found on the refugee crisis -a total of 30 from 2015-2016-, written by his Editor-in-Chief, Kurt Kister, discussed the refugee situation internationally and globally, but not the domestic issues, so they were not useful for the analysis and therefore were not included. Finally, the third most read newspaper, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, which has a daily circulation of 400.000 copies and a conservative editorial line<sup>5</sup>, is not available in the IHEID databases.

Despite these limitations, a sample of 113 opinion and editorial articles were selected and analyzed from Die Welt and Der Tagesspiegel<sup>6</sup>, which showed to have substantive discussions around the refugee crisis and are very informative of the evolution of the popular reaction to the government policies and of the political surge of the far-right. These articles were sampled from a collection of opinion and commentary articles gathered through the database Lexis-Nexis, using the search string *Migra! OR Immigra! OR Flücht! OR Einwander! OR Zuwander! OR Asyl! (SECTION Editorial! OR Kommentar!)*. The results from this search were 185 articles from Die Welt and 124 from Der Tagesspiegel. From the 185 articles in Die Welt, I collected a sample of 56 articles for the analysis by restricting the number of opinion writers to those journalists working for the newspaper and acting as frequent contributors on immigration issues; that is to 5 people: Dorothea Siems, Ulrich Clauß, Ulf Poschardt, Torsten Krauel and Jacques Schuster. From Der Tagesspiegel, I sampled and analyzed 57 articles which resulted of eliminating all those commentaries that were written by invited politicians and government authorities.

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<sup>4</sup> University of Chicago, Department of Germanic Studies, "The Media in the German Speaking Countries" <https://german.uchicago.edu/links/media>, Last accessed: 04 April 2019

<sup>5</sup> Department of Germanic Studies, Division of the Humanities, University of Chicago.

<sup>6</sup> The opinion articles and commentaries were found in German language. Quotes of these documents found in this study were made by the author.

**Table 1. Description of the Sample**

<b>Actor</b>	<b>Type of Document</b>	<b>Number of documents used in the analysis</b>
<b>Federal Chancellor</b>	Official press releases.	89
	Official transcripts of speeches and press conferences.	87
<b>Total</b>		<b>176</b>
<b>AfD</b>	2016 Political Program.	1
	Coverage in newspaper articles.	73
	Official press releases.	34
<b>Total</b>		<b>108</b>
<b>Der Taggespiegel</b>	Opinion articles and commentaries.	57
<b>Die Welt</b>	Opinion articles and commentaries.	56
<b>Total</b>		<b>113</b>

### **2.2.3. Method**

The discourse analysis of the sampled documents was conducted using predicate analysis. According to Milliken this method

[...] focuses on the language practices of predication -the verbs, adverbs and adjectives that attach to nouns. Predications of a noun construct the thing(s) named as a particular sort of thing, with particular features and capacities. Among the objects so constituted may be subjects defined through being assigned capacities for and modes of acting and interacting. (1999, 232)

According to this definition, the predicate analysis of language allows to deconstruct the meaning attached in a text to the signifier *refugee* in its different figurations -*asylum seeker, economic migrant, forced migrant, illegal migrant*, and so on- by observing the attribution of positive and negative values made by the enunciator, contained in the way they present the intentions, actions, beliefs, values and identity markers of the refugee. The concept of figuration in this context

corresponds to figures of speech that encompass “[...] distillations of shared meanings in forms or images.” (Weber 2016a, 15) According to Weber, figurations

[...] do not (mis)represent the world, for to do so implies the world as a signified preexists them. Rather, figurations emerge out of discursive and material semiotic assemblages that condense diffuse imaginaries about the world into specific forms or images that bring specific worlds into being. This makes figurations powerful signifiers that approximate but never properly represent seemingly signified worlds, even though figurations are evoked as if they did represent preexisting worlds. (2016a, 15)

Departing from this notion, a systematic predicate analysis of several texts in a defined period of time serves to reveal patterns of social construction, modification and transformation of the meaning attributed to a signifier, which go beyond what it is signified. In this sense, the observation of the predicate reveals the linguistic context in which the signifier and the signified become part of new systems of meaning charged with social valuation. Because of these characteristics, predicate analysis is an adequate method for the deconstruction of discourses in order to unveil the political intentionality and the power relations behind the representations of the signifier.

Following this method, and in accordance with the theoretical framework, I focused the analysis of the discourse in identifying the security frames through which the refugee was constructed as a threatening and as a non-threatening subject. The securitization frames were differentiated following Rumelili’s approach (2015) in ontological security and physical security, according to the threatening nature attributed to the refugee. That is, when the refugee was represented as a threat to the physical wellbeing or to the existence of an individual or human group, the securitization frame was considered as physical security or security-as-survival. On the contrary, when the refugee was represented as a threat to the stability of the narratives, routines, practices and institutions defining the social and political community, the securitization frame was classified as ontological security or security-as-being. Departing from this differentiation, securitization frames were further classified according to the type of referent object that was presented as threatened by the refugee movement.

Within the ontological security frame for securitization, three ordinate security frames were identified: societal security, economic security and political security. **Societal security**, as we have already seen, is the frame that responds to the representation of the refugee as a threat to a community’s identity. (Waever et al. 1993; Buzan, Waever and de Wilde 1998) **Economic security** is characterized by the construction of socio-economic issues, such as the market in its many configurations -i.e. job market, housing market- and the institutions related to the economic

development -economic growth, fiscal budgets, taxes, the welfare system and so on- as referent objects. (Buzan, Waever and de Wilde 1998) **Political security** is the frame that is used to securitize as a referent object the political form of organization of a community and its essential features: structures, processes and institutions. (Buzan, Waever and de Wilde 1998) This includes the ordering capacity of the state. (Huysmans 1998)

Within the physical frame of securitization, two ordinate security frames were identified: internal security and state security. **Internal security** is the frame used for presenting public order as the referent object of security. In this frame, the security subject is represented as “[...] a threat to law and order for the safety of the individual [...]”, which involves actions such as riots and violent crime. (Buzan, Waever and de Wilde 1998, 182) **State security**, on the other hand, is the frame used to present the very existence of the state as threatened by the security subject. This frame responds to traditional understandings of national security in which the state as a sovereign political unity is existentially threatened by actors using military capabilities. Although inter-state armed conflict is less common in the industrialized world since the end of the Second World War, the notion of national security has persisted in the imaginary of society and in the organization of the state, and since 9/11 2001, it has evolved to be invoked to face other forms of threat -mainly transnational terrorism and drug-trafficking- that are politically equated to armed conflict and responded through military and quasi-military measures.

For identifying the desecuritizing construction of text, the analysis was centered in the deconstructivist strategy of desecuritization. (Huysmans 1995, quoted in Roe 2004) The reason lays in that this strategy serves as the basis for Hansen’s strategies of desecuritization, because it consists on the linguistic rearticulation of meaning aiming at transforming the security nature of a public issue. Through retelling a narrative around a security threat, the reasons of the original securitization can be obviated and put in the back, as in the change through stabilization strategy, or substituted by the construction of another security issue as in the replacement strategy. At the same time, the deconstructivist strategy serves to overcome the friend/enemy dichotomy in the process of othering the security subject, thus becoming part of the rearticulation strategy. In accordance with this perspective, the deconstructivist strategy was identified in two frames, which were differentiated on the basis of the nature of the narrative used to rearticulate the meaning of the threat: the humanitarian frame and the utilitarian frame. The **humanitarian frame for desecuritization** corresponds to the reconstruction of the security subject as a referent object according to humanitarian imperatives. In this sense, this frame was observed when the refugee was presented as a vulnerable individual in need of solidarity, hospitality and protection. The

**utilitarian frame for desecuritization** corresponds to the use of economic imperatives for desecuritizing immigration. In this framing, the refugee becomes a factor of production that is needed in the country for maintaining international economic competitiveness, and as such, tolerated.

For complementing the analysis of securitizing and desecuritizing constructions of the refugee, I also looked at the predicative construction of the national Self in order to identify variation in its representation in the face of the refugee crisis, given that ontological security implies a process of identification and renegotiation of imagined collective identities in times of crisis. (Browning and Joenniemi, 2017) Two predicative constructions can be distinguished of the German collective Self:

- a) as resilient, modern and cosmopolitan Self, having a multicultural, diverse and open-ended society in which migrants can integrate (non-securitizing text).
- b) as a romantic, conservative and closed Self, based on religious and ethno-national roots, and thus as threatened by migration and by the lack of assimilation of foreigners (securitizing text).

In order to observe if the securitizing and desecuritizing discourses are successful, that is, are translated into concrete security practices, in the first case, or are aimed at disarticulating institutionalized security practices, in the second case (Bourbeau, 2011), the study will include an analysis of legal measures regulating the granting of international protection in Germany that were proposed by the government and passed by the Parliament during the 2015-2016 time frame. Eight legal instruments were identified and analyzed. In order to determine their overall political nature, the study used a classification by which it considered legal and policy disposition as **securitizing** when they aimed at limiting the influx of asylum seekers to the country, disincentivizing asylum seekers to go to Germany by restricting rights and benefits, facilitating the deportation of refugees and asylum-seekers, and using the security apparatus to oversee asylum-seekers and refugees. On the contrary, it considered legal and policy disposition as **desecuritizing** when they intended to improve the conditions of humanitarian reception, facilitate the integration of refugees into the German society, increase the rights of refugees and disarticulate institutionalized security practices.

Additionally, the study included the analysis of the socio-historical context and the impact of exogenous shocks affecting the framing of asylum-seekers in the national debate. For that, the study considered the following events:

- a) The terrorist attack on Charlie Hebdo, on January 2015.
- b) The adoption by the Federal government of the open-door refugee policy 2015.

- c) The numerous accusations of sexual assault in Cologne on 1 January 2016.
- d) The state elections of Baden-Württemberg, Rhineland-Palatinate and Saxony-Anhalt when the AfD entered those state Parliaments, on 13 March 2016.
- e) The terrorist attacks in Würzburg and Ansbach, on 18 and 22 July 2016.
- f) The terrorist attack in Berlin, on 19 December 2016.

Finally, through the predicative analysis of discourse and the analysis of the nature of the resulting policies, this study will follow a methodological understanding of securitization and desecuritization processes as causal mechanisms. (Guzzini 2011) According to Elster, a social mechanism is a “[...] frequently occurring and easily recognizable causal patterns that are triggered under generally unknown conditions or with indeterminate consequences”. (quoted in Guzzini 2011, 332) Under this definition, the study of securitization and desecuritization is not aimed at finding “efficient regularities” that can be universally observed under certain conditions or used to predict similar social events in analogous contexts, such as general laws. (Guzzini 2011, 333) Instead, (de)securitization as a social mechanism is indeterminate and unpredictable, and as such, it can be studied as both a) a trigger that prompts a straightforward response based on similar historical contexts “[...] in which actors lay claim to the actualization of a preexisting action-complex [...]”, but of which the effects stay indeterminate; and b) as an effect that is determined and institutionally anchored, but in which the triggering conditions are unpredictable and contingent. (Guzzini 2011, 336) In this reading, “[...] one could see securitization either as the process that is triggered by something else or as itself the trigger of certain effects – both *explanandum* and *explanans*”. (Guzzini 2011, 337)

Within these two possibilities of empirically studying (de)securitization, and given that this study follows a socio-historical context in which a linear succession of events elucidates securitization/desecuritization processes, the causal mechanism is going to be observed as a sequence of moves, which involve both text construction and the adoption of policy measures. This empirical approach implies an “interpretivist process-tracing” in which

[...] analysis can be directed to the understanding of why certain moves can be expected in given national security discourses, why some of them may find a receptive audience (given the underlying security imaginary), and indeed why certain action-complexes can then follow. (Guzzini 2011, 338)

### **3. THE DISCOURSE AND POLICIES OF THE FEDERAL CHANCELLOR**

This section is going to focus on the text construction of the refugee crisis by the Federal Chancellor, Angela Merkel, and for that, it used the sample of 176 documents among press releases from the Chancellor's Office and transcripts of Merkel's speeches. The selection of Chancellor Merkel as the desecuritizing actor in the 2015-2016 refugee crisis has theoretical and methodological underpinnings. Theoretically, because Merkel has occupied the position of Head of Government since 2005, being re-elected four times (2009, 2013 and 2017), and having a strong popular support reflected in approval ratings of 71 % in 2014 and 67 % in 2015 (The Guardian 2015) it can be inferred that Merkel enjoyed great authoritative power in German society and in German politics as to influence in a definitive manner the construction of security issues, and by extension, to desecuritize existing securitized subjects. This dispositional and relational power made Merkel the main actor able to define the way in which the German state and German society dealt with the refugee crisis. In this context and according to the literature (Benedikter and Karolewski 2016; Dingott Alkopher 2018; Heisbourg 2015; Mushaben 2018), it was Merkel who broke with the general securitizing trend towards asylum-seekers and refugees during the crisis, adopting a desecuritizing discourse and non-securitizing policies. Thus, Merkel has been identified as a desecuritizing actor in a context of increased asylum securitization in Europe.

Despite Merkel's general desecuritizing discourse on the refugee crisis, this section is going to show that the discourse has not been consistent in its representation of the refugee and instead has classified those subjects into different subcategories which had served to frame some of them in security terms. This subcategorization was influenced by external shocks that caused increased political and social pressure on the government and opened the door for the adoption of government policies which effectively securitized some subclassifications of refugees. In this fashion, the discourse and the policies show an interesting pattern of discontinuities and contradiction that affected the government credibility.

#### **3.1. General patterns of the discourse construction**

##### **3.1.1. Inconsistency in the discourse**

During the entire period analyzed, Merkel's discourse fluctuated simultaneously between desecuritizing and securitizing representations of refugees. These fluctuations were always contingent to the context, being the securitizing predications reactive to violent external shocks. The desecuritizing discourse during the period of analysis is characterized by a dominant use of the *replacement* strategy of desecuritization in which Merkel used a humanitarian frame for

constructing the refugee as a referent object of security. In this way, the Chancellor tended to attribute to the refugee the condition of vulnerability, as a forced migrant scaping civil war, terrorism and political persecution, thus justifying the granting of international protection in Germany as a moral imperative and a legal obligation.

We can also see the consequences of terrorism, war and the resulting loss of perspective, which find one expression in the large numbers of refugees. The refugee agency UNHCR reports almost 60 million refugees, displaced persons and asylum seekers worldwide – more than at any time since the Second World War. We know that in Europe we can only overcome this challenge through cooperation and solidarity. To this end we have formulated a comprehensive strategy which focuses on several areas simultaneously. Taking in the refugees requires more than the engagement of just a few EU countries; we really need commitment from the whole of Europe. We have already taken a decision on improving sea rescue operations. The refugee tragedies in the Mediterranean have to come to an end. We also have to put a stop to the evil and criminal activities of the human traffickers, who are only interested in unscrupulously exploiting the plight of helpless and vulnerable people. Above all we need to tackle the problems leading to flight and displacement. This requires better cooperation with the countries of origin and transit. (Die Bundeskanzlerin 2015h)

The analysis also shows that the utilitarian frame for desecuritizing the refugee was less used by the Chancellor as a replacement strategy. Given that Germany has an aging population and a need for a young workforce, the limited use of this frame was unexpected. Nevertheless, the analysis of the discourse construction of the AfD and the media showed that there was a strong opposition to any perceived use of the institution of asylum to bypass the lack of a comprehensive immigration policy oriented by economic imperatives. In this scarcely used form of predicative construction, Chancellor Merkel presented the arrival of refugees as an opportunity for the German economy to incorporate needed workforce as a means to counter the demographic decline of German population. This desecuritizing frame can be observed in a speech in Leipzig, on 11 May, 2016, where Merkel framed the refugee crisis in positive economic terms.

In the end, integration will benefit us all if it succeeds, not least in view of the demographic change in our country and, incidentally, also in view of our openness, which is necessary to understand globalization. This curiosity, this openness should always be preserved in all problems. (Die Bundeskanzlerin 2016a)

Other desecuritizing strategies were less common in Merkel's discourse during 2015-2016. In very few occasions, the Chancellor used a *rearticulation* strategy, by calling for the recognition of the refugee as an individual and a fellow human being, and not as masses of faceless people as was commonly depicted by international media, especially in situations of distress at sea. In this fashion, the Chancellor was appealing to consider the dignity of all those people in the need of protection as a way of desecuritizing their subjectivity, promoting empathy and instantiating popular solidarity and hospitality.

How do we deal with the fact that so many refugees come to us? I think the most important thing is that, even if there are still so many, we never call them masses or crowds, but we see each person as one person. Sometimes this may not be easy in the face of many, but every human being must be treated with dignity. (Die Bundeskanzlerin 2015a)

Along with these desecuritizing constructions, Chancellor Merkel consistently portrayed asylum-seekers as people also trying to migrate for economic reasons and abusing the institution of asylum. In fact, her most common discursive construction of the refugee crisis presented a dyad of genuine/illegitimate refugees simultaneously applying for asylum in the EU. This dyadic construction was politically necessary for Merkel, for it allowed the Chancellor to provide with legitimacy to the asylum procedure in Germany and contest accusations of a wrongful use of the institution of asylum to overcome the lack of an immigration law.

In Germany, you see a country that has the power to offer protection and prospects for a better life. But given the dimension of the refugee problem, we also have to make it clear that anyone who comes to us for economic reasons alone will have to return to their homeland. We need our strength to protect those who really need it, who have fled terror, war and persecution. (Die Bundeskanzlerin 2015b)

In Merkel's perspective, if the population could rely on the authorities that only people deserving international protection were been granted asylum, then popular support for the open-border refugee policy was possible. This genuine/illegitimate binary construction of refugees allowed Merkel to securitize the economic irregular migrant and call for the implementation of security measures, such as establishing detention centers, rejecting asylum claims *ex officio*, and enforcing deportations. In another securitizing construction which became prevalent from the end of 2015 on, and which is correlated with the numbers of asylum seekers exceeding the governments initial predictions and the fiscal and social pressure produced by the refugee situation, the Chancellor framed the refugee in another dyad: as legal/illegal according to the way in which asylum seekers arrived to the EU. This text implicitly recognized that most of the asylum

seekers coming mainly from Turkey had a founded claim of persecution and thus the legal basis for being granted asylum. But because of the increasingly unfavorable political context, locally and at the EU level, Merkel reacted securitizing the asylum seeker arriving by irregular channels to the EU -mostly through human-trafficking networks-, figuring him as illegal, and calling for measures at the EU level interdicting his movements.

### **3.1.2. The link between the national and the EU level**

The second general characteristic found in the Chancellor's discourse is that the refugee crisis is always presented as concerning both the domestic and the EU level. These two levels are always intertwined and the measures called for addressing the crisis at both levels cannot be understood independently. At the domestic level, Merkel tends to call for measures that desecuritize the figure of the (genuine) refugee, such as maintaining the borders open, avoiding to impose upper-limits to the number of refugees accepted, and integrating them into German society with a long-term perspective. On the contrary, at the EU level, Merkel tends to securitize the refugee and interdict his movement into European territory, through reinforcing EU external border controls, fighting irregular channels for migrating into the EU, and fostering international agreements for returning asylum seekers to third countries.

These differentiated responses are all connected to the open-border refugee policy. This linkage of apparently incoherent approaches reflects different perceptions of threat caused by the refugee crisis in the Chancellor's discourse. First, at the EU level, the Chancellor perceives the refugee crisis as a threat to EU cohesion and to the continuity of the European integration project, given that it happened at a time when the EU was politically weakened by the effects of the 2010 sovereign debt and Euro crises. This situation had polarized the debate among the EU members on the common economic measures for rescuing the so called PIIGS -Portugal, Ireland, Italy, Greece and Spain- and for avoiding an exit of Greece from the European Monetary Union, which could have weakened the Euro's international position. (Richter and Wahl 2011) In this context, the Chancellor articulated the continuity and well-functioning of the Schengen Area and the principle of freedom of movement within the EU, as one of the pillars of the European integration project and a fundamental aspect of its economic strength that should be protected. The fact that Italy and Greece were overwhelmed by the refugee movements and that other countries were reinstalling border controls -mainly the Visegrad Four (Poland, Czechia, Slovakia and Hungary), but eventually Austria, Denmark, Sweden and partially Germany as well- led Merkel to present

the massive arrival of refugees as a threat to the European integration project. In this way, Merkel constructed the EU as an object of security.

I also want to make it clear once again what my view is about Europe, a functioning European Union. We value Europe, we also benefit directly, as Federal Republic of Germany, as an exporting country, from Europe, from a European Union in which the four fundamental freedoms apply: the freedom of the movement of the people, the capital, the services and the products. Obviously, such a space of freedom can only be maintained if one knows where this space ends and is able to protect and control the outer boundaries of this space. The pressure on the external borders by civil war refugees or migration was lower before than it is today. This pressure has not manifested itself so much in Germany because we are not living on the external borders, but are a country in the center of this so-called Schengen area. When this pressure was not that high, we did not strive too hard for the protection of the borders, but it is the prerequisite for us to be able to live in a space of freedom in a comprehensive sense. One of the reasons why I have always insisted, for example, on solving problems at the external borders, is that I am convinced that otherwise the four fundamental freedoms could not be maintained as they were, which would mean significant weakening of the European Union. (Die Bundeskanzlerin 2017)

On the contrary, at the national level, Merkel saw a favorable economic, fiscal and social environment for adopting an exemplary action, suspending the application of the Dublin Regulation and keeping open the German borders to the flows of asylum seekers. In this way, Merkel expected to set an example for other EU countries to follow, aiming at alleviating the pressure that the massive arrival of asylum seekers was causing on Greece and Italy's bureaucracy and infrastructure. (Die Bundeskanzlerin 2015c) In this domestic context, Merkel framed the refugee crisis as a challenge -not a threat- that Germany was able to overcome due to, on the one hand, its economic power, its sound financial and budgetary position, and its low unemployment rates; and, on the other hand, its liberal, cosmopolitan and open society. This is shown in the following statement of the Chancellor: "The overwhelming majority of our people are cosmopolitan. Our economy is strong, our labor market is robust and even receptive." (Die Bundeskanzlerin 2015d)

### **3.2. The construction of Germany's collective identity**

The Chancellor constructed German collective identity through political, economic, cultural, ethical and institutional markers. Politically, she presented Germany's identity as civic, liberal, secular

and republican, based on the respect of democracy, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law. Economically, Merkel constructed Germany as an economic great power, a free-trading nation and a welfare state. Culturally, Germany was figured as a Western and European country with a cosmopolitan, open, and multicultural identity, but rooted on Christian and Jewish values as well as on the tradition of European Enlightenment. Ethically, Merkel constructed German identity as based on humanism, humanitarianism and solidarity, and attributed to Germany the role of a regional and international leading country, recognized and respected as such, and responsible for the conservation of the European integration project and the international liberal order. Finally, the Chancellor defined Germany's identity also from its membership to the EU, NATO, the G7 and the G20. An important aspect that is brought often by Merkel in her speeches is the burden of the Nazi, militaristic past in defining current German identity. This burden is presented as the reason for Germany's responsibility with the current international liberal order, as well as for the Chancellor's view of Germany's duty to show solidarity towards, and assist forced migrants in the context of the refugee crisis. In a speech on the Annual Meeting of the Association of the Expelled, in May 2015, Merkel asserted that:

We are commemorating in these days the end of World War II 70 years ago and of the collapse of civilization brought about the Shoah. Anyone who tries to grasp even to the slightest extent the suffering that was brought into the world by Germany in the era of National Socialism, reaches the limit of the imaginable. Only by being aware of Germany's everlasting responsibility for the horrors of our past, can we shape a bright future. [...] With the commemoration day on the 20th of June, we will tie in with the United Nations World Refugee Day. This gives the opportunity to look at both historical and current events. We are witnessing huge numbers of refugees these days. The UN refugee agency speaks of almost 51.2 million refugees, displaced persons and asylum seekers worldwide, more than ever since the Second World War. [...] Linking historical and current issues with each other and looking at both equally - this is the approach followed by the Federal Government as well. (Die Bundeskanzlerin 2015e)

The political and cultural values that sustain Merkel's construction of Germany's identity favored the desecuritization of the refugee crisis by providing the ground to present the country and its society as able to integrate two identity markers that were attributed to the arriving asylum seekers: their foreign origin and their Muslim faith. By articulating German collective identity as liberal and cosmopolitan, the Chancellor represented Germany as a *country of immigration*. According to some scholars (Diez and Squire 2010; Checkel 2011; Hollifield 2004; Thielemann 2001) Germany

was a country with traditionally restrictive immigration policies that defined belonging to the political community as based on ethno-national grounds. Since the reforms to the citizenship law in 2000, more political actors have articulated the idea of Germany being an immigration country. Nevertheless, the debate on this subject has continued and was revived in 2014 and early 2015, under the proposal of the government to elaborate an immigration law, which the country until today does not possess. The framing of Germany as an immigration country allowed Merkel to present the refugee crisis not as a disruptive event which could create ontological insecurity by threatening a fixed ethno-national self-image, but as a new migratory process in which foreigners were going to be integrated into German society, as it has happened before. The figuration used by the Chancellor to refer to this open quality of German society was the popular term *Willkommenskultur* (welcoming culture) which encompassed liberal political values, tolerance and cultural cosmopolitanism. In this way, at the national level, by avoiding to present the refugee movement as an emergency and the foreigner as a threat, Merkel sought to desecuritize the situation, in opposition to what was happening in other EU countries.

I believe that our country has changed again and again in its history as long as the Federal Republic of Germany exists. At the beginning, we integrated millions of displaced persons, and the expellees themselves made a major contribution. We have long made the mistake of referring to guest workers as guest workers, but fortunately for quite some time now, we have come to see that they are our fellow citizens, no matter what their lineage is. That they live with us in the third or fourth generation has already changed our country. [...] In the light of the anniversary celebrations of the CDU, I spoke of Germany as an immigration country. At the moment we are experiencing immigration in a very specific form, namely in this case by asylum seekers, civil war refugees. Many of them will stay with us for a very long time. (Die Bundeskanzlerin 2015d)

In the same vein, the articulation of German identity as secular and cosmopolitan allowed the Chancellor to present Islam in non-threatening terms. This point is important given that Merkel framed the open-border refugee policy as aiming at providing protection mainly to Syrian refugees, who are reported by the media and the AfD as being predominantly Muslim and in consequence a source of ontological and, in the context of the Islamist terrorist attacks happening in Europe, also a physical threat for German society. In this context, the Chancellor tried to prevent the securitization of the Muslim refugee by arguing that Islam was part of Germany's collective identity. In an interview in August, 2015, Merkel said: "This has led to the discussion of whether Islam belongs to Germany or not, in which I made a clear statement and said that now it belongs to

Germany, of course.” (Die Bundeskanzlerin 2015d) Nevertheless, the prevention of the social perception of the Muslim refugee as a physical threat was more complex. Due to the terrorist attacks, the Chancellor constructed Islam in binary terms (religion/political ideology) and fostered the integration of Muslims into German society depending on their actions: “Muslims have the right of freedom of religion guaranteed, but also the obligation to respect Germany’s legal framework.” (Die Bundeskanzlerin 2015f) As in the case of the dyadic construction of the refugee as genuine and illegitimate, these figurations of Islam are problematic because they generate doubt on the real nature and intentions of the Muslim and the refugee. In this way, the social construction of the meaning of *Islam* implied a security dimension.

Finally, Merkel constructed German identity as intrinsically related to the EU, as being part of a larger European identity and as having a historical responsibility towards the EU as a political project. For the Chancellor, the project of European integration was the reason for the reincorporation of Germany into the international system after WWII, the precursor of Germany’s economic success, and the institution that facilitated Germany’s reunification. But for Merkel, the role of Germany in the EU is not restricted to its conservation, it also involves its conduction.

We know that even in the euro crisis we did not always stand together, but sometimes Germany stood there alone [...]. What we have experienced over and over again [...] is that it can be precisely this readiness and the strength of Germany that finally paves the way for a European solution. (Die Bundeskanzlerin 2015g)

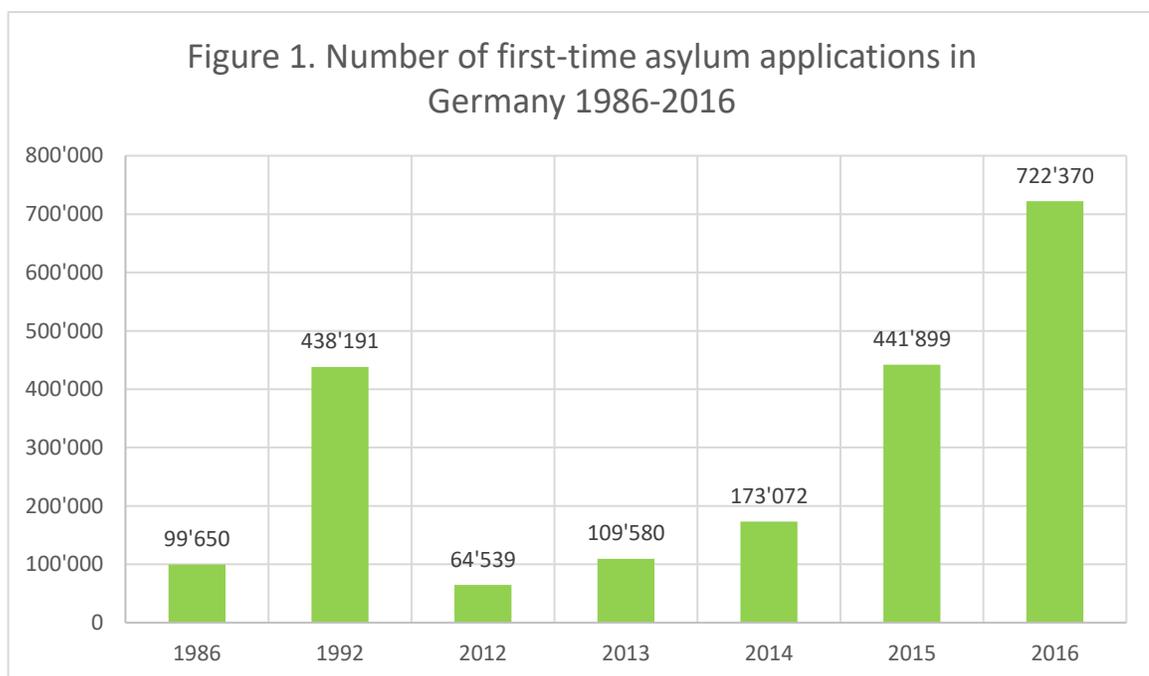
In this fashion, the Chancellor presents her country as a *hegemon* according to the description of Keohane, as both the international recognition of a state as a hegemonic power and the willingness of that state to exert its hegemonic power by bringing stability and order to the international system through the creation of international regimes. In Merkel text construction, it is possible to observe a representation of Germany as the EU hegemonic power accepting the responsibility to lead and maintain the existing institutions. This is the argument that justifies the open-border refugee policy at the domestic level as a measure to maintain the EU’s single space and to set the policy example that the rest of member states should follow.

### **3.3. The use of security frames to construct the refugee crisis**

The analysis of the Chancellor’s discourse shows an evolution in two different moments according to the historical and socio-political context. This evolution comprehends a variation in the use of language strategies of predication, framing the representation of the refugee crisis and affecting in consequence the adoption of security policies. The first moment is characterized by a

predominantly desecuritizing discourse on the refugee crisis. It goes from January to September 2015 and is marked by the humanitarian crisis unfolding at the EU borders and the subsequent adoption of the open-border refugee policy by the German government. At this time, the refugee is predominantly framed as referent object of security threatened by war political persecution, armed conflict and organized transnational crime, therefore deserving international protection. The subjects of security, rather than being the refugees -as it was the case in some countries of the EU- were the root causes of forced migration and human-trafficking networks. Despite this predominant desecuritizing discourse, Merkel also simultaneously securitized the refugee crisis by figuring the refugee through the genuine/illegitimate binary, according to political and geopolitical calculations. In this construction, illegitimate refugees were portrayed as threats to the fiscal soundness of the country and to the success of the government's refugee policy.

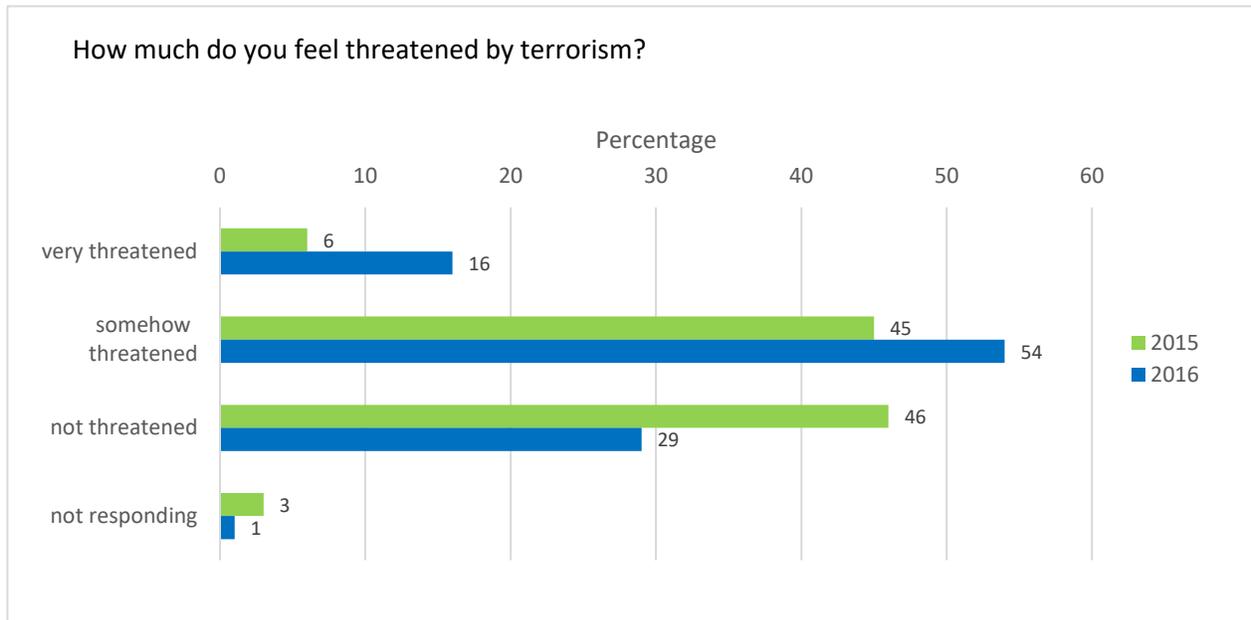
**Figure 1. Number of first-time asylum applications in Germany 1986-2016**



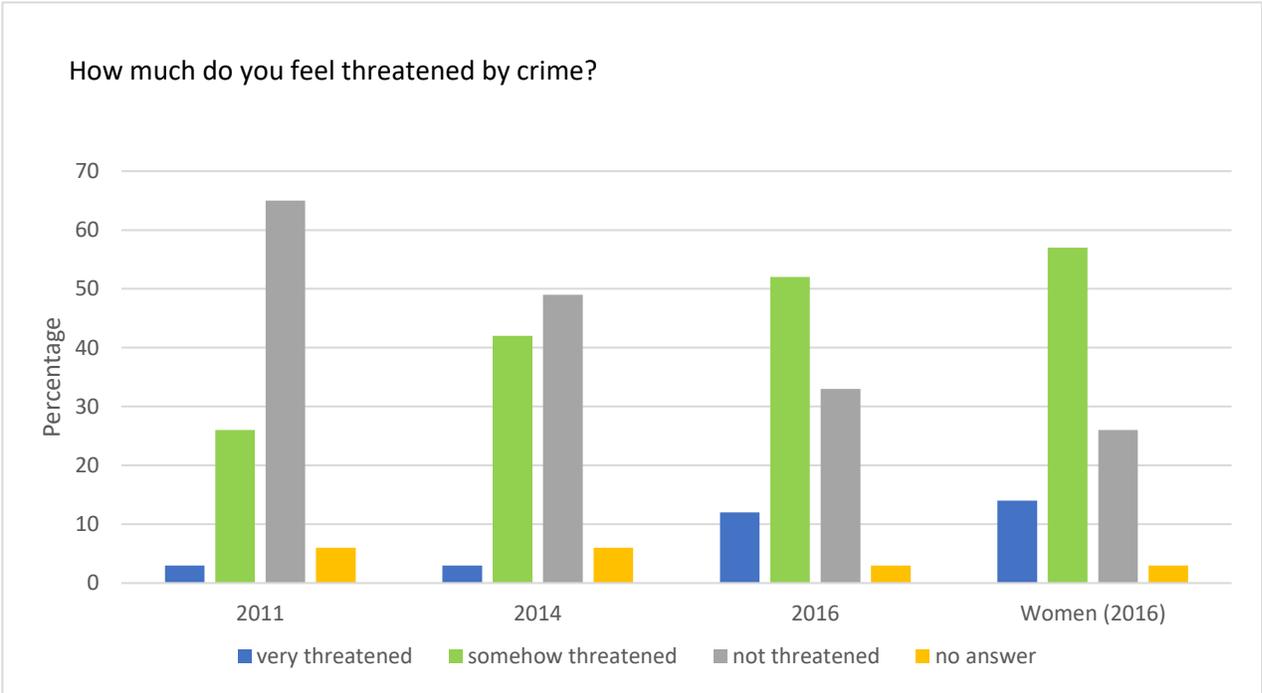
The second moment, which goes from September 2015 to December 2016, is characterized by a securitizing turn in the Chancellor's discourse. The humanitarian desecuritization frame loses force and momentum and Merkel's discourse on the refugee crisis becomes predominantly securitizing. This discursive turn is correlated with a negative change in public opinion after the impact of external shocks. The increasing negative popular perception of the refugee was reflected

in opinion polls which showed an increase in society's fear of terrorism and violent crime in Germany intimately related to the refugee crisis.

**Figure 2. Evolution of public perception of the threat of terrorism in Germany. August 2016**

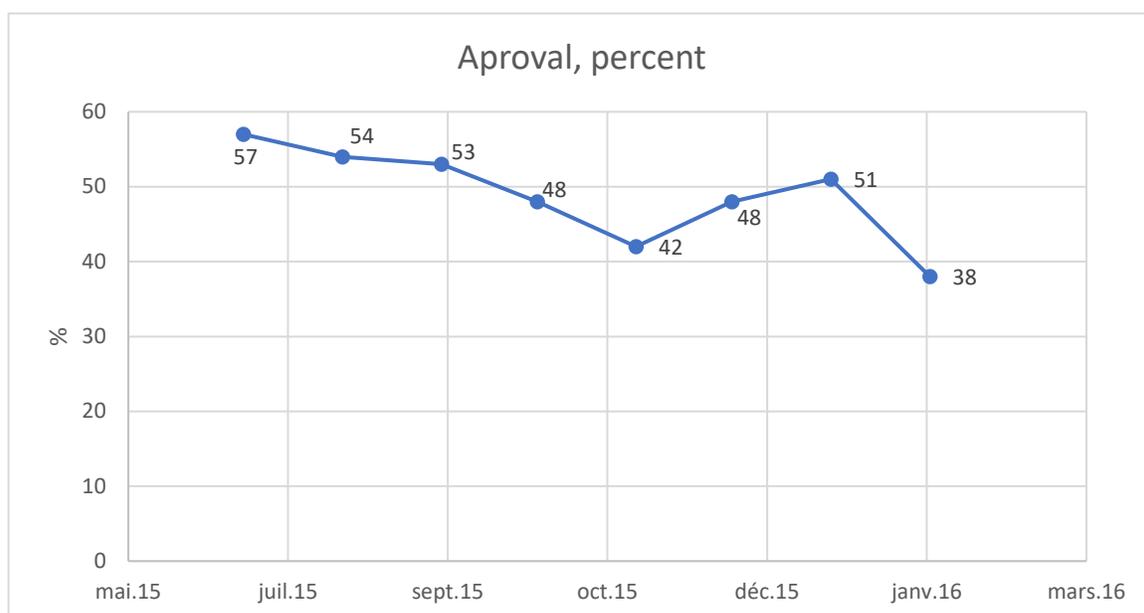


**Figure 3. Evolution of public perception of the threat of crime in Germany. August 2016**



This change in the social context and in the perception of the security nature of the refugee crisis affected the popular support for the government and provoked a growing contestation to the open-door policy. Opinion polls reflected this discontent with the administration through a stiff decline in Merkel’s approval ratings, which fell 20 percentage points between June 2015 and January 2016. This new socio-historical context became inadequate for Chancellor Merkel and the Federal government to maintain a desecuritizing approach towards the refugee crisis and that was reflected in a sudden change of tone in Merkel’s discourse which became more oriented towards constructing some categories of refugees as security concerns.

**Figure 4. Chancellor Merkel approval ratings. July 2015 - February 2016**



Merkel's new discursive moment was characterized by two securitization frames of the refugee crisis. First, the situation became to be portrayed as a source of risk of criminal offenses and terrorism. The refugee was consequently securitized as an internal security and a state security threat, leading to the call for emergency measures that implied breaking with international standards of international protection, and which involved the increased use of the security *dispositif*. Second, the failure of adopting a common policy for distributing evenly the refugees within the EU led the German Chancellor to securitize the refugee as a threat to the European integration project, especially to the freedom of movement. This political security frame led Merkel to promote security measures aiming at deterring refugees from arriving through irregular channels to Europe.

### 3.3.1. First moment: January-September 2015.

**(Security frames:** Humanitarian desecuritization frame, economic securitization frame.)

The first discursive moment is characterized by articulating a process of desecuritization of the refugee crisis which had a climactic moment in the adoption of the open-border policy. During this period, the Federal Chancellor approaches the refugee crisis with a great emphasis on its European dimension and the debate is focused on the critical humanitarian situation at the EU borders, especially at the Mediterranean Sea. Given the risks and sufferings that asylum seekers were experiencing, the Chancellor concentrated her text construction in figuring the refugees as

referent objects of security and calling for a joint EU response to the crisis. Using a *replacement* desecuritizing strategy Merkel presented the refugee to German society and to the EU leaders as existentially threatened by war, persecution and human-trafficking, and thus in the need of international aid and protection. Following this construction, the policy responses demanded by Merkel included calls for joint operations to rescue asylum seekers at sea. (Die Bundeskanzlerin 2015h) It can be also observed that Merkel figured the asylum seeker deserving international protection as resulting mainly from the Syrian armed conflict, a fact that has important implications for the Federal government's refugee policy.

Still, if we have to make a difference now and say who we can help, then we say, these are the people who are now fleeing Aleppo, fleeing the real threat. We can help them. If someone has been in a Palestinian refugee camp in Jordan for 20 years, that is not an easy fate, but it is not per se a fate that entitles them to asylum in Germany. (Die Bundeskanzlerin 2015d)

The reasons Merkel gives for this selective construction of the refugee are diverse. First of all, she refers to the war in Syria in which there are basically two aggressors -the Assad government and the so-called Islamic State (IS)- and one victim: the Syrian people. Merkel formulated this construction clearly in a speech in which she stated that: "It should not be forgotten that the majority of refugees in Turkey fled the barrel bombs of Assad; today the forced migration in the IS front is added." (Die Bundeskanzlerin 2015i) This argument evidences a political instrumentalization of asylum. The Assad government is constructed as a regime that systematically violates human rights and that is contrary to civilizational values, thus the regions controlled by the state are not considered safe for Syrian citizens. This use of the institution of asylum, as a tool to show the moral bankruptcy of a political regime was very common in Western countries during the Cold War. (Keely 2001, 307) It can be inferred from Merkel discourse that the German government has a hierarchy on the root causes of asylum in which political persecution has a higher status than armed conflict and state failure. This is also reflected in the legal framework: Article 16 of the Basic Law awards refugee protection exclusively in cases of political persecution, while subsidiary Law -the Asylum Act- awards international protection (refugee status and subsidiary protection) according to the provisions of 1961 Refugee Convention and to humanitarian considerations. (Chemin et al. 2018)

A second reason is articulated by Merkel as the proximity of Syria to the EU, specially to Cyprus; thus, the stability of Syria and the protection of their people is presented by Merkel as affecting directly the security of the EU and Germany.

The civil war in Syria has turned 4.8 million into refugees, according to UNHCR. Most of them have found refuge in neighboring Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan. However, I would like to point out that Cyprus is not very far away, but only separated from Syria by a narrow water border; and Cyprus is part of our European area of freedom of movement and movement, the Schengen area. (Die Bundeskanzlerin 2016g)

These geopolitical and political dimensions in Merkel's discourse are important to understand its ambiguity, for they classify refugees in disserving and non-disserving as well as in true refugees and economic migrants. And this classification has important legal consequences. One of those consequences is that Syrian asylum-seekers were subject to an ex officio recognition of their refugee status similar in many aspects to *prima facie* recognition<sup>7</sup>, which produced an acceptance rate on Syrian asylum applications of 99 % in 2015. (AIDA 2017, 8) On the contrary, Afghan asylum-seekers, for instance, whose applications in Germany increased from 4,624 in 2012 to 127,892 in 2016 (AIDA 2017), due to the deterioration of Afghanistan internal security after the end of NATO military operations in 2014, did not benefit from *prima facie* recognition and instead were subject to a policy of rejection of their applications and their repatriation. This policy led to a rejection rate of 39.4 % on Afghan asylum applications and to an agreement with the Government of Afghanistan, on October of 2016, for facilitating the voluntary and forced deportation of Afghan asylum-seekers in Germany to Afghanistan.

In this fashion, the German government constructed, discursively and legally the Afghan asylum-seekers as non-disserving German protection. The reasons are not only geopolitical - Afghanistan not being enough close to Europe to provoke a refugee crisis-, but also mainly political: Germany, as part of NATO, has being involved in the military and security operations in Afghanistan since 2002; thus, after 13 years of intervention and the provision of economic and military cooperation to Afghanistan, accepting failure to provide security to its citizens would be politically costly. Finally, because Afghan democracy and its government are supported by NATO, Germany considers that those regions under State control are safe enough for Afghan people suffering from armed violence in their communities of origin to find sanctuary. In November 2015, Merkel stated that "Germany will continue to engage militarily and financially in Afghanistan. It also

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<sup>7</sup> According to a UNHCR working paper, (Rutingwa,2002), "AGroup determination on a *prima facie* basis means in essence the recognition by a State of refugee status on the basis of the readily apparent, objective circumstances in the country of origin giving rise to exodus. Its purpose is to ensure admission to safety, protection from refoulement and basic humanitarian treatment to those patently in need of it. (sic)" One of those circumstances, which is also applied in Germany as means for the recognition of the status of refugee or for the granting of subsidiary protection -Sections 3 and 4 of the Asylum Act, respectively- is situations of indiscriminate violence due to international or civil armed conflict. (Chemin et al., 2018)

aims to accelerate the creation of domestic flight alternatives in order to bring the refugees back to Afghanistan more effectively.” (Die Bundeskanzlerin 2015l)

**Table 2. Asylum Statistics in Germany 2015-2016**

	Number of first-time applicants		% Refugee status		% Subsidiary Protection		% Humanitarian protection		% Rejection	
	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016
<b>Total</b>	441,899	722,370	50.2	42.1	0.8	25.3	1	4	47.9	28.6
<b>Syria</b>	158,657	266,250	99.5	57.6	0.09	42	0.28	0.3	0.02	0.1
<b>Afghanistan</b>	31,382	127,012	48.8	22	9.1	9.3	21.5	29.3	20.6	39.4
<b>Iraq</b>	29,784	96,116	97.3	59	1.68	17.5	0.54	0.7	0.46	22.8
<b>Eritrea</b>	10,876	18,854	91.1	81	7.4	17.8	0.86	0.6	0.63	0.6
<b>Albania</b>	53,805	14,853	0.03	0.06	0.09	0.24	0.07	0.3	99.8	99.4
<b>Pakistan</b>	8,199	14,484	19.4	3.2	1.52	0.6	2.91	1.2	76.1	95
<b>Kosovo*</b>	35,583	n/a	0.03	n/a	0.09	n/a	0.34	n/a	99.5	n/a
<b>Serbia*</b>	24,486	n/a	0.02	n/a	0	n/a	0.16	n/a	99.8	n/a
<b>Macedonia*</b>	12,704	n/a	0.44	n/a	0.02	n/a	0.41	n/a	99.1	n/a

Data for the period January-October, 2015 - Source: AIDA 2015a; BAMF/EMN 2016, 2018

In the same vein, it is possible also to observe that, in contraposition to the genuine refugee coming from Syria, which is effectively desecuritized, the illegitimate asylum-seeker originates from regions where the German government presumes that there is no possibility of persecution, such as the Balkan countries, and in consequence subject to a process of securitization. On Merkel's logic, because Balkan countries were in the process of applying for membership in the EU, for that reason alone, they had to have sound political and human rights situations, making it unlikely for their citizens to have substantiated grounds for claiming asylum in Germany. In this sense, the asylum-seeker coming from the Balkans, as a collective group, is figured as an irregular economic migrant which threatens the German economy, the welfare system and the state sovereignty in its ordering capacity.

Economic hardship is not a reason for asylum. The countries of the Balkans wanted to become members of the EU, there is no political persecution there. One should not raise false hopes, "otherwise we cannot help those who need our help," said the Chancellor. Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier said in an interview that a possible extension of safe countries of origin could not be "taboo". "Albania, Macedonia and Kosovo are seeking the rapprochement with the EU by their own decision and for that very reason cannot be treated as persecuting states at the same time," said Steinmeier in the Bild newspaper. (Die Bundeskanzlerin 2015j)

Categorizing entire national groups, that do not come from countries considered as suffering from political persecution, as "illegitimate" refugees, is a securitizing move as it involves constructing these asylum-seekers as threats and demanding for security measures that imply a rupture with norms that otherwise should be respected. In fact, with this discourse, the German government failed to comply with the standards of the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees and Stateless Persons and its 1967 Protocol (from now on, the 1951 Refugee Convention). The categorization of asylum-seekers from specific national groups as irregular migrants leads to the rejection of their asylum applications as ill-founded ex officio, and in so doing, German policy violated the principles of non-refoulement and of individual case consideration. (UNHCR 2011) The UNHCR argues that "[...] a prima facie approach operates only to recognize refugee status. Decisions to reject require an individual assessment." (UNHCR 2016, 5) The statement that asylum seekers from the Balkans had little chance of being granted international protection sent a strong signal not only internally, to Germany's bureaucratic institutions in charge of processing asylum claims -the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, dependent of the Ministry of Interior-, but also a deterring sign to people fleeing individual or collective political persecution and

not only armed conflict. The securitizing nature of this political move is reinforced when considering that Roma Sinti, who are systematically persecuted and unprotected in the Balkans and also in the EU, were probably among the people involved in this asylum-seeker movement. (Banai and Kreide 2017, 913)

Within this context of discursively desecuritizing Syrian refugees and at the same time securitizing asylum-seekers coming from the Balkans, in August and September 2015, the Chancellor adopted the open-border policy. Accordingly, the government unilaterally suspended the application of the Dublin Regulation, by which it had the legal right of deporting asylum-seekers to the first EU country of arrival. This decision was framed by Merkel as resulting from a moral and humanitarian imperative due to the suffering that the refugees were experiencing in their way to Germany, and to the impact that the images of that suffering, like the picture of the dead body of Aylan Kurdi, were having on the public opinion. Nonetheless, besides framing it as an ethical responsibility, Merkel also portrayed the arrival of refugees as inevitable and as a situation limiting the capacity of the state to interdict their movement without generating another humanitarian crisis:

The Austrian Chancellor called me. The people were traveling on the highway. By the way, we knew that in August already 70,000 people had come to Germany via Hungary. Now the situation was more acute, especially after the terrible realization that refugees had died in a truck. They had then come over the train station in Hungary and then set off on foot. And just as in August, many arrived in Germany, so it was clear to me that they are on the way anyway, that is very difficult to stop them without putting them in further dangers - we had this terrible image of the dead boy in Turkey who was widely seen and upsetting - so we made this decision. (Die Bundeskanzlerin 2015k)

Merkel's discourse in this period also shows a constant pattern of highlighting the strength of Germany's economy and institutions, as well as the open, multicultural and cosmopolitan nature of German society. Merkel thus positioned an imagined collective identity of Germany that had markers allowing it not to be threatened by the massive flow of refugees. Furthermore, Merkel constructs in positive terms the conditions of the German state for facing the massive arrival of refugees, and in such terms, she praises the economic strength of the country and the solidity of the state's institutions. In this form of text construction, the Federal Chancellor uses a deconstructivist strategy for rearticulating collective identities in order to efface the ontological basis that could serve to represent the refugee-Other as a threat. In this fashion, Merkel aims at transforming the relation between Self and Other away from inimical terms.

Germany is a strong country. The motive with which we approach these things must be: We have accomplished so much. We can do it! We can do it, and where there is something in the way, it has to be overcome, it has to be worked on. The federal government will do everything in its power -together with the states, together with the municipalities- to enforce exactly this. (Die Bundeskanzlerin 2015d)

In the same vein, the Chancellor made efforts to socialize the measures that the Federal government was taken for improving the response to the refugee crisis. Merkel highlighted policies of speeding up the processing of asylum claims through locating asylum-seekers in different facilities according to their country of origin and the likelihood of their being granted asylum, in order to accelerate asylum decisions and to facilitate the deportation of those who do not have the legal basis for being granted international protection:

In order to speed up the asylum procedures for applicants with little chance of recognition, special reception centers will be set up to handle the asylum application, application processing and decision, also for appeal and repatriation. (Die Bundeskanzlerin, 2015l)

In this sense, Merkel tried to present the state as exercising its internal ordering and external protection function by allowing only genuine refugees to stay in the territory. At the EU level, the Chancellor put emphasis in the redistribution of refugees within the EU members and for that purpose, pushed at the EU Council for establishing compulsory quotas -between 120,000 and 140,000 recognized refugees (Die Bundeskanzlerin 2015m)- with the aim at maintaining the political cohesion within the Union and intra-EU borders open, as a fundamental pillar of the European integration process.

### **3.3.2. Second moment: September 2015- December 2016**

**(Security frames:** internal-security, state-security and political-security securitization frames.)

During the second moment, Chancellor's discourse shows an important turn. It evolves from desecuritizing the refugee crisis and emphasizing the refugee's nature as the object of security, to highlight his representation as a security subject under physical and ontological frameworks. Accordingly, the tone of the discourse becomes harsher and the policies proposed for responding to the refugee crisis, more restrictive. From the ontological security perspective, the new tone responds to the failed EU compulsory refugee-quota solution, the violent xenophobic reactions spreading in Germany, and the rise in support for the far-right populist AfD party.

From a physical security perspective, the changes in the discourse respond to violent external shocks, mainly to two incidents which caused nationwide malaise: the sexual and criminal

offenses denounced in New Year's Eve in Cologne and the Islamist terrorist attacks of July 2016 in Ansbach and Würzburg, which were all attributed to refugees and asylum-seekers. In this new moment, the external shocks led the Chancellor's to destabilized the genuine/illegitimate refugee binary by adding two new dyads which responded to new securitization processes at the national and at the European level. The first dyad is the predication of the refugee as underdeveloped/undevelopable (Waever 2016b), that is, as able to learn and interiorize the values, norms and institutions of German society and become a productive member of it, on the one hand, or as incapable to do so, becoming thus a social burden and a security threat. In Merkel's discourse, recognized refugees that cannot integrate into society are believed to incur in criminal offenses or that fall in Islamist radicalization and thus are attributed the condition of existential threats, both to Germany's internal order and state security, and in consequence are subject to ethnic profiling, violation of their privacy and forced deportation.

What happened on New Year's Eve is completely unacceptable. [...] The feeling - of women in this case - of being completely vulnerable is also unbearable for me personally. [...] Of course, from what happened there are some very serious questions that go beyond Cologne. There are questions about connections, whether there are common patterns of behavior, or whether there is something like misogyny in some groups. [...] we also have to talk again and again about the basics of our cultural coexistence in Germany. What people rightly expect is that these words are followed by deeds. At the same time, it has to be checked again and again whether we have already done everything that is necessary to set clear rules for those who are unwilling to comply with our legal order, as far as the need of deportation from Germany is concerned. (Die Bundeskanzlerin 2016b)

The second dyad is the predication of the refugee as legal/illegal according to the way in which he reached the EU and responds to a process of securitization in which both, the internal security and the political security frames conflate. By categorizing some refugees as illegal, they are given a symbolic representation of subjects inclined to breaking the law and thus as potential threats to Germany's public order. But at the same time, the construction aims at presenting the "illegal" refugee a threat to the EU institutions, mainly to the EU capacity of ordering internal and external human mobility. In this way, the refugee becomes a factor of ontological insecurity at the EU level. In accordance to this securitization framing, the Federal Chancellor calls for dealing with illegal refugees through the interdiction of their movement and through forced return. The ultimate aim of this policy is to reduce the number of all refugees arriving at the EU, and is proposed to be reached by reinforcing the EU external borders through providing the European Border and Coast

Gard Agency (FRONTEX) with more resources and powers in order to make it operate as an European Border Police, and using NATO for operations against human-traffickers in the Mediterranean and Aegean Sea, which involved sinking vessels deemed as being owned or operating for criminal networks. An important aspect of this new policy approach formulated by Merkel was the adoption of diplomatic measures for externalizing EU borders to Turkey, Mali and Niger. Thus, the Chancellor pushed for agreements for increasing EU development assistance and financial aid in exchange for interdiction of movement of refugees coming to the EU, and for receiving returned asylum-seekers.

This is the willingness to take back all migrants who arrive on the islands in Greece by irregular means, i.e. with the help of smugglers. In the case of the Syrians, because Turkey already has a large number of Syrian refugees, there is the expectation that other Syrians who have not chosen the illegal path will be one-to-one redeemed by the European Union in a relocation scheme, and thus, so to speak, stopping the incentive for illegal migration. For those who reach the Greek islands illegally will certainly not be among those who will be resettled first, but will at best be at the end of the queue and probably will not get a chance of resettlement at all. This means a clear incentive to choose legal ways and thus to stop illegal migration. (Die Bundeskanzlerin 2016c)

At the same time, because the number of refugees coming in 2016 were less than in 2015, the Chancellor turned her emphasis at promoting a policy of integration of refugees into German society. Merkel presented that policy as aiming to avoid the apparition of parallel societies and for maintaining social stability and cohesion in the country. Although cultural, social and economic integration was discussed by the Chancellor through 2015, by 2016 integration became mandatory for refugees and linked to their right to receive social benefits and to remain in the country. This policy was coined by Merkel as *Fördern und Fordern* (Support and Demand). (Die Bundeskanzlerin 2016h) Thus, the Chancellor pushed for language courses, induction courses on German culture and society, and professional training and job creation for refugees, as well as reduction of social benefits and deportation for those who show no signs of integration. Through these text construction and policies proposed, undevelopable refugees are predicated in physical security frames: as criminal offenders and terrorists, and as such, as risks to Germany's state and internal security.

In view of the decreasing numbers of those who are coming to us, but also because of the large number of those who are already with us, we all feel that the topic of integration is increasingly coming to the fore and is taking hold. Unfortunately, on the night of 31st

December to 1st January, we got a negative impression of what unsound integration could cause insecurity, anxiety and worry. That's another reason why we take the issue of integration very seriously. (Die Bundeskanzlerin 2016d)

It is worth noting that, despite the hardening of the discourse, the Chancellor avoided to make any link between the identity markers of the refugees and a natural inclination towards crime and terrorism, especially after the Ansbach and Würzburg attacks. More importantly, Merkel did not only not construct a link between the Arab and Muslim identity markers with physical security threats, but actively tried to resist this linkage that was being made by AfD and some sectors of society. For desecuritizing the religious marker of the refugee's identity, the Chancellor used her traditional humanitarian frame for desecuritization. First, Merkel presented Muslims as being the main targets of Islamic terror in Middle East: "[...] the terrorist militia ISIS boasts of barbaric acts that are directed against people of all religions, but especially against Muslims." (Die Bundeskanzlerin 2016e) And second, the Chancellor portrayed the July 2016 terrorist attacks as not an isolated German phenomenon caused by the refugee policy, but as a worldwide problem which derives from the war in Syria and which has impacted other Western countries:

But at the beginning I would like to elaborate on a topic from my side, namely the terrible murders and attacks of the last days in Germany, on the 18th of July in Würzburg, on the 22nd of July in Munich and on the last Sunday in Ansbach. According to what we know today, the attacks in Würzburg and Ansbach are Islamist terror. These attacks -combined with what we experienced in Nice, the terrible murder of a Catholic priest the day before yesterday in Normandy, the massacre of gay and lesbian people in Orlando a few weeks ago, the terrorist attacks in Belgium and also again and again in Turkey, which included German victims- are shocking and depressing. Civilizational taboos are broken. The acts happen in places where each of us could be. (Die Bundeskanzlerin 2016f)

Nevertheless, due to the fact that the terror attacks of July 2016 were committed by "[...] two men [who] had come to Germany as refugees; that is, two men who sought protection in our country, or perhaps only pretended to seek protection, and who now wanted to spread fear, death and terror [...]" (Die Bundeskanzlerin 2016f), the Chancellor performed a new securitizing process on the refugee crisis, announcing the implementation of measures to guarantee national security public order. These measures were aimed at controlling and surveilling refugees through intervening their communications, profiling potential perpetrators, preparing security forces for dealing with terror attacks, and deporting those who are deemed as threats. In this fashion, and by calling for the use of the security apparatus of the state to be applied to refugees and asylum-

seekers, Merkel reversed her linguistically desecuritizing construction of the refugee and symbolically attributed to him the notion of security risk:

From my point of view some things are already clear from the last few days: It is already clear that next to the threats posed by organized terrorism [...] new threats are being made by perpetrators who the security authorities have not noticed until the time of their acts. In other words, we need a better early-warning system here, which also allows authorities to take action as soon as, for example, signs of radicalization become apparent in the asylum procedure or in integration measures. Secondly. Wherever necessary, the Federal Government will also increase personnel measures or improve technical equipment. [...] Third. [...] we are building a central office for information technology in the security field; that is, essentially for decrypting Internet communications, known by the acronym ZITiS. [...] Fourth. We recently adopted the White Paper of the Federal Ministry of Defense. It is now time to carry out exercises for large-scale terrorist attacks, which we can also carry out in accordance with the current constitutional law, in which the *Bundeswehr* can then be involved under the leadership of the police. Fifth. We must continue and, if necessary, expand all research projects that already exist on Islamist terror and on the background of how people are radicalized. (Die Bundeskanzlerin 2016f)

### **3.4. The process of securitization in the Chancellor's discourse**

After having found that Chancellor Merkel's discourse around the refugee crisis shows strong ambiguity, representing the refugee simultaneously as both a security and a non-security issue through the use of diverse binary figurations and different predications according to the contingency of the context, this section is going to analyze how the discourse impacted in the forms of governmentality of the refugee-subject. For that, it is going to start with a revision of the securitizing moves found in the 176 documents sampled on Merkel's speeches and press releases during 2015-2016, and then it is going to continue with an evaluation of the security dispositions contained in the legal instruments passed by the *Bundestag* in relation to the refugee crisis in the same time period.

#### **3.4.1. Securitizing moves in Merkel's discourse**

In the analysis of Chancellor Merkel's sample of speeches and press releases, only eight securitizing moves can be identified. I differentiate these linguistic acts from the more general securitizing discourse found in the rest of the sample by sticking to the definition provided by CoS,

by which securitizing moves are illocutionary acts made by a securitizing actor in front of an audience trying to trigger perlocutionary responses through the adoption of emergency measures. (Balzacq 2011) Accordingly, these eight securitizing moves were identified by looking at constructions in which referent object, security subject and extraordinary measures were called for by a security actor in front of an audience.

**Table 3. Securitizing moves performed by the Federal Chancellor 2015-2016**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Forum/Level</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Security Frame</b>
31/03/2015	Germany as audience, at the EU level, supporting France in the aftermath of Charlie Hebdo attack and the emigration of Europeans to join ISIS.	This securitization process constructs a nexus between migration (both emigration and immigration) and terrorism and turns migratory policies and practices at the national and EU level into counter-terrorist mechanisms. This measures are the conclusion of the EU System of Passenger Name Record; a French-German control of people, sharing databanks and establishing shared risk indicators; impeding EU citizens to join the IS or impeding their return; reinforcing cooperation in the fight against illegal migration and migrant smugglers, including through the sinking of their vessels; increasing the reliability of the identity controls in the Schengen Area and increasing the power and funds of FRONTEX.	State security frame of securitization
24/04/2015	At the EU level, in the aftermath of the humanitarian crisis in the Mediterranean Sea	The EU Commission adopted the 10 Points Program, which, by constructing the refugee as a referent object, put asylum-seekers in more vulnerable situations when trying to reach the EU, due to the lack of regular ways of migration. The measures can be grouped in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reinforcing rescue at sea operations</li> <li>- Combat against illegal migrant smuggler networks through cooperation of Ministers of Interior</li> </ul>	Humanitarian frame of desecuritization

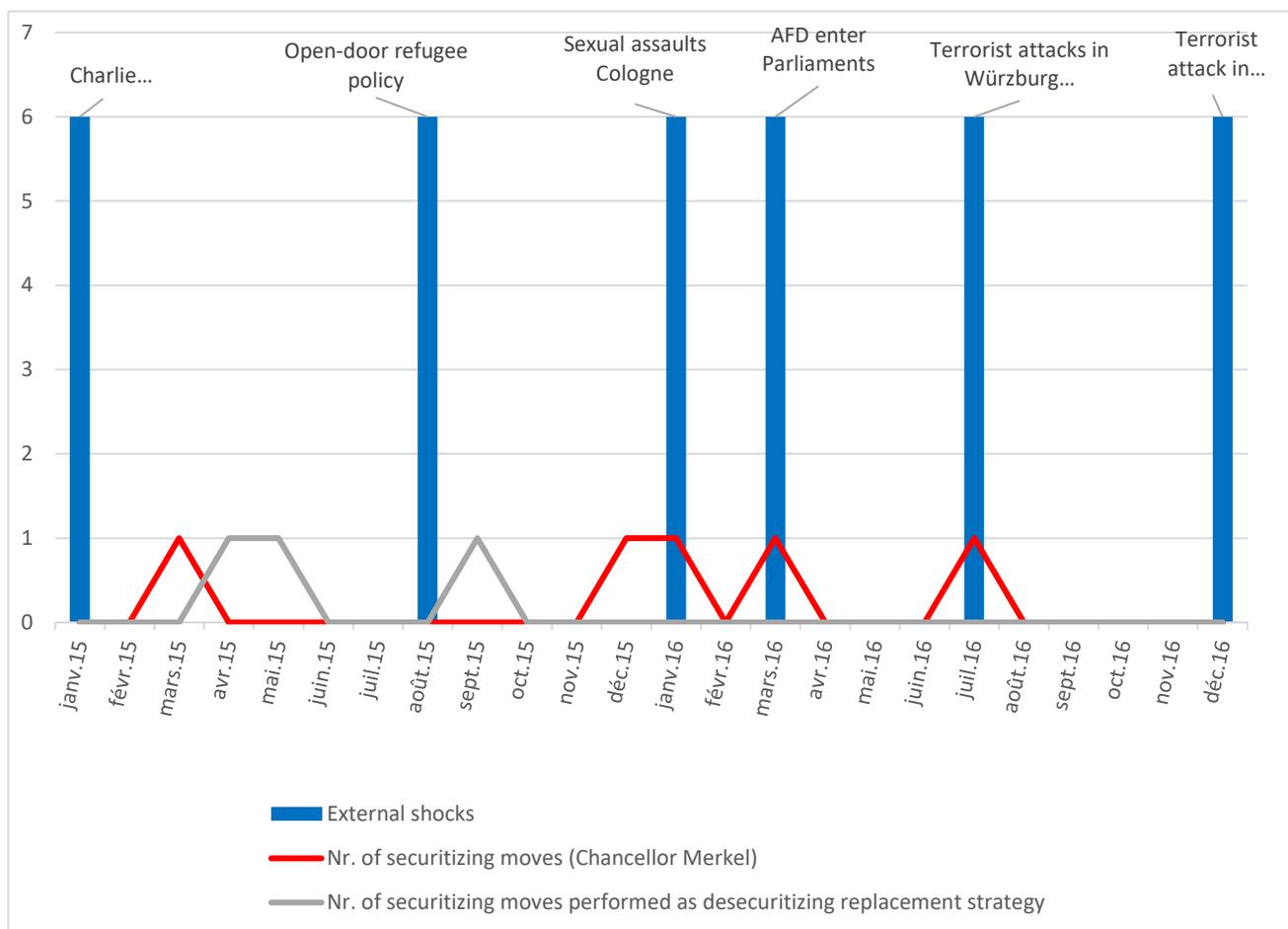
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Intensification of cooperation with countries of origin and transit, specially the African Union.</li> <li>- Better coordination for the admission of refugees in Europe.</li> </ul>	
18/05/2015	Germany as securitizing actor at the EU level, in the context of the humanitarian crisis. Meeting of EU foreign and defense ministers discussed the refugee crisis in Brussels.	The EU discussed the launching of a mission under the umbrella of the Common Security and Defense Policy (GVSP) to fight migrant smuggling networks that were putting migrants in distress at sea. The German government asked for a UN Security Resolution to provide the legal framework of what was already been done de facto: sinking human smugglers vessels in Libya. The Federal Government ordered two Bundeswehr ships into the Mediterranean. The frigate Hesse was sent to the sea area north of the Libyan coast. German operations were based in Italy.	Humanitarian frame for desecuritization
09/09/2015	Germany as audience, at NATO level, due to the increasing number of Syrian refugees arriving in the summer to the EU	Germany decided to assist in the military training of 3,000 Iraqi Kurdish security forces in order to fight ISIS and transnational terrorism in Syria and Iraq which were constructed as referent objects causing the refugee crisis.	Humanitarian frame for desecuritization
18/12/2015	Germany as audience at the EU level, in a renewed effort to control EU external borders and reduce the irregular arrival of refugees, in the context of failed refugee redistribution measures.	The Chancellor joined the EU Commission's proposal for the adoption of policies to protect the external borders of the EU from the irregular influx of migrants and refugees in order to maintain the Schengen Area and the freedom of movement inside the EU, which Germany sees threatened by the potential decision of other countries to restrict those movements. So, at the EU, Germany supported the creation of the "European Border Police".	Political security frame of securitization

28/01/2016	At the national level, as a reaction to the incidents of New Year's Eve in Cologne	Agreement within the Government coalition on the Asylum Package II, which made the refugee policy more restrictive and fostered repatriations of refugees on the basis of country of origin and of offenses to the public order. The new legal framework included suspending family reunion for beneficiaries of subsidiary protection, the legal classification of Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia as safe countries of origin (interestingly, the perpetrators of the sexual offenses in Cologne were identified mostly as Maghrebi asylum-seekers and refugees), and strengthen the possibilities of expelling asylum-seekers or losing their status as asylum-seekers in the event of convictions - including probation.	Internal security frame of securitization
08/03/2016	At the EU level, but on the basis of a German proposal, for reducing the number of refugees arriving at the EU.	Signing of the EU-Turkey Plan of Action which frames the refugee situation as a "migration crisis", related to illegal migration and human-smuggling criminal networks. The measures adopted included the use of military forces (NATO) to control EU external borders and interdiction of irregular migration to the EU through the Aegean Sea. Besides, the agreement involved the implementation of the readmission of refugees by Turkey, starting 20 march 2016. This measure involves in practical terms a closure of the EU borders for asylum-seekers because they cannot apply in the EU anymore, but only in Turkey. It is also a process of forced return, a violation of the principle of non-refoulement. Merkel presented the measure as fighting illegality. For each irregular Syrian refugee sent back to Turkey, the EU offered to resettle one Syrian refugee from Turkey. Thus, Turkey became part of EU external border.	Internal security and political security frames of securitization

28/07/2016	At the national level, after the terrorist attacks of Würzburg and Ansbach.	Further adoption of security measures and increasing surveillance power for the security agencies, for preventing and fighting Islamist terrorism, which involved measures affecting the refugee policy.	State security frame of securitization
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These securitizing moves follow the changes observed in the tone of Merkel's overall discourse. First, they turn their focus from the root causes of forced migration originating the refugee crisis, to the refugee as a security subject after September 2015. As illustrated in Figure 5, the securitizing moves observed until September 2015 are in their majority (three out of four) part of the desecuritizing strategy fostered by the Federal Chancellor. In these moves the refugee is attributed the condition of referent object of security, existentially threatened by war, terrorism and the criminal actions of human traffickers. As such, the refugee is replaced as a security subject by the causes of the humanitarian crisis at the EU borders. Nevertheless, after September 2015, four securitizing moves are performed by Merkel in which the refugee becomes portrayed as a threat. The securitization frames used in these moves are political security, internal security and state security.

**Figure 5. Evolution of the Chancellor's discourse in context. 2015-2016**



In the political security frame, the refugee is represented as a threat to the Schengen Agreement and the freedom of movement within the EU single space, and the measures called for containing the threat are increasing the power of the EU security mechanisms, in particular Frontex, which was to become the EU border police. Germany had opposed such a reinforcement of Frontex, but changed its position and accepted granting new powers to this security agency due to the growing numbers of refugees arriving at the EU and at its own territory.

In the internal security frame, the refugee was constructed as a security risk for his potential to commit violent crime. The securitizing move in which this form of subjectification is observed was performed as a result of the sexual assaults in Cologne on 1 January 2016, and in it Merkel announced the presentation to the Bundestag of Asylum Package II, which she asserted would make made asylum policies more restrictive, for example by restricting the right to family reunification for people not receiving the refugee status, and would reinforce integration to the job

market for recognized refugees. Merkel also announced the proposal for classifying Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia as safe countries of origin and foster repatriations.

Finally, in the frame of state security, Merkel performed a securitizing move as a response to the Islamist terrorist attacks of Würzburg and Ansbach of 18 and 24 of July 2016. In this illocutionary act, Merkel constructs the refugee as a source of risk linked to terrorism. In consequence, the Chancellor announced a set of anti-terrorist measures increasing the power of security and intelligence agencies, some of which affected the asylum procedure. These announced measures were the establishment of early-warning systems for allowing authorities to identify signs of radicalization during the asylum procedure or the refugee integration processes, improve the technical equipment for gathering information, and building a central office for information technology in the security field with the aim of decrypting Internet communications. (Die Bundeskanzlerin 2016i)

Following the CoS approach to securitization, these securitizing moves are only perfected by the adoption of extraordinary policy measures that exceed the limits of what is normally accepted in a democratic state, all in the name of security. Thus, for analyzing if the securitizing moves resulted in successful securitization processes, in what follows, the study is going to focus on the most relevant of legal instruments passed at the German Federal Parliament during 2015 and 2016, as well as to the EU-Turkey migratory agreement, promoted by Germany at the EU level.

### **3.4.2. Changes in the federal legal framework regulating asylum**

In the context of the refugee crisis, between 2015 and 2016, eight legal instruments were proposed by the Federal government, of which seven were passed, amending the existing laws and administrative process associated with the institution of asylum in Germany, in particular the Asylum Act, the Residence Act and the Asylum Seekers' Benefits Act. These instruments were analyzed according to the nature of their general dispositions; that is, according to their aim at improving the conditions of humanitarian reception of asylum seekers and the conditions of international protection given to those asylum claims accepted, and according to their aim at restricting those conditions and deterring additional asylum claims. In this sense, the study used a classification by which it considered legal and policy disposition as *securitizing* when they aimed at:

- A1. Limiting the influx of asylum seekers to the country.
- A2. Disincentivizing asylum seekers to go to Germany by restricting rights and benefits.

A3. Facilitating the deportation of refugees and asylum-seekers.

A4. Using the security apparatus to oversee asylum-seekers and refugees.

On the contrary, it considered legal and policy disposition as *desecuritizing* when they intended to:

B1. Improve the conditions of humanitarian reception.

B2. Facilitate the integration of refugees into the German society.

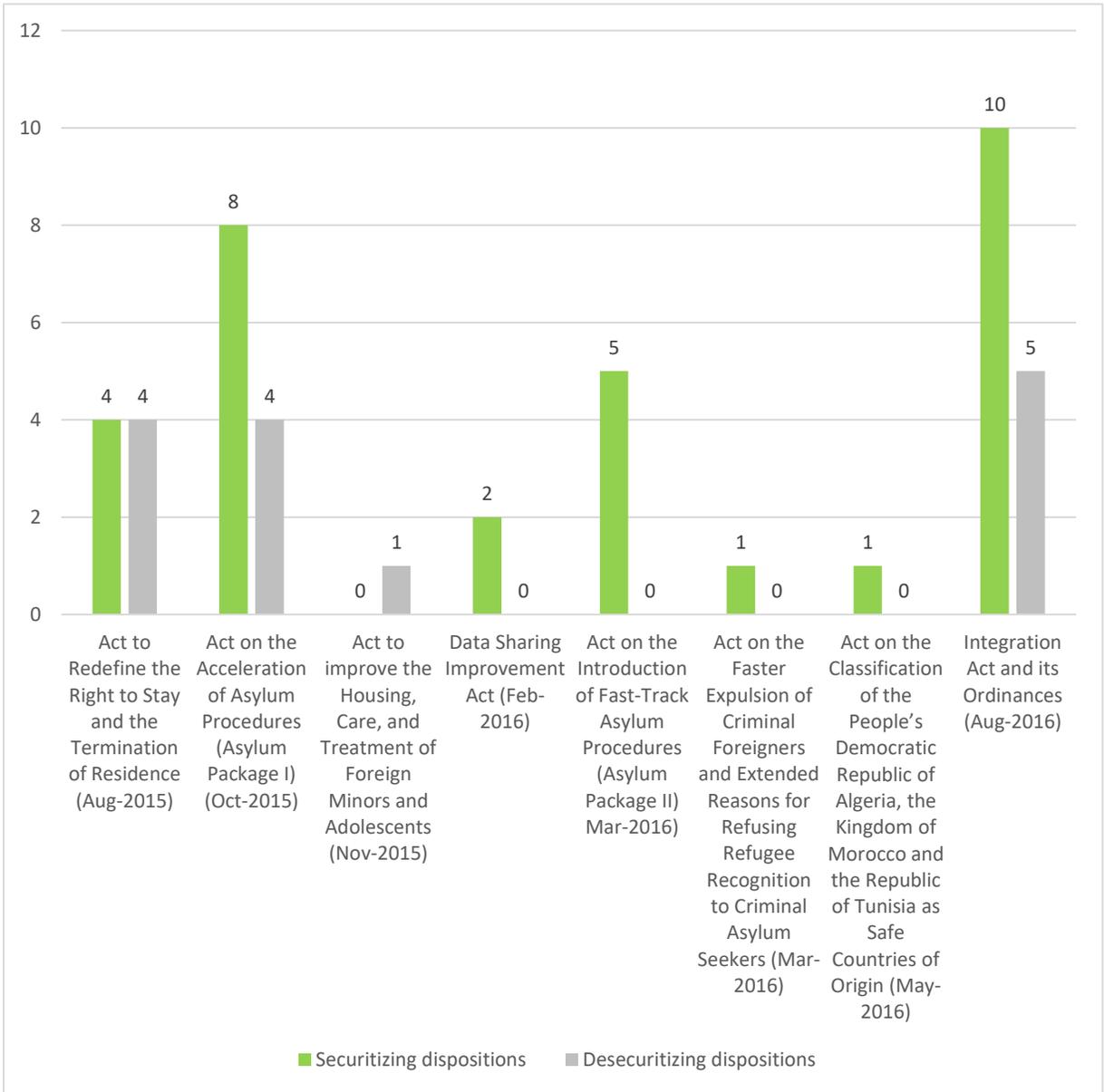
B3. Increase the rights of people granted international protection.

B4. Disarticulate institutionalized security practices.

Following this approach, the study found a general securitizing trend in the nature of the dispositions of the legal amendments which at the same time shows two moments that are contingent to the change in the socio-historical context: an initial weak securitizing trend, where securitizing dispositions are balanced by desecuritizing measures; and, a strong securitizing trend in which security measures become predominant.

During the first moment, an effort on the part of the Federal government to improve the humanitarian reception, increase the rights of refugees and, most importantly, facilitate their integration in the country is observed. These efforts are nonetheless accompanied with the adoption of new, more restrictive dispositions seeking to reduce the number of asylum seekers eligible for being granted international protection and facilitate deportations of applicants with rejected asylum claims. These securitizing dispositions are not applied indistinctively, rather, through establishing a differentiation between genuine and illegitimate refugees, they are aimed at those asylum seekers whose refugee claims are deemed illegitimate. This political differentiation translated into the legal framework coincides with the Federal Chancellor's discourse articulated in the summer of 2015, by which she portrayed asylum seekers from the Balkan states as illegitimate refugees, while asylum seekers from Middle East were figured as genuine. In consequence, the desecuritizing dispositions are mainly directed at improving the conditions of protection to Syrian, Iraqi, Eritrean and Iranian refugees, whose cases were considered worth of *prima facie* refugee status due to war and persecution. (BAMF, 2016)

**Figure 6. Number of securitizing and desecuritizing dispositions in the legal framework regulating asylum in Germany. 2015-2016**



Of the three laws found in this period, which goes until November 2015, the Act to Redefine the Right to Stay and the Termination of Residence shows a balance between the number of securitizing and desecuritizing dispositions. The desecuritizing dispositions mainly increased the rights of people granted subsidiary forms of protection (subsidiary protection and a ban on deportation for humanitarian reasons) and to refugees who have been resettled in Germany (mainly Syrian who were part of the German resettlement program aiming at alleviating the burden of providing international protection to refugees in Syria's neighboring countries). Accordingly,

people awarded subsidiary protection were given the right to family reunification while resettled refugees were given the same rights as recognized refugees, which included the access to permanent residence permits. In its securitizing aspects, the law established new criminal offenses for applicants providing false information in the asylum process and the access of German authorities to personal communications in order to verify information, both measures that involve the use of the state security apparatus (A4). The Act to improve the Housing, Care, and Treatment of Foreign Minors and Adolescents had no securitizing dispositions, only improvements to the conditions of humanitarian reception (B1) for minors, involving access to legal representation for asylum and residence procedures. Nevertheless, these measures did not affect in a substantial manner the increasingly securitizing nature of the legal framework, and they are only meant to improve the situation of a vulnerable group, not of the refugee population as a whole.

The Act on the Acceleration of Asylum Procedures (Asylum Package I), adopted in September, already shows a majority of securitizing dispositions which double the number of desecuritizing measures, and which focus mainly on facilitating deportations (A3). This situation is correlated with the increase in the numbers of refugees arriving at Germany, whose applications passed from approx. 25,000 in May to approx. 43,000 in September (BAMF 2015), of which a third was people coming from the Balkan region. Thus, the securitizing dispositions aimed at diminishing the likelihood of Balkan asylum seekers to be granted international protection in Germany and to remain irregularly in the country. In this sense, the Act included the classification of Albania, Kosovo and Montenegro as safe countries of origin, a disposition that turns asylum claims from nationals of these countries unfounded ex officio. However, this Act still improves to a point the conditions of reception (B1) by facilitating the construction of refugee shelters, as well as the integration prospects of “genuine” refugees in German society (B2), through measures allowing asylum seekers with good prospects to remain to benefit from government-funded German language courses and from work permits, which evidences a political decision in the German government to adopt a policy of Local Integration as durable solution for forced migration, instead of choosing the option of establishing refugee camps with the prospect of repatriating them in the future, as durable solution. (UNHCR 2007)

**Table 4. First-time asylum applications in Germany 2015 and rejection rate**

	<b>Number of first-time applicants</b>	<b>% of total</b>	<b>Rejection Rate</b>

<b>Total</b>		441,899	100 %	47.9 %
<b>Countries experiencing persecution.</b>	Syria	158,657	36 %	0.02 %
	Iran	5,394	1 %	n/a
	Iraq	29,784	7 %	0.46 %
	Eritrea	10,876	2 %	0.63 %
<b>Total</b>		<b>204,711</b>	<b>46 %</b>	
<b>Legally classified safe countries of origin</b>	Albania	53,805	12 %	99.8 %
	Kosovo	35,583	8 %	99.5 %
	Serbia	24,486	6 %	99.8 %
	Macedonia	12,704	3 %	99.1 %
<b>Total</b>		<b>126,578</b>	<b>29 %</b>	

Source: AIDA 2015a; BAMF 2016

The second moment, which encompasses the period February-August 2016, shows an absolute preponderance of securitizing dispositions in the legal instruments. These laws are the Data Sharing Improvement Act, the Act on the Introduction of Fast-Track Asylum Procedures (Asylum Package II), the Act on the Faster Expulsion of Criminal Foreigners and Extended Reasons for Refusing Refugee Recognition to Criminal Asylum Seekers, the Act for Classifying Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia as Safe Countries of Origin, and the Integration Act. Of these instruments, only the Integration Act includes desecuritizing dispositions, all of them aiming at improving the prospects of success of local integration as a durable solution for refugees (B2). This Act made access to government-funded German language and societal courses mandatory for refugees and provided to them access to vocational training and formal third-level education, and to government-sponsored jobs. However, this Act also introduced a clause of performance by which refugees not showing interest or capacity to be integrated in German society -by not reaching the required level of German language, for example- were subject to reduction of social benefits and, and in ultimate case, to the cancellation of their resident permit. This change coincides with the overall securitizing turn in Merkel's discourse after September 2015, by which the humanitarian desecuritization frame through which she constructed the "genuine" refugee loses force. More specifically, the change responds to the increasing use of the internal and state security frames to construct both the asylum seeker and the refugee crisis as sources of risks, and which are direct

response to the public concern with an increase in sexual assaults and violent crime after the Cologne incident, on the one hand, and with the risk of more terrorist attacks after the incidents in Ansbach and Würzburg in July.

**Table 5. Description of the securitizing dispositions contained in the legal amendments made after September 2015.**

Name of Law	Type of securitizing dispositions			
	A1	A2	A3	A4
Act on the Acceleration of Asylum Procedures (Asylum Package I)	1	3	4	
Data Sharing Improvement Act				2
Act on the Introduction of Fast-Track Asylum Procedures (Asylum Package II)		1	4	
Act on the Faster Expulsion of Criminal Foreigners and Extended Reasons for Refusing Refugee Recognition to Criminal Asylum Seekers			1	
EU-Turkey Agreement	1			
Act on the Classification of Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia as Safe Countries of Origin			1	
Integration Act and its Ordinances	2	6		2

In this context, the new instruments increase the powers of the state's security apparatus to intervene in the asylum procedure (A4), by providing it with the faculty to monitor asylum seekers' actions, gather and share among security agencies comprehensive personal information, access their private communications, detain them in special centers, and establish new penalties which range from onerous fines to imprisonment and deportation. The new amendments also increase state powers to enforce forced return (A3). These dispositions brought about important administrative changes, as it allowed the government to institutionalize the differentiated treatment given to asylum seekers according to their country of origin and their likelihood to be granted international protection. In this sense, Asylum Package II opened the way for the Federal and state governments to establish "Special Reception Centers" (BAMF 2018, 62) where asylum seekers from safe countries of origin were hosted and where their claims were processed. Because these asylum claims were considered *ex officio* inadmissible or unfounded, they were subject to a fast-track procedure which is a reverted expression of the *prima facie* refugee recognition: the authorities were given a week for deciding on their applications and applicants were given a week to file an urgent appeal against the decision, which instead of an independent judicial body, was reviewed by an administrative court within one additional week. This fast-track procedure together with measures eliminating cash-benefits for people residing in reception centers, which reduced the chances of applicants to hire legal assistance, increased the likelihood of rejection of their asylum claims. Furthermore, "illegitimate" asylum seekers were obliged to reside in the reception centers for six months, making their deportation more easily enforced. These measures were to be more effective in returning refugees through the inclusion of three new countries in the classification of safe countries of origin: Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia.<sup>8</sup> This fact is also connected with the sexual assaults in New Year's Eve, because the offenses were attributed to refugees and asylum seekers from North Africa. (Boulila and Carri, 2017)

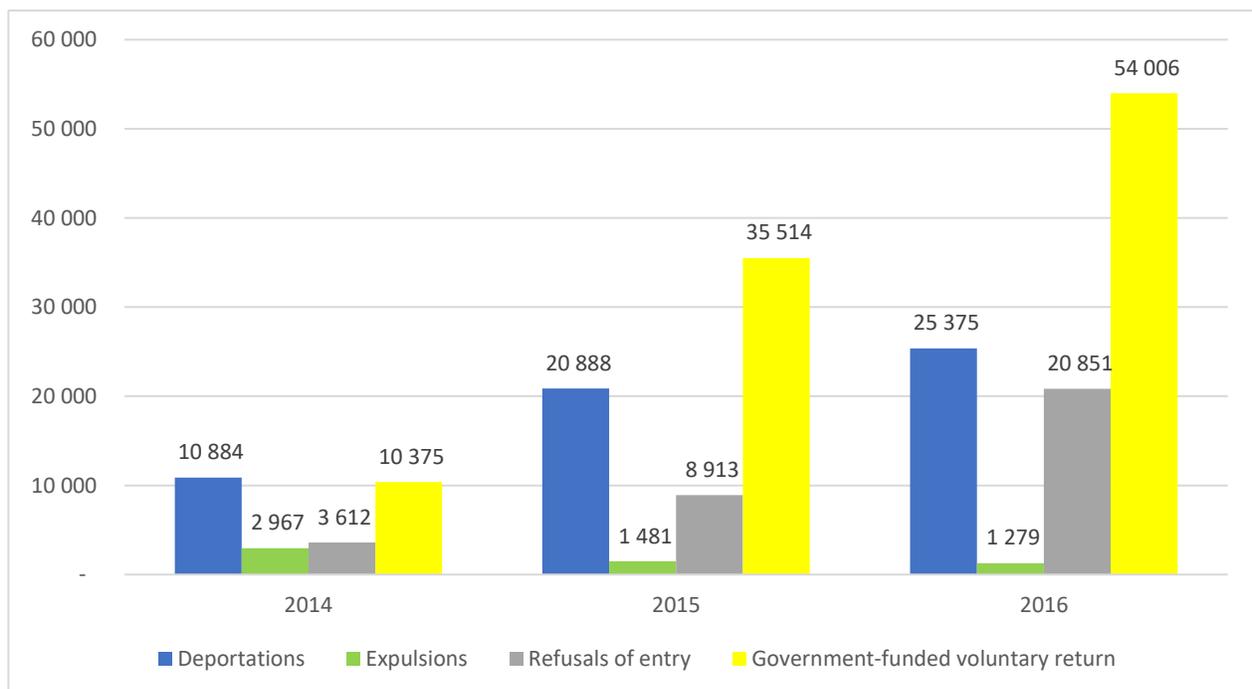
But in this period, the emphasis on deportations evolved from focusing on illegitimate refugees only, to include more strict dispositions to expulse genuine refugees, particularly those who are involved in certain criminal offences, including sexual assault, which is a clear. Despite all these measures, they seem to have had a reduced impact on enforcing deportations. Statistics show that although the absolute number of forcibly returned foreigners increased (deported, expelled and refused entry), in relative terms they did not increase and remained constant around

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<sup>8</sup> The Act was passed in the Bundestag on 13 May 2016, but it never entered into force for it was rejected by the Bundesrat on 10 March 2017 due to lack of political consensus.

7 % for 2015 and 2016. Rather than forced return, the statistics show that the government increased its efforts to promote voluntary return using federal funds to finance it, which increased in 242% in 2015 and 52% in 2016. This shows that the government opted for a non-confrontational but onerous return policy for non-desired immigrants in order to deliver results and avoid possible demands in court.

**Figure 7. Number of cases of forced and voluntary return of asylum-seekers in Germany 2014-2016**

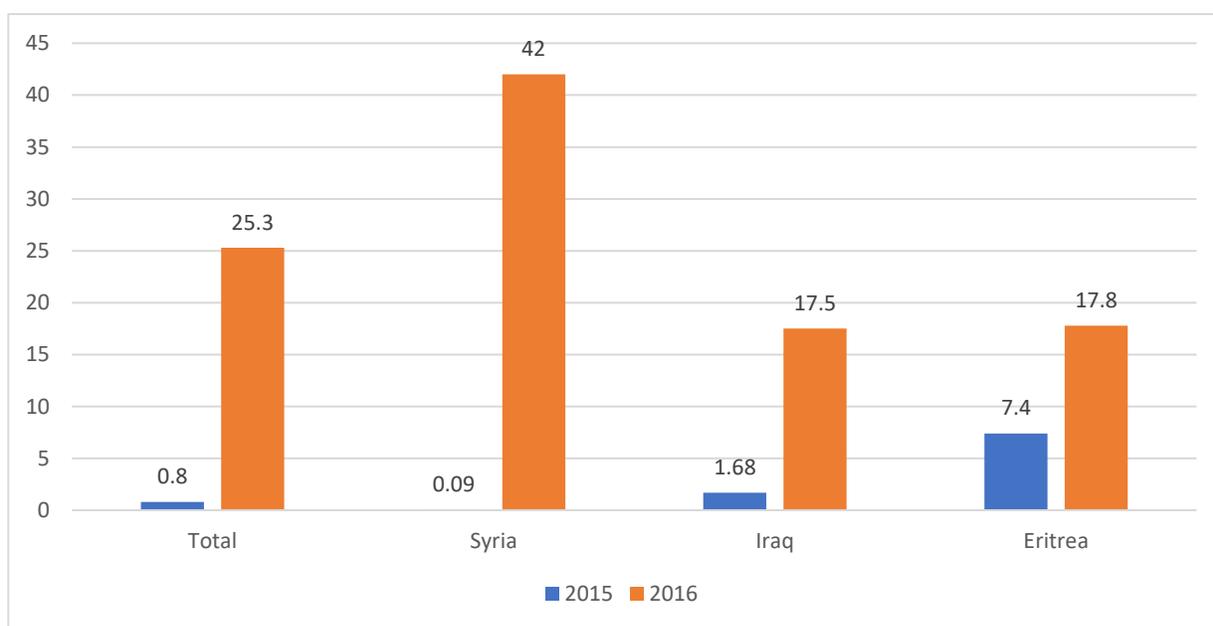


Thus, instead of fostering and enforcing deportations, the dispositions in these instruments aim mainly at restricting rights to asylum seekers and refugees (A2), a situation that had a clearer impact in the reducing the number of people granted refugee status. Asylum Package II suspended for two years the right to family reunification for people awarded subsidiary protection.<sup>9</sup> This measure gave the legal tool to the government for reducing the number of refugees coming to Germany by decreasing the number of cases being granted refugee status -which allows family

<sup>9</sup> According to German Asylum Act, subsidiary protection is awarded in cases where there is no individual persecution, yet there is “substantial grounds for believing that [the person] would face a real risk of suffering serious harm in his/her country of origin”, such as “death penalty or execution, torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment or serious and individual threat to a civilian’s life or person by reason of indiscriminate violence in situations of international or internal armed conflict.” (Chemin et al., 2018: 41)

reunification with equal rights to those of the refugee- and instead increased the number of cases receiving subsidiary protection, thus restricting the subsequent flight of the foreigners dependents. The measure also undoubtedly tried to discourage the arrival of new asylum seekers due to the impossibility of bringing later the family. On this basis, the statistics show that between 2015 and 2016, the number of asylum seekers awarded with refugee status moved from 50.2 % to 42.1 % while those been granted subsidiary protection increased from 0.8 % to 25.3 %. (AIDA 2015a, 2017) The most affected national groups due to this measure were those originally granted prima facie refugee recognition, in particular, Syrians, who were the most numerous group and who in 2015 had a refugee-status recognition rate of 99.5 % and a subsidiary protection rate of 0.1 %. (AIDA 2015a) By 2016 asylum seekers from Syria showed a refugee recognition rate of 57.6 % and a subsidiary protection rate of 40 %. (AIDA 2017)

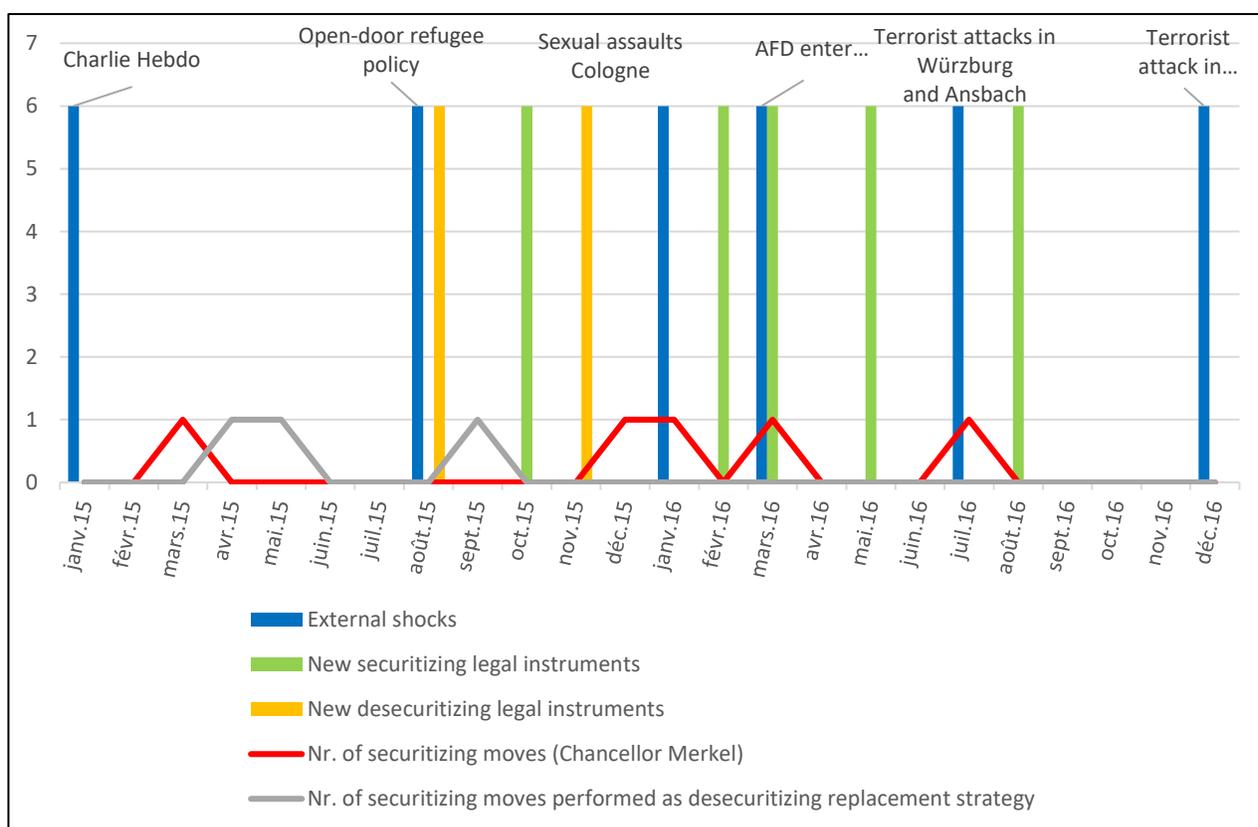
**Figure 8. Percentage of people granted subsidiary protection in Germany. 2015-2016**



The legal instruments analyzed to a certain extent coincide with, and at the same time contradict the Federal Chancellor's discursive construction of the refugee crisis. Because Merkel's discourse fluctuates from an initial predominantly desecuritizing moment until September 2015 and then becomes predominantly securitizing due to the impact of external shocks in the social and political context, the changes in the legal framework regulating asylum coincide with this fluctuation, by

initially looking for improve the conditions of humanitarian reception and the conditions of international protection for refugees, and by subsequently focusing on deporting asylum seekers and refugees considered a security threat. This tendency can be observed graphically in Figure 9: after the adoption of the refugee policy, of the six laws passed in the Bundestag, five have a securitizing nature. In this sense, although there is a fluctuation in the intensity of the securitizing dispositions, the overall changes in the legal framework during the period of study show a consistent securitization process. This overall securitizing nature of the legal instruments adopted oppose and contradict the overall desecuritizing strategy observed in Chancellor Merkel's discourse, thus showing a disconnection between the Head of Government's manifested political will and the translation of that will into practical measures.

**Figure 9. Evolution of the Chancellor's discourse and the government policies. 2015-2016**



In this context, the study found that the desecuritizing discourse of Chancellor Merkel did not produce important legislative changes in the institution of asylum, specially related to the

disarticulation of the security practices. In 2015, some parties like *Die Linke* and *Die Grüne* were asking for the de-criminalization of the asylum-seekers, that is, to eliminate border controls, and criminal offenses and fines associated with the asylum process, but such demands were not embraced by the Chancellor nor the government. On the contrary, the German government proposed further securitizing measures, such as the Act to classify Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia as safe countries of origin, which did not succeed due to a constraining political context opposing such a securitizing move. Therefore, the desecuritizing discourse of Chancellor Merkel did not involve the second pillar of the desecuritizing strategy of rearticulation of social identities, leaving only evidence in the discourse of efforts to foster the first pillar: transform the relation between German citizens and refugees away from an inimical nature. Because of not being translated into a new legal framework, the desecuritization strategy followed by Merkel was not institutionalized and thus was easily reverted with a change in the context and a change in the discourse. Moreover, the securitization process that followed the contextual change had little problem to increase the security practices regulating the new flows of asylum seekers.

With regards to the dispositions observed in the securitization process, it is important to note that they barely incorporate an emergency or extraordinary nature that would characterize them as part of a Schmittian state of exception. In comparison to the security measures called for more radical securitizing actors, such as the AfD, which imply the suspension of the application of the Schengen Agreement in Germany, the closing of German borders and their militarization, the use of lethal force against irregular immigrants at the borders and the suspension of the right to asylum, which qualify as a state of exception, the securitizing dispositions proposed by the Federal government and passed in the Bundestag do not have this extraordinary nature. The main characteristic of the security measures implemented to deal with the refugee crisis are of an ordinary, administrative nature. They involve routines and daily actions directed at data mining, risk management, monitoring, surveillance and profiling, and as such are of a precautionary nature. They require in some cases, such as in surveillance and forced deportations, the use of the security forces; but in general, these measures only imply the operation of the regular administrative bureaucracy.

**Table 6. Detail of the amendments to the legal framework regulating asylum in Germany  
2015-2016**

Name of Law	Entry into force	Securitizing Dispositions	Type	Desecuritizing Dispositions	Type
Act to Redefine the Right to Stay and the Termination of Residence	1-Aug-15	It establishes a re-entry ban and restricts the possibility to apply for a residence permit to asylum-seekers from safe countries of origin.	A2	It facilitates acquiring residence permits to foreigners with an exceptional leave to remain able to prove their integration in German society and their economic independence, after 8 years. It also facilitates the acquisition of residence permits to well-integrated minors after 4 years.	B2
		Foreigners with an exceptional leave to remain who provide false information to authorities in order to be granted residence permits will be charged with criminal offenses.	A4	It grants family members of foreigners awarded subsidiary protection the right to family reunification, with no proof of secure subsistence or sufficient living space and without proof of German language skills.	B3
		It allows authorities to request data from telecommunication providers to establish the identity and nationality of a foreigner and enforce the return to another state.	A4	Resettled refugees were given the right to apply for a residence permit and enjoyed the same rights as foreigners awarded with refugee status.	B3
		It establishes criteria to determine the risk of absconding in order to held	A3	Deportation could be suspended for one year for foreigners pursuing qualified	B3

		foreigners in custody pending deportation.		vocational training before attaining the age of 21.	
Act on the Acceleration of Asylum Procedures (Asylum Package I)	24-Oct-15	It increases the time asylum-seekers could be in reception centers from three to six months.	A3	It provides access to integration and language courses financed by the German state to asylum seekers with a good prospect to be granted refugee status (nationals of Syria, Iraq, Iran and Eritrea) as well as to foreigners whose deportation have been suspended for humanitarian reasons (deportation ban according to the section 60a subs. 2 of the Residence Act).	B2
		It establishes that asylum-seekers from safe countries of origin shall be required to live in reception centers until their application receives a decision.	A3	It facilitates access to the labor market to asylum seekers with a good prospect of remain and foreigners with a deportation ban.	B2
		It restricts the access to work permits to asylum seekers from safe countries of origin during the asylum procedure	A2	Foreigners with exceptional leave to remain are given access to grants for studies after 15 months of lawful stay in Germany	B2
		It designates Albania, Kosovo and Montenegro as safe countries of origin	A1	Certain construction and environmental requirements were eased for facilitating the	B1

			rapid building of new shelters for asylum seekers.	
		Foreigners obliged to leave the country will no longer be informed about their deportations in advance.	A3	
		It reduced the period of suspension of deportation allowed to authorities of the Federal states for not reaching an understanding with the Federal Minister of Interior from six to three months.	A3	
		Freedom of movement restrictions (residency requirement to the district responsible for the asylum seeker's application) is limited to three months. For asylum-seekers from safe countries of origin, the freedom of movement restriction is indefinite.	A2	
		Benefits in-kind were given precedence over cash benefits during the time of permanence of asylum seekers in reception centers.	A2	
Act to improve the Housing, Care, and Treatment of	1-Nov-15		It rises the minimum age for legally effective procedural actions and for actions in a residence and asylum	B1

Foreign Minors and Adolescents			procedure from 16 to 18 years. (BAMF 2016)	
Data Sharing Improvement Act	5-Feb-16	It facilitates the exchange of information among authorities of the Federal Ministry of Interior, the Federal Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs and the Federal states' police authorities. All data collected at the time of registration was stored in the Central Register of Foreigners and included fingerprints, country of origin, contact data -address, phone numbers and e-mail addresses-, information on allocation and information on health examinations and vaccinations.	A4	
		Asylum seekers were issued a Proof of Arrival which is a paper-based document that indicates the person has been registered in the Central Register of Foreigners and it is necessary for having access to the benefits under the Asylum Seekers' Benefits Act	A4	

		(accommodation, food, healthcare).		
Act on the Introduction of Fast-Track Asylum Procedures (Asylum Package II)	17-Mar-16	It suspended the right to family reunification to foreigners granted subsidiary protection, for two years; that is, until March 2018.	A2	
		Deportation bans for health reasons which were formerly granted in cases of life-threatening or serious illness are modified. Foreigners with such illnesses need to prove with a medical certificate that the deportation will worsen their condition.	A3	
		It allows the establishment of special reception centers to host asylum seekers from safe countries of origin, follow-up applicants and non-cooperative applicants who are deemed to have destroyed or disposed of their identity documents. In these centers, asylum seekers are required to	A3	

		<p>reside until the asylum procedure is completed, and in case of refusal, until their deportation.</p>		
		<p>The fast-track procedure for asylum seekers with low prospect of remain establishes that Government authorities have one week for deciding on their applications. Subsequently applicants have one week to file an appeal against the decision, which will be reviewed by an administrative court within one additional week.</p>	A3	
		<p>It allows for the closure of asylum procedures if the applicant does not continue to pursue the case due to an unauthorized leave of the special reception center.</p>	A3	

Act on the Faster Expulsion of Criminal Foreigners and Extended Reasons for Refusing Refugee Recognition to Criminal Asylum Seekers	17-Mar-16	It allows denying refugee status to asylum seekers, and facilitates the deportation of foreigners in general, who have been sentenced to prison terms -or to youth custody in the case of minors- of more than one year, for criminal offences against life, physical integrity, sexual self-determination or property or for resisting enforcement officers, making use of violence.	A3	
EU-Turkey Agreement	18-Mar-16	It allows to deport back to Turkey "all third-country nationals who irregularly entered the EU via one of the Greek Mediterranean islands and did not file an asylum application or whose asylum application was rejected as unfounded or inadmissible." In exchange for Turkey's commitment to accept returned asylum seekers, "EU Member States committed themselves to admit the same number of Syrian refugees from Turkey for humanitarian grounds or via other legal pathways (1:1	A1	

		mechanism)." (BAMF 2018, 47)		
Act on the Classification of Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia as Safe Countries of Origin	13-May-16	As a response to the Cologne incident, the Act designates Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia as safe countries of origin in order to deport asylum seekers of this countries.	A3	
Integration Act and its Ordinances	6-Aug-16	It introduced the new rule of inadmissibility of an asylum claims due to readmission by a third country that is regarded as a safe country for the applicant.	A1	Access to the labor market is facilitated for asylum seekers with a good prospect to remain and people with a ban on deportation, after three months in Germany, by a suspension on the priority check, by which employers had to prove that there were not German or EU nationals with the qualifications needed for a job.
		Asylum claims are also inadmissible for "people who received a refugee status in a third country or lived there safely for at least for 3 months." (Will 2018, 188)	A1	Asylum seekers with a good prospect to remain are given access to benefits to support school or vocational training after three years; or, after 15

				months if they no longer reside in a reception center.	
		In order to counter segregation and foster integration, refugees and people receiving other forms of international protection are obliged to reside in the district where they were allocated by the government for a period of three years.	A2	It authorizes the government to create 100,000 jobs offered to asylum seekers with good prospects of remain in the public sector and local or welfare organizations.	B2
		The period after which a recognized refugee could apply for a permanent residence permit is increased from three to five years. Furthermore, for a successful residence application, the foreigner has to show economic independence and a sufficient command of the German language (level A2 CEFR). If the foreigner shows a high command of the German language (level C1 CEFR), the three-year period continues to apply.	A2	Persons with an exceptional leave to remain are given the right to finish a vocational training and a period of 6 months after the training for entering the job market. If they do find adequate employment, they are eligible for a two-years residence permit.	B2

	<p>It allows the benefits for asylum seekers to be cut below the general minimum standard of living if they fail to cooperate during the asylum procedures, if they refuse to participate in government-sponsored job opportunities and if they were granted a residence permit in another EU country.</p>	A2	<p>Foreigners with a residence permit of one year are also granted access to government-funded German language and integration courses.</p>	B2
	<p>Asylum seekers of safe countries of origin are excluded from measures of vocational training, education and access to government-sponsored jobs.</p>	A2		
	<p>Private sponsors of foreigners being granted a residence permit in Germany are made liable for up to five years for covering the "living expenses, including the provision of living space, medical care in case of illness and any required nursing care, and including any such expenditure which is based on a legal entitlement of the third-country national" (BAMF/EMN 2018, 46) This provision applies to foreigners being granted refugee status</p>	A2		

		and other forms of international protection.		
		Foreigners awaiting deportation that are considered a threat to state or internal security are to be monitored.	A4	
		Fines up to 30,000 EUR were imposed to non-cooperative asylum seekers who provide “wrong, incomplete or delayed information” during the asylum process. (Will 2018, 180)	A4	
		Asylum seekers with a good prospect to remain are now obliged to attend German and societal courses under penalty of losing social benefits from the government.	A2	

### 3.5. Conclusions

After the analysis of Chancellor Merkel’s text construction of the refugee crisis and its impact in the institutional framework regulating asylum, two characteristics are observed. First, the Chancellor’s discourse is inconsistent and volatile. Second, the discourse is contradicted by the policies adopted by the Federal government during the period of study. Merkel’s discourse shows strong ambiguity, fluctuating from desecuritizing to securitizing predications of asylum-seekers

and refugees, according to shifting and complex classifications which depend on the changing context.

It is possible to identify a first moment in the discourse which points at a political will by the Chancellor to desecuritize the refugee crisis and offer international protection to forced migrants fleeing from countries where the German government considers there is widespread persecution. The strategies observed for this desecuritization process are deconstructivist, fostering a representation of refugee crisis as non-threatening to German society. But the desecuritizing strategy mostly used was replacement and aimed at presenting the refugee as a security object threatened by common civilizational enemies, i.e. terrorism, human rights abuses and armed conflict.

However, this representation is accompanied, after September 2015, by simultaneous security predications in which asylum seekers and refugees are figured through instable binaries that provide the room to Merkel to construct certain figurative subcategories of refugees as a security subject (the 'illegitimate' and the 'undeserving' refugee). This form of subjectification starts with the use of ontological frames of securitization pushed by a socio-historical context characterized by an increasing social sense of disruption of the social environment and discontinuity in the collective sense of Self, due to the massive arrival of ethnic and cultural aliens.

But by January 2016, the subjectification of some of the figurative subcategories of refugees becomes framed also in physical security frames (the 'illegal' and the 'undevelopable'). As in the first securitizing moment, this construction of certain figurative subcategories of refugees is contingent to the context and responds to violent external shocks that affected society's perception on the risks of violent crime and terrorism in Germany. Furthermore, in this context, it can also be observed that Chancellor Merkel adopted the role of securitizing actor in the aftermath of the sexual assaults in Cologne and of the terrorist acts in Germany in July 2016, and performed securitizing moves calling for the adoption of emergency measures to contain the threat posed by some subcategories of refugees, which were success in triggering perlocutionary effects through changes in the legal framework, providing evidence to the understanding of the securitization process as a causal mechanism.

Despite this inconsistency in the Chancellor's construction of meaning around the refugee, during 2015-2016 her overall discourse can still be considered as desecuritizing for two reasons. The first reason is that, along the entire period, Merkel desecuritized certain figurative subcategories of refugees (the "genuine" and "legal"), and furthermore she consistently presented the refugee flows, and immigration in general, as not being a threat to Germany's collective

identity. By fixing multiethnic, multicultural and cosmopolitan markers to define the German collective Self, Merkel tried to transform the relation between German society and foreigners, framing it in *amity*. (Buzan, Waever and de Wilde 1998) Thus, Merkel counter opposing securitizing discourses within some sectors of society, the populist far-right and her own party, representing the refugee-Other in inimical terms. The second reason is that, thanks to this representation of Germany's identity, and due to the Chancellor's concern on the continuity and soundness of EU institutions, she avoided the European trend to close borders to refugee flows and instead took the political decision to kept them open and to suspended the application of the Dublin Regulation in order to welcome all Syrian asylum seekers refused entry in other countries. After adopting this policy, Merkel stuck to it notwithstanding the changing context and the political costs.

Merkel's general desecuritizing position is contradicted by the laws and policies the Federal government adopted during the refugee crisis, which show no desecuritizing trends. On the contrary, the amendments to the legal framework show an opposing trend of securitization, in which a weak securitizing moment is found when the socio-historical context was enabling Merkel's desecuritizing discourse, followed by a strong securitizing moment when the context changed and became favorable to securitizing calls from growing sectors of society and opposition political parties. This analysis evidences that the refugee crisis in Germany was not completely desecuritized in the discourse, and most importantly, was not desecuritized in practice. On the contrary, despite the adoption and defense of open-door policy, a process of securitization of the refugee crisis is observed in the Federal government's actions through which the refugee, both in his deserving and non-deserving figurative subcategories, is symbolically attributed the condition of security risk.

This symbolical subjectification is, nonetheless, made through securitizing dispositions that do not involve a rupture with the current legal and political order as in a state of exception. On the contrary, most of the measures by themselves, without the linguistic and socio-historical context, seem to be only administrative adjustments, banal and innocuous. Nevertheless, their practical aim is at restricting rights for asylum seekers, decreasing the number of asylum applicants and limiting the responsibilities of the German state in providing international protection, as part of a political decision that originates in a reading of certain figurative subcategories of refugees as a threat to German society and to the German state. Despite the discursive differentiation of threatening and non-threatening refugees, the securitizing measures adopted by the German state fostered a general perception in society that the *refugee*, indistinctly, was a potential threat

and therefore, a potential enemy. At the same time, this symbolic security construction, which generalized the risky and inimical nature of the refugee, jeopardized Merkel's desecuritizing strategy of transforming the relation between German society and the refugee-Other, and therefore impeded a successful rearticulation of social identities which could have ended in the disarticulation of the security practices associated with asylum in Germany. Due to these elements, the analysis of Merkel's discourse and the government policies shows that the German case was not an anomalous case of desecuritization and that, on the contrary, followed the trend found in the EU members of further securitizing the institution of asylum.

#### **4. THE CONSTRUCTION OF TEXT ON THE REFUGEE CRISIS BY THE AfD**

In order to observe how the text construction around the refugee crisis, as presented by the Federal Chancellor, was resisted and contested, this section is going to analyze the discourse of AfD politicians. A sample consisting of 74 newspaper articles containing interviews and coverages of AfD politicians, 34 AfD press releases and the 2016 political program was used to analyze the predications and figurations used by this party to construct both the refugee and the refugee crisis during 2015 and 2016. The choice of the AfD is useful for two reasons. First, the AfD is a political actor that aims at representing sectors of the population not comfortable with certain policies of the Federal government and certain dispositions of the German legal framework.

Second, the AfD's influence in the policies of the Federal government and in the discourse of the establishment parties, despite their recent existence as a political actor, serves to test the prevailing view in CoS's securitization theory that a securitizing actor's power is not relational but dispositional, that is, it is granted by the social capital attributed to certain positions, such as Head of the Government, which provides authority to speak security and facilitates the audience's acceptance of securitizing moves. (Buzan, Waever and Wilde 1998) This theorization has an empirical and logical argument: dispositional power allows securitizing actors to have asymmetric access to mass communication channels -official and private-. (Balzacq 2011) In this way, government authorities, for instance, have more access to the national and local press and thus more facility to set the agenda for the political debate, to socialize their constructions of meaning into society, and in consequence, for their texts to become the general regime of truth. In the German case, this access to mass media platforms is important because it seems to be restricted for AfD politicians probably in order not to legitimize them as valid political actors and to avoid the amplification of their radical views. This situation could be the result of the general framing of AfD as an extreme right-wing party, and to the burden of Germany's Nazi past.

This observation is based on AfD leaders' complaints on the lack of platform provided by the major newspapers to them, on the negative image presented by newspapers around the party's actions -most attention in the news coverage is given to the radical and illiberal political positions and racist and xenophobic statements of her politicians-, and on the small number of interviews made to AfD party leaders that I have found in the 2015-2016 period. Looking in 12 regional and national newspapers for interviews given by the maximum leaders of the party- the co-chairs Frauke Petry (January 2015-December 2016), Bern Lucke (January-July 2015) and Jörg Meuthen (July 2015-December 2016) and the Parliamentary leaders Alexander Gauland and Alice Weidel, 74 articles were found covering the party, from which only 17 were interviews and portraits. In contrast, in the AfD's web page, from December 2015 to 6 January 2017, 349 press releases were found in which AfD politicians address diverse political issues in Germany. In this context, it is of academic interest to analyze the construction of securitizing text from a political actor which shows a weak social and political position, but nevertheless succeeds at socializing its views around the refugee crisis, increasing its political presence at the state level during 2016 and at the Federal level in 2017, and forcing the moderate parties to adopt some aspects of its illiberal agenda on the refugee policy in order not to lose more voters.

#### **4.1. Securitization frames**

The predicate analysis of the AfD's discourse has found that this party has consistently securitized the refugee crisis as well as the figure of the refugee during all the period studied. Illocutionary acts that follows the grammar of securitization -referent object, existential threat and emergency measures- can be periodically found in AfD politician's speeches and press releases. The sample used for this analysis showed a total of 41 securitizing moves between 2015 and 2016. Of these moves, 21 used the framework of security-as-being while 20 used the framework of security-as-survival. Further disaggregated in their security frames, the data shows that the AfD used predominantly the state security frame of securitization, while the second more used frame for securitization was the political security frame. The third most used securitization frame was societal security.

This securitization text is complex, multidimensional and also contextually influenced. The process is complex as it frames the refugee as a source of both ontological and physical insecurity. The analysis of the securitizing moves performed by AfD representatives during the period of study show that, in the ontological security framework, which is the most salient, the refugee is portrayed as an existential threat both to Germany's collective identity -societal security frame-,

due to his ethnic, political and cultural markers, and to the structure and institutions defining the German political community -political security frame-, due to the large number of arrivals and the disordered and unforeseeable fashion in which refugees' movements are depicted. Within the notion of physical security, in the securitizing moves the refugee is linked to an increase in sexual and criminal offenses -internal security frame- as well as to terrorist acts -state security frame-. In this way, AfD articulates consistently the migration-security nexus. An interesting fact is that physical security frames for securitization are used mainly after the impact of violent external shocks, in particular Islamist terrorist attacks around Europe and Germany, while ontological security frames for securitization are used permanently and indistinctly of other external shocks.

**Table 7. Securitizing moves performed by AfD representatives disaggregated by type  
2015-2016**

Type of securitization	Securitization frame	Number of instances
Ontological	Economic security	4
	Political security	9
	Societal security	8
Physical	State security	13
	Internal security	7

The securitizing text is also multidimensional because it uses simultaneously many figurations that are inscribed on refugee. In the AfD's discourse, the use of binaries is more restricted than in the case of Chancellor Merkel, evidencing a clearly negative perception of the refugee. Although there are few instances where AfD politicians present the dyads genuine/illegitimate and Muslim/Islamist refugee to distinguish the threatening from the non-threatening, the dominant text construction has predications in which the refugee is represented through several negative figurations: bogus refugee, illegal migrant, illiterate, low-skilled, anti-Semite, homophobic, misogynist, politically illiberal, criminal and Islamist terrorist. By representing the refugee as embodying several negative figurations which threaten German security in many different aspects (cultural, social, economic, political and sexual), the form of othering observed in the AfD's discourse generalizes the subjectivity of the refugee-Other as inimical. In this manner, AfD politicians do not single out potentially risky subjectivities among the refugees, as in the discourse of Chancellor Merkel; instead, they tend to generalize the refugee's inimical nature and create the

conditions of possibility for abjectifying him, trumping general feelings of empathy in the population, and calling for adopting extreme security measures.

As a result, the policies demanded by AfD politicians aim at instantiating exceptional measures in different areas, ranging from promoting ethno-national population policies (banning abortion and actively promoting the rise on birth rates), re-nationalizing migratory policies (re-establishing German border controls and militarizing rural border zones, allowing the use of lethal force for interdict the movement of illegal migrants, restricting migration policies to high-skilled workers, and denouncing the 1961 Refugee Convention in order to freely limit the definition of refugees and the applicable rules) and limiting some rights such as citizenship and freedom of religion (abolishing *jus solis* as a basis for citizenship, ending double nationality, and banning the construction of minarets and the use of veiling in public spaces).

#### **4.1.1. Ontological security frames**

The construction of the refugee crisis by AfD as causing ontological insecurity has two forms, according to whether the referent object is the shared collective identity (Kinnvall 2004) or whether it is the ordering mechanism of the political community. (Huysmans 1998)

##### **a. Societal security frame**

In the first sense, AfD presents the refugee crisis as a threat manifesting itself in the form of “millions” (Stuttgarter Zeitung 2016a) of foreigners and cultural aliens arriving in Germany and challenging the continuity of an imagined, pre-existing national identity. In this construction, refugees are figured as ethnically Arab and culturally Muslim, identity markers which the AfD presents as inferior and incompatible with German identity. An example of this representation is found in the following excerpt from a statement made by Alexander Gauland, the leader of the AfD Brandenburg faction and the strongest political figure of the party, on 31 December, 2015:

Uncontrolled immigration presents no opportunity for Germany, it poses a great danger to our society. We do not want Germany to be changed by such an influx from the Arab countries. Immigration can only be an opportunity if it is controlled and based on criteria that are in the interests of our society. An upper limit, integration capacity and willingness to perform should be at the top of the list here. The opposite, however, is currently the case. Anyone who wants can enter Germany. It does not matter if it's a terrorist, economic migrants or refugees. (Gauland 2015)

The AfD also securitizes German identity by presenting it as existentially threatened by multiculturalism. In this articulation of text, the refugee as a threat to identity is the result of the adoption and implementation by the German government of a “foreign ideology” which puts into question Germany’s cultural reproduction. In this language strategy, AfD uses predications to fix an imagined German identity on the basis of certain historical, geographical, linguistic, religious, intellectual and institutional markers, which bounds people to land (Germany and Europe), family and tradition, creating the social fiber on which citizenship rights are based and passed through generations. In this sense, and in opposition to Merkel’s approach to German identity, which is cosmopolitan and open, AfD presents a conservative, romantic and closed Self-image of Germany imagined on an ethno-national and religious narrative that is not compatible with multiculturalism.

The AfD is committed to German as the predominant culture. This culture is derived from three sources: firstly, the religious traditions of Christianity; secondly, the scientific and humanistic heritage, whose ancient roots were renewed during the period of Renaissance and the Age of Enlightenment; and thirdly, Roman law, upon which our constitutional state is founded. Together, these traditions are the foundation of our free and democratic society, and they determine daily patterns of social interaction in society, and shape the relationship between the sexes as well as the conduct of parents towards their children. The ideology of multiculturalism is blind to history and puts on a par imported cultural trends with the indigenous culture, thereby degrading the value system of the latter. The AfD views this as a serious threat to social peace and the survival of the nation state as a cultural unit. [...] (Alternative für Deutschland 2016, 46-47)

The use of religion and the promotion of a nationalistic view of the collective identity is a political strategy generally promoted by radical right-wing politicians because, in times of uncertainty, these markers are powerful sites for identification and for the promotion of cohesion within the national in-group, for they articulate narratives of past glories and traumas which awake emotional responses. (Kinnvall 2004) Thus, by promoting a nationalistic and religious Self-image based on shared knowledge within the in-group, and by identifying a common enemy to those identity markers, AfD aims at unifying German society behind their political vision and trigger an inimical construction of the refugee-Other as well as of the Federal government. An example of this strategy is found in Petry’s promotion of electoral slogans such as “who loves Germany and democracy, chooses AfD” and “We came to stay because Germany needs us.” (Sächsische Zeitung 2015) Similarly, Saxony-Anhalt’s AfD faction leader, André Poggenburg, referred to AfD

and other right-wing populist parties in Europe as the defenders of German and European identity, due to their anti-immigration position:

For our Fatherlands, for our common European home, in this historic turning point, it is about being or not-being. The domestic and foreign Old Parties are on the side of non-being, and our allies are on the side of being. (Der Taggespiegel 2016e)

Because Germany's national identity is presented as based on Christianity, Islam is automatically constructed as its opposing Other, threatening Western and German values, and representing underdevelopment, fanaticism and backwardness. Although there are instances when AfD leaders refer to Islam in non-threatening terms,<sup>10</sup> in general, and mainly in the context of the Islamist terrorist attacks in Europe, Islam is construed as a security subject. This is clear in the AfD's 2016 Political Program, which has two sections called "Islam in tense relation to our value system" and "Islam does not belong to Germany".

Islam does not belong to Germany. Its expansion and the ever-increasing number of Muslims in the country are viewed by the AfD as a danger to our state, our society, and our values. An Islam which neither respects nor refrains from being in conflict with our legal system, or that even lays claim to power as the only true religion, is incompatible with our legal system and our culture. [...] (Alternative für Deutschland 2016, 48)

By presenting Islam as a threat to German civilization, the refugee coming from the Muslim world becomes automatically framed as a source of ontological insecurity. Petry has made this direct link to forced migration as a cause of cultural alienation, asserting that the mass arrival of asylum seekers from Syria and Iraq was threatening "German identity within German territory". (Aachener Zeitung 2016) In a similar text, in an AfD rally in Karlsruhe in February 2016, Gauland presented the (Muslim) refugee flows as a "massive invasion" of Germany and the government's open-border policy as "multicultural asylum madness", and then called for closing the borders, asking German people not to let the refugees' suffering be used emotionally: "We have to close the borders and then endure the cruel pictures. We cannot be blackmailed by children's eyes." (Die Zeit 2016b)

AfD's framing of the refugee crisis as Muslim invasion in Europe reproduces a broader discourse of civilizational confrontation found in Huntington's Great Dichotomy in which the Global South is represented as uncivilized, underdeveloped, traditional, and anarchic society in opposition to the civilized, developed, modern, and ordered society of the Global North. (Weber

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<sup>10</sup> For example, in an interview on 26 April 2016, Gauland said that AfD was not against Islam, as a religion, but against Islamism, as a political ideology. He also recognized that although Islam is not part of Germany's roots, integrated Muslims are part of German society

2016b, 10) This clash-of-civilizations type of construction of AfD was used to portray their electoral success in the March regional elections, when it entered the Parliaments of Baden-Württemberg, Rhineland-Palatinate and Saxony-Anhalt winning double-digit voting percentages. AfD Co-chairman Meuthen presented the results as a triumph over Islam. According to the Berliner Zeitung he said “Islam, ‘my dear friends’, [...] ‘is done.’” (Berliner Zeitung 2016a) Gauland followed the same line and presented the results as a popular plebiscite against Merkel’s asylum policy: “This Sunday, [...] the refugee policy of the Chancellor was voted out.’ (Berliner Zeitung, 2016a)

The rejection of multiculturalism and the construction of immigration from culturally different people as a threat to German collective identity makes it difficult for AfD to articulate a coherent narrative on immigration policies. AfD recognizes the declining demographic trend in Germany and the economic challenges it presents to the Social Market Economy model, thus they say to promote an immigration policy aimed at people that are willing and ready to be integrated into German society. The approach they support is the Canadian and Australian immigration policies where highly-qualified people are favored for immigrating. (Alternative für Deutschland 2014, 11) According to this view, highly-skilled migrants are tolerated because they can be easily integrated into society and will not become a future threat to internal public order and social cohesion, while low-skilled migrants are considered to be undevelopable, that is, unable to acquire German values and traditions, thus becoming a factor of insecurity.

This construction seems to have an economic dimension, inspired in the trend observed in industrialized countries by which they compete to attract and retain highly qualified migrants who are seen as “[...] net contributors to receiving societies, by promoting innovation and national competitiveness and thus contributing to long-term economic growth [...]” (Czaika and Parsons 2016, 4) and because they are “[...] less welfare dependent and have a skill set that is ready for the labour market.” (Baily and Mulder 2017, 2690) Nevertheless, even this desired high-skilled immigration encompasses a sense of security symbolically attributed by the approach that AfD gives to the concept of integration and by the secondary role that AfD wants immigration policies to play. With regards to integration, AfD’s vision of a monolithic national culture and its rejection of cultural diversity logically leads it to favoring assimilation instead of integration.

Assimilation as the most advanced form of integration is worth striving for, yet, it cannot be enforced. [...] The continuing influx of people with extremely poor integration prospects exacerbates existing problems, and is therefore irresponsible. Good prospects of integration must be made a future condition to permanent residence in the country. (Alternative für Deutschland 2016, 62)

With regards to population policies, AfD promotes an ethno-national, “Germans-first” kind of approach that puts immigration as a second-best solution for the declining demographic trends. AfD claims that state policies should promote an increase in German birthrates, and for that purpose they propose to ban abortion, they oppose homosexual marriage and diverse forms of families, and they offer to reform the welfare system in order to support financially and through labor policies, German families with children. According to Petry:

German politics has a responsibility to ensure the survival of their own people, their own nation. Therefore, the three-child family is desirable. That's what I stand for [...]. Immigration will not compensate for the population shortage, so we are either dealing with shrinkage, which I do not want, or we have to engage in active population policy. (TAZ 2015)

On the labor policy, they propose investing in the skills of German people in order to incorporate in the labor market unemployed German citizens. Then, immigration could be considered to fill the workforce needs of the German industry.

Recruitment from third countries should only be sought after all other means of obtaining and qualifying a workforce have been exhausted. However, controlled immigration from third countries is no solution of the demographic crisis. Uncontrolled and predominantly illegal immigration of unqualified workers, who misuse the application for asylum, does not strengthen the potential of a skilled workforce. (Alternative für Deutschland 2016, 61)

## **b. Political security frame for securitization**

In the second ontological sense, AfD constructs the refugee crisis and the government’s political response as threatening the internal ordering role of the state, basing their arguments in the irregular form in which asylum-seekers were arriving at the EU and Germany. This text construction has two characteristics. First, it presents the government as “deceptive” and “ruling against” the interest of the German people.

Politicians of all parties represented in the Bundestag, above all the Federal Chancellor, pull all tools of mass psychology and mass suggestion to deceive the population. They are supported in this by a largely unified media landscape (...). Merkel attracts hundreds of millions of economic refugees to Germany. If this influx is not stopped, the end of German and European culture is sealed. (Stuttgarter Zeitung 2016a)

Second, it de-contextualizes the refugee crisis for it does not refer to the causes of forced migration in the Middle East, and thus it reduces the reasons for the government’s open-border policy to a

political decision to “attract” (Arab, Muslim) immigrants to Germany in order to counter the declining demographic trends.

In order to fight the effects of this negative demographic development, political parties currently in government support mass immigration, mainly from Islamic states, without due consideration of the needs and qualifications of the German labor market. During the past few years it has become evident that Muslim immigrants in Germany, in particular, only attain below-average levels of education, training and employment. As the birth rate is more than 1.8 children amongst immigrants, which is much higher than that of Germans, it will hasten the ethnic-cultural changes in society. [...] The spread of conflict-laden and multiple minority communities erodes social solidarity, mutual trust, and public safety, which all are elements of a stable community. (Alternative für Deutschland 2016, 41)

The construction of the government as “deceptive” is accompanied by a categorization of it as “incompetent” in the face of the refugee crisis, thus, as unable to control its borders and to decide who can be integrated in the social and political community, according to the country’s economic needs. This incapacity to perform its external protection and ordering role is not only attributed by AfD to the government’s wrongful policy of considering Syrian asylum-seekers *prima facie* refugees, it is also attributed to the cession of sovereign power to regional and international institutions. In this fashion, AfD articulates its rejection of the domestic refugee policy with its reactionary nationalism.

[...] current German and European asylum and refugee policies cannot be continued as in the past. The ill-fitting (*sic.*) term “refugee” used for all the people who enter Germany irregularly with the aim to stay here forever, is characteristic of this misguided policy. The AfD will substitute the individual right to asylum by a constitutional law, which is to provide an institutional guarantee. We demand that the Geneva Convention of 1951 and other outdated supra-national and international [...] agreements be adapted to present-day conditions of global mass migration. The German Asylum Laws may no longer be misused as a vehicle for mass migration. [...] Since the end of 2014, the decision-makers of the German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees have been forced to generally acknowledge whole ethnic groups instead of dealing with migrants on a case by case basis. Consequently, there has been no verification of identity, country of origin, or nationality. This has led to widespread malpractices. These decision-makers must once again be free of directives and able to make their own independent decisions, which was

the case until 2002. This is the only way to prevent political influence on the asylum quota. (Alternative für Deutschland 2016, 58-59)

According to this text, the AfD views the refugee crisis as provoking a disordered response in which the state cannot, and the government does not want to apply strict protocols for granting asylum, therefore allowing the abuse of the institution of asylum by bogus refugees. This incapacity of enforcing the asylum law and controlling immigration turns the German government into an illegitimate representative of the people allowing an invasion of foreigners and cultural aliens that threatens German collective identity. (Alternative für Deutschland 2016, 58)

#### **4.1.2. Physical security frames**

In contrast to the permanent representation of the refugee crisis as an ontological insecurity issue, the representation of the refugee as a physical threat is mostly contingent to external shocks. The analysis of AfD's discourse reveals that the construction of the refugee as a subject of security uses as a referential context, or happened in the aftermath of:

- The terrorist attack at Bataclan Theater, on 13 November 2015, in Paris
- The sexual and criminal offenses denounced in Cologne, on 31 December 2015
- The terrorist attacks in Nice, Ansbach and Würzburg on, 14, 18 and 24 July 2016
- The terrorist attack at the Breitscheidplatz Christmas Market in Berlin, on 19 December 2016.

Due to the fact that the terrorist attacks in France were claimed by IS and thus were presented as result of Islamist radicalism, and that the attacks in Germany and the Cologne incidents were committed by asylum-seekers and refugees coming from the Arab world, the AfD articulated a security text in which the refugee was figured with ethnic and religious categories, on the one hand, and on gender categories on the other hand. Thus, AfD represented him as predominantly young, male, Arab and Muslim. To these physical and cultural markers were attached behavioral categories framed in security terms such as violent, criminal, misogynist and terrorist. In this fashion, AfD constructed the frameworks of asylum securitization as state security -the security of the German state- and internal security or public order -the security of the German population, mainly women-.

##### **a. State security: the attack at Bataclan, Paris**

The Paris terrorist attack provided AfD the scenario for linking the refugee crisis to terrorism. For instance, Gauland asserted that “Of course there is a connection between the attacks and the uncontrolled influx of refugees.” (Der Taggespiegel 2015f) Furthermore, racializing the construction and presenting the refugee situation as a clash of civilizations, Gauland spoke of Germany being in a state of war due to immigration, and using a historical metaphor figured the refugee as a “barbarian” coming to destroy German and European civilization: “This is a commitment against the unrestrained influx of people we did not call! [...] One feels reminded of the downfall of the Roman Empire when the barbarians came over the Limes.” (Der Taggespiegel 2015f)

As a result of this construction of text in which the refugee transcends its nature as an ontological security concern to a physical, security-as-survival threat, is made through a linkage between the refugee’s identity markers (Arab, Muslim) with illegal actions and terrorism, a linkage that is portrayed as inherent, automatic. As a response, AfD politicians called for policy measures which involved the abjection of the refugee. For example, Thomas Schädlich, a medical doctor of Ellefeld, Saxony, and member of the Vogtland district council representing AfD, announced at a local council meeting that “[...] he would not accept refugees as patients.” (Der Taggespiegel, 2015f) Pretzell, an elected representative to the European Parliament and spouse of Frauke Petry, demanded publicly that firearms be used against refugees at the German border, to impede their entry. (Der Taggespiegel, 2015f) Finally, at the Hannover AfD congress celebrated on 25 November 2015, the AfD discussed a proposal to make it a constitutional offense for priests to give shelter to refugees in churches, which represents a form of censorship and reprimand for showing solidarity with inimical aliens. (Sächsische Zeitung, 2015)

### **b. Internal security: The Cologne sexual attacks**

After the denounces of massive sexual assaults in Cologne, Petry, in a newspaper interview made directly the link between the government’s refugee policy and the incident. Using the context of the incident, Petry constructed refugee as a threat to women’s safety as well as to Germany’s internal order, emphasizing his ethnic identity marker.

If women in one of the busiest German places in the presence of police can no longer be protected from sexual violence by a group of about 2,000 men of alleged Arab and North African descent, the so-called constitutional state is at an end and thus Protection of women’s rights in our country no longer guaranteed “. The events are “the horrible

consequence of a catastrophic asylum and migration policy" of the Federal Government. (Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger 2016)

The construction of the refugee as a sexual offender did not initiate with the Cologne incidents. In fact, it was previously articulated and seems to be related to a broader discourse in which the Muslim is presented as sexually underdeveloped or uncivilized, as well as misogynist for the secondary role that women is granted in radical interpretations of Islam. A previous example of the securitization of the refugee in these terms is found in Björn Höcke, the leader of the AfD Thuringian faction, who stated that the Muslim refugee is "the nightmare of blond women". (Stuttgarter Zeitung 2015) Höcke has also sexualized and racialized the refugee as a threat to German ethnicity, arguing that migrants coming from Africa have a tendency for overpopulation due to an "African life-affirming propagation type" while Germans have a tendency to decreasing birth-rates. (Die Zeit 2016a) In his view, "The refugees are young, Muslim, male and mostly uneducated, they are not an asset to our country." (Die Zeit 2016b)

Nevertheless, since the Cologne incident happened, it has been continuously instrumentalized by AfD politicians to depict refugees as an internal-security threat and to attack the open-door refugee policy of the government. For instance, Pazderski, in an interview in June, 2016, used the reference to the Cologne incidents as well as to other alleged sexual assaults attributed to foreigners in a music concert in Darmstadt, on 31 May 2016, to figure the refugee as sexually underdeveloped (Webber 2016b) and in consequence as a threat to German women.

[...] name me a Muslim state where tolerance and democracy prevail. There are studies from the United Kingdom that one-third of British Muslims recognize Sharia law. We need to understand who we bring to the country. The attacks in Cologne, Darmstadt, at the Berlin Carnival of Cultures are first excesses. My daughter is scared when she sees groups of certain men at the train station. (Der Tagesspiegel 2016f)

The political responses that were called in the aftermath of the Cologne incident were aimed at interdicting the arrival of refugees, even with the use of force, and reducing the economic pulling factors attracting them to Germany. In an interview in February 2016, Petry echoed his husband and called for limiting the influx of asylum-seekers through the use of lethal force:

We need comprehensive controls to prevent so many unregistered refugees from crossing the border [...] Federal police would need to make use of the firearm if necessary. Shooting at illegal immigrants, their ultima ratio. (TAZ 2016)

In another interview, on 18 February 2016, Petry called for Germany to close the borders to asylum seekers in the same way as Austria and other Eastern European countries, and to reduce “ [...] the financial incentives for migrants.” (Stuttgarter Zeitung 2016b)

### **c. State security: the terrorist attacks of July 2016**

The Islamist terrorist attacks in France and Germany in the summer of 2016 presented the AfD with new arguments for hardening their opposition to Merkel’s open-border policy towards refugees and to demand more extreme security measures to contain the refugee movement. The terrorist attacks provided with the context to reinforce the refugee-terrorism nexus and to denounce the government asylum policy as threatening Germany’s peace and state security. In this fashion, Gauland, relating the attacks to the Muslim marker of the asylum seeker identity, called for the total suspension of the right of asylum:

Against the background of the many terrible terrorist attacks, the right to asylum for Muslims must now be suspended immediately until all asylum seekers registered in Germany are checked and their applications are processed. Not all Muslims are terrorists, but religiously motivated terror in Germany has always been Muslim. For security reasons, we can no longer afford to allow more Muslims to immigrate unchecked to Germany. Among the illegally immigrant Muslims are terrorists and their numbers are constantly increasing. (Gauland 2016a)

With this assertion, Gauland demanded to use the security *dispositif* to govern the refugee presence in Germany and interdict his movements, symbolically reinforcing the nature of the refugee as a subject of security.

[...] to control our borders to stop the influx of asylum seekers. [...] to equip the police better and to train them in the new threat situation. [...] to build a federal police force with extended powers. [...] We urgently need a central asylum registration office and a central removal center to better control the situation and achieve an efficient deportation practice. (Gauland 2016b)

In a similar call for the use of the security *dispositif*, Pazderski affirmed that the refugee shelters were places where terrorist attacks were planned, putting Germany in a high level of danger. As a response, he urged for the security agencies to surveil the refugee shelters “Especially among people of Arab origin to minimize the IS terror threat [...]” and to identify, arrested and deport terrorists. (Pazderski 2016) Adding to this racialized construction of the refugee as a state-security threat and to the security measures demanded, Petry sexualized the security construction, calling

for deporting rejected asylum-seekers and externalizing the EU borders. In a televised interview, she said that “[...] rejected asylum seekers should be sheltered on at least two islands at the gates of Europe - men separated from women.” (Berliner Zeitung 2016b) In another interview, on 11 September 2016, Petry replaced the term refugee/asylum-seeker with illegal immigrants in order to detach the figure of the refugee from forced displacement, which implies a quality of victim and a notion of vulnerability, and by using the ‘illegal’ qualifier to the ‘immigrant’ signifier, reinforced the security meaning attributed to it.

We have more than 600,000 illegal immigrants here, who are not entitled to asylum, so the Federal Government must immediately ensure that these people return to their countries of origin. That's why I called for a remigration program. [...] That people need to be rescued in distress is out of the question. But they have to be brought back to the North African coast. [...] (Welt am Sonntag 2016)

In all these statements, emergency powers are asked for the security agencies and measures that are illiberal in nature and contrary to the current legal order in Germany and to international law, are called for, thus representing processes of securitization instantiated in a bottom-up manner.

#### **d. State security: the terrorist attack in Berlin**

The attack in Berlin did not bring changes to the already strong securitizing discourse promoted by AfD on the refugee crisis, nor to the kind of emergency measures demanded. Nonetheless, because the terrorist act was perpetrated by an asylum seeker in the name of Islam and aimed at a Christmas market, the representation of the event in the framework of the clash of civilizations and its causality related to the open-border refugee policy were automatically articulated in AfD reactions. Poggenburg, for instance, constructed a text in which Islam is equaled to Islamism, and it is at war against Christian-Western values:

This attack clearly shows that terror has finally arrived in Germany. [...] It is the direct result of a policy of multiculturalism at any price, and yet the price is the safety of our citizens. As things stand, it can be assumed that it is a deliberate attack on our Christian-Western culture and our values through Islamism. Anyone who continues to deny that Islam is directly linked to Islamist terror is complicit in any further casualty. (Poggenburg 2016a)

Gauland added to this framing of the attack as a civilizational struggle the causal link to the refugee policy, thus, demanding for the closure of the borders and the deportation of rejected asylum seekers.

We must finally realize that this terrible act is also a consequence of the loss of control at the German borders. We have always pointed out that the refugee policy of Angela Merkel poses very great dangers. A state that is unable to protect its borders in an emergency situation has failed. [...] I want to make it very clear that such terrorist attacks are not an isolated case. They are directly related to the uncontrolled immigration from the Muslim area to Germany. The borders must finally be controlled, so that no one can enter illegally, so that there can be no multiple identities, so that police-known asylum seekers can be immediately rejected. (Gauland 2016c)

Finally, Pazderski completed the security grammar by ascribing the perceived terrorist threat posed by the refugee/migrant with urgency and immediacy, asking the government to grant exceptional powers to the security forces in order to perform ethnic profiling in order to surveil and monitor Arab and Muslims and prevent new terrorist attacks. “Especially in times of asylum crisis, in which the crimes have increased enormously by migrants, the 'ethnic profiling' must necessarily be included in the police toolbox”. (Pazderski 2017)

#### **4.2. Conclusion**

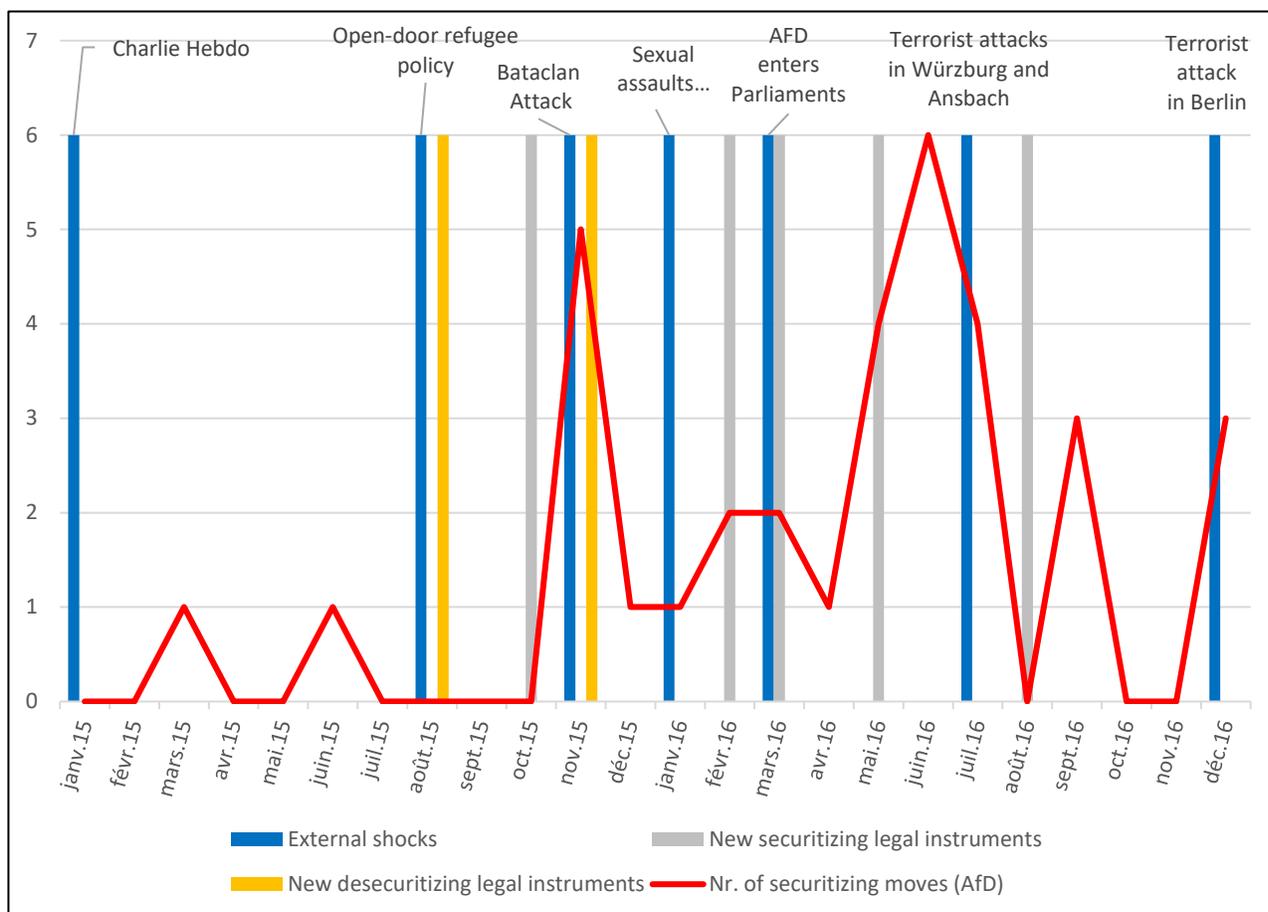
The AfD construction of meaning on the refugee crisis shows a clear consistency during the period studied, with a clear securitizing aim and with little ambiguity, as opposed to the Chancellor's text. In fact, the ambiguity found in some statements made by AfD representatives disappears after June 2015 when AfD chairman and co-founder Bernd Lucke, an economist and university professor who opposed the Euro and the EU supranational structure and who was more interested in maintaining AfD as an Eurosceptic party rather than as an Islamophobic and anti-immigration party, left with other like-minded cadres. Until that moment, there was an internal struggle on the main discursive lines defended by the party, with the group of leaders represented by Gauland and Petry pushing for a nationalist political agenda. Once this group defeated the Eurosceptic faction, AfD redefined itself in the German and European political arena as a party defending tradition, culture, Christianity and state sovereignty. Given this change in the political program, AfD could position itself as the main political opponent to Merkel's refugee policy after September 2015 and capitalize in electoral terms the increasing popular discontent with the refugee crisis.

The position of AfD as the securitizing actor is reinforced by the large number of securitizing moves performed during the 2015-2016 period, all of which construct the refugee as a security subject. Interestingly, the bulk of these moves (34 out of 36) are performed after the adoption of the open-door refugee policy, which provides support to the notion of securitization as

a causal mechanism. This social mechanism was triggered by the emergence of a sense of discontinuity in the collective Self at first -as the ontological security school theorizes- in response to the increasing number of refugees arriving in Germany abruptly. This can be observed in Figure 10, in which the first pick of securitizing moves happens between October and November 2015. But then, as result of the impact of the violent external shocks of Cologne and of Würzburg and Ansbach in 2016, the securitizing moves became more numerous and predominantly characterized in physical security frames.

In this period, the ontological frames are not discontinued, rather they become intertwined with new representations of refugees as sources of violent crime and terrorism. This characteristic of AfD's security discourse allows us to deduce that ontological frames of securitization, in their condition of arguments for mobilizing public opinion to demand government authorities the adoption of emergency measures, are not as powerful as the securitizing moves framed in physical security terms. Thus, when the socio-historical context provides elements to construct the public issue as an immediate threat to physical harm, these arguments are going to be more intensively exploited by the securitizing actor not occupying a position of institutional power. This complements Kinnvall assertion that in times of ontological insecurity, religion and nationalism become strong rallying objects for important sectors of society. While this is true, I argue that physical security threats are better arguments for mobilizing people behind a religious-nationalistic political agenda.

**Figure 10. Securitization moves performed by AfD representatives, in context. 2015-2016**



The intensification of the securitizing discourse using physical security frames does not overshadow the fact that for AfD immigration of cultural and ethnic aliens resulting from the refugee crisis is ultimately a source of ontological insecurity. The analysis of AfD's discourse does not show only the use of securitization as a strategy to capture the vote of those people opposing the government's open-border policy towards refugees, or the vote of sectors of society who embrace xenophobic views based on economic and internal security fears. It also reflects a deeper political motivation founded on a conservative ideology in which the international geopolitical order consolidated in the XIX century, and based on the nation-state as the superior form of socio-political organization, is being eroded by globalization. This erosion has its most clear expression in the state of human mobility which has emerged as a major force in the world in the last decades, transforming most industrialized countries in multicultural societies. (Massey et al., 1993: 431) Being Germany not a traditional immigration country, it is not surprising that a strong political and social reaction to massive migratory flows could emerge in it. Socially, that expression is most

evident in the *Patriotic Europeans against the Islamisation of the West* (Pegida), a right-wing populist street movement that originated in Dresden, Saxony, in 2014. Politically, the reaction took longer to appear, because anti-immigration positions are linked to xenophobia and racism which are a great public concern due to its relation to Germany's Nazi past and to the Shoah. This explains why AfD did not incorporate the Pegida movement, which was violently anti-immigration and Islamophobic- as a political platform and rather tried to take distances from it. Nevertheless, once AfD gained some legitimacy as a political actor, it started to take a more radical discourse that channeled into the national debate strong and vocal opposition towards migrants, asylum-seekers, refugees and Muslims.

In this sense, the analysis of AfD construction of text around the refugee crisis reveals two clear pillars. First, a political reaction to a perceived transformation of Germany as a state, through the cession of sovereign powers to the EU and other international regimes, and in German national identity, due to the consolidation of Muslim communities as members of the nation. In order to confront these developments and bring the situation back to an imagined past state of full sovereignty and cultural and ethnic purity, AfD politicians present the foreigner and the Muslim, as well as the traditional German parties which favor immigration and multiculturalism, as threats that need to be contained. This securitizing process then becomes not the reaction to a particular and momentaneous emergency, but as a sustained political process of resisting structural change. In this fashion, the frame for securitization is ontological security and it is based on both collective identity and state sovereignty -understood in Foucault's biopolitical notion, as the institutional framework defining the political community; and in Huysmans' social-contract kind of notion, as the institution bringing social order to the chaos of the state of nature-. This securitization process is characterized by Schmittian politics, as it creates an extreme polarization in society in which friends and enemies are identified according to the position that they take on the immigration, asylum and multiculturalism issues. This is why AfD uses terms charged with radical meaning to define as inimical the SPD, the CDU and other moderate parties, such as *Altparteien* (Poggenburg 2016b), a term used by the far-right to attack moderate parties during the Weimar Republic.

At the same time, the securitization process is articulated in order to construct the Muslim immigrant/refugee as an uncivilized enemy of the German state and the German society, and in this fashion to trigger a socio-psychological process of abjection. This frame of securitization of the refugee based on its construction of an existential threat to state security and internal security, provides the conditions of possibility for an extreme form of othering. The Muslim refugee/immigrant is constructed as both an external and an internal enemy, because he is both

inside the social community but outside the political community, thus disrupting the capacity of the state to maintain inimical subjects outside the territory and guarantee the internal order. The result is the abjection of the refugee-Other, a political de-humanization of the refugee in which his inimical nature overshadows the causes of his forced displacement as well as the humanitarian crisis he endures at EU borders. De-humanization then suppresses feelings of empathy from the Self towards the Other in a way that security measures that could cause harm to him could be called for, promoted and implemented as well as justified.

## **5. THE ROLE OF THE GERMAN MEDIA IN THE (DE)SECURITIZATION OF THE REFUGEE CRISIS**

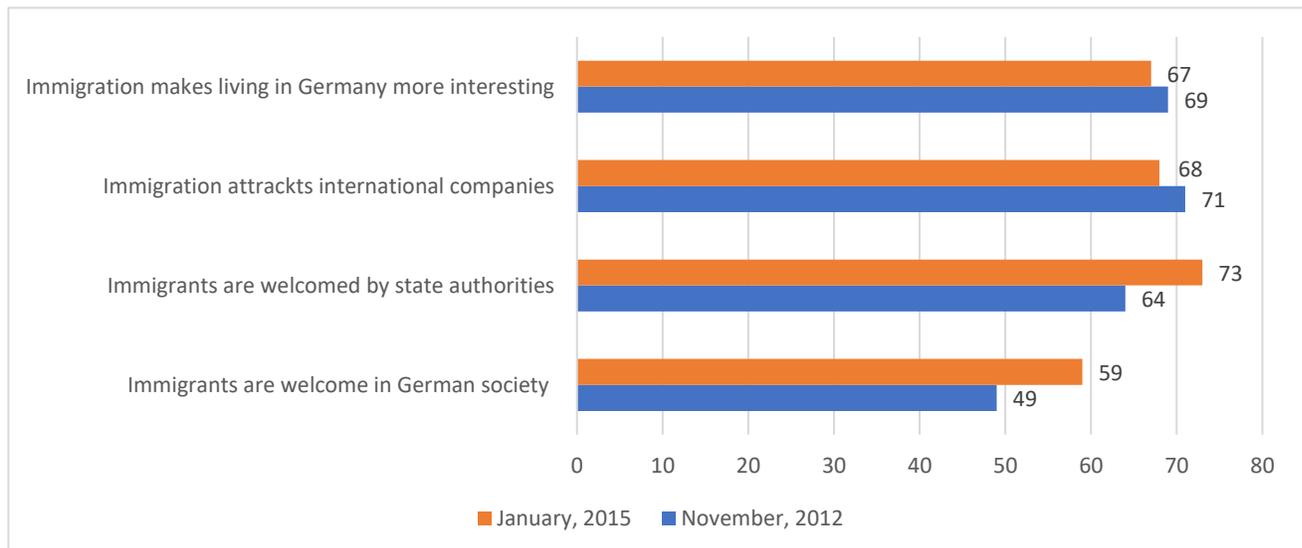
Mass media is a reflection of the social response to processes of securitization and desecuritization in two forms: it amplifies public opinion and it initiates securitizing moves. Through editorials and written opinions, journalists reflect how any citizen articulates his/her worldviews according to individual and group identities, social structures and the influence of context. In this role, journalists amplify the voices of sectors of society that share similar values, beliefs and group identities, and as such, they are granted authoritative power to speak to political elites in the name of society. Furthermore, and thanks to this socially recognized power, journalists have also the capacity to influence and mold public opinion and thus to socialize a specific construction of social reality and lead sectors of society to demand political action accordingly; that is, to initiate securitizing moves and urge political elites to sanction securitization processes. This double role of amplifiers and securitizing actors makes widely-circulated national newspapers a suitable reflection of the active role of the audience in the (de)securitization of forced migration, as a facilitating or a constraining factor for a successful securitization, on the one hand, and as a securitizing actor on its own right, on the other hand.

### **5.1. The text construction in Der Tagesspiegel.**

The analysis of the 57 opinion and commentary articles sampled on Der Tagesspiegel during the period 2015-2016 shows three moments in the discourse construction. The first moment, which goes from January to October 2015, reflects the spirit of the welcoming culture that was present in German society by not using securitizing text. Due to the suffering of refugees at the borders of Europe and the international context in which massive forced migration was happening, the newspaper's articles constructed the refugee situation as a humanitarian crisis and the solidarity of the German people and the Federal government as showing the humanist and open nature of

German society. In this way, the discourse of Der Tagesspiegel supports the Federal government approach to refugees, by not closing the borders and providing to them international protection, thus amplifying the general public opinion. In fact, in this period, the tone of the articles coincides with the popular will to support refugees and the welcoming environment for migrants in general, as evidenced by the opinion-polls, a context that enabled the desecuritizing discourse of the Federal government and its materialization in the open-door refugee policy. Polls showed that, by January 2015, 59 % of the population welcomed immigrants, as compared to 49 % in 2012, and that 73 % of the population thought state authorities were also welcoming immigrants, as compared to 64 % in 2012. (Emnid/ Bertelsmann Stiftung 2015)

**Figure 11. Changes in Germany's Welcoming Culture between November 2012 and January 2015**



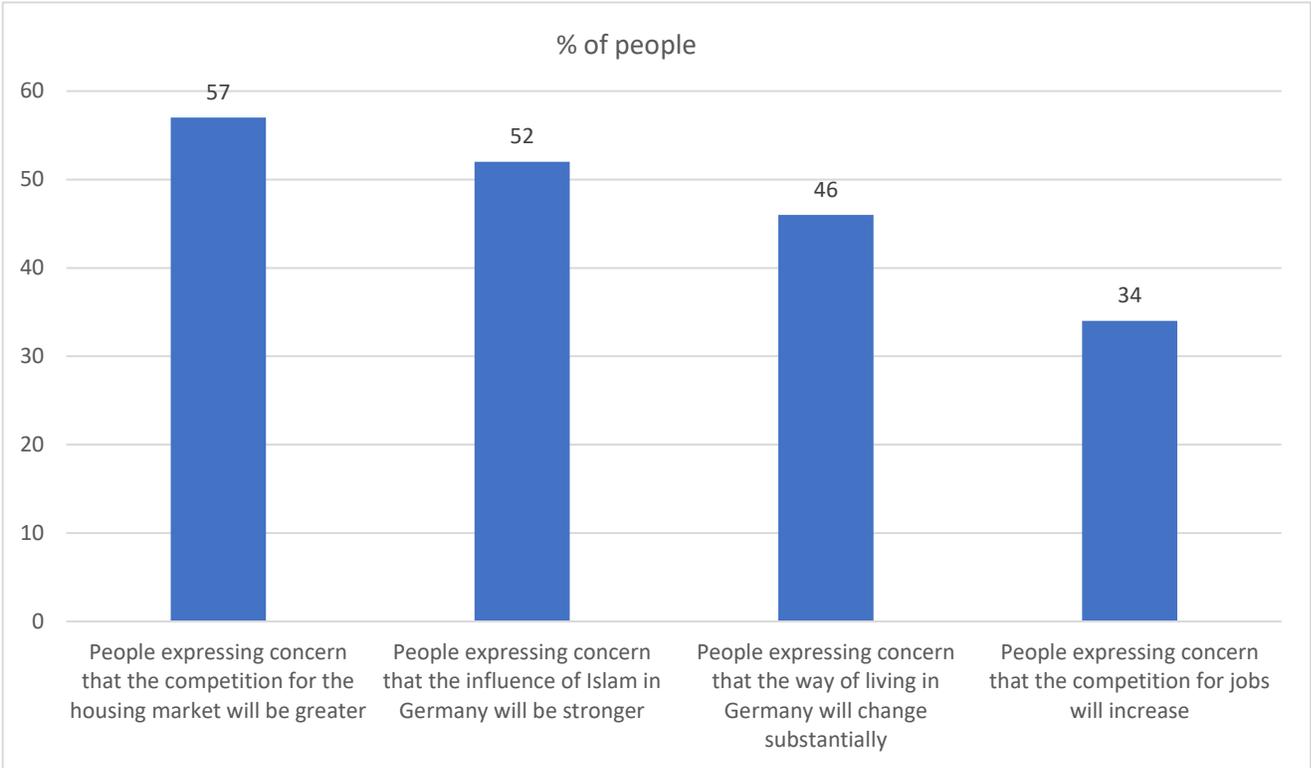
A second moment is found from October 2015 to July 2016 in which Der Tagesspiegel's adopts a securitizing discourse on the refugee crisis, which uses at first an ontological security frame and later a physical security frame for securitization. In this period, eight instances of securitizing constructions of text can be found, in which the newspaper uses mainly the societal security and the internal security frames to construct the refugee as a threat. Of these instances, only one securitizing move is observed, framed as internal security, in which Der Tagesspiegel demands a closure of German borders to stop the refugee flow, as a response to the Cologne incident.

**Table 8. Instances of securitizing text in Der Taggespiegel's discourse**

Type of securitization	Securitization frame	Number of instances	Securitizing moves
Ontological	Economic security	1	0
	Political security	1	0
	Societal security	3	0
Physical	State security	0	0
	Internal security	3	1

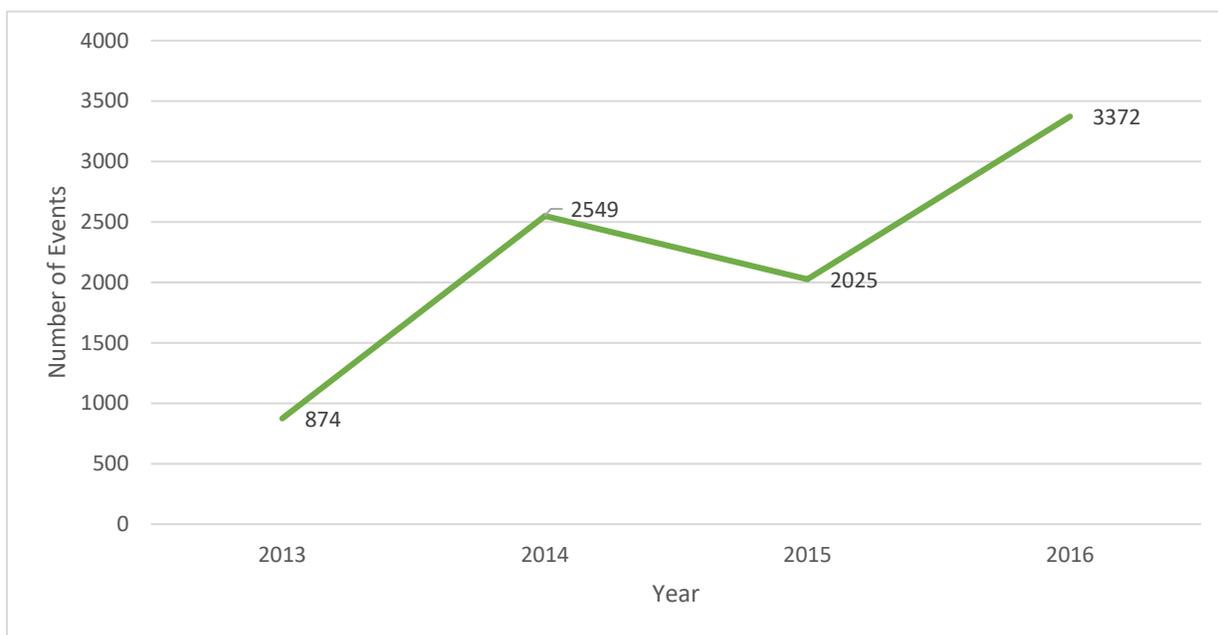
This securitizing turn in Der Taggespiegel's discourse starts in October 2015, as an expression of ontological insecurity. Within this frame, the newspaper constructs German collective identity as a referent object, threatened by the massive arrival of culturally different foreigners. Due to this new representation of the refugee crisis as a subject of security, the newspaper starts a tough contestation of the Federal government's open-border refugee policy, asking for restrictive turn following the example of other European countries. The change in Der Taggespiegel's position towards the refugee crisis corresponds to an amplification of the anxiety that appeared in German society during this time. According to opinion polls, by December 2015, the majority of Germans were concerned with the potential of social problems resulting by the growing number of refugees arriving to the country. In particular, one of two citizens were worried about the pressure that accommodating refugees was going to cause in housing availability and about the continuity and reproduction of German collective identity, mainly its Christian roots, due to the Muslim faith professed by the majority of refugees coming from Middle East. Four in ten Germans were also worried about the continuity of their way of living, while three in ten were worried about an increase in job competition.

**Figure 12. Public opinion on the problems associated with the refugee flow. December 2015**



By January 2016, Der Tagesspiegel's discourse changes its main securitization frame from ontological security to physical security. In the new securitizing construction, the refugee is represented as a direct and indirect threat to internal security. As a direct threat, the refugee is predicated as producing an increase in criminal offenses and a sense of physical insecurity in the population. This construction is a reaction to the Cologne incident. As an indirect threat, the refugee is made responsible for the drastic rise in xenophobic and violent reactions in the population, which amounted from 874 incidents nationwide in 2013, to 3,372 in 2016, thus provoking great concern on the future prospect of public order, the rule of Law and German social cohesion.

**Figure 13. Evolution of politically motivated crime associated with immigration in Germany. 2013-2016**



Finally, the third discursive moment is found between July and December 2016. In this period, Der Tagesspiegel's discourse takes an additional turn from a securitizing to a desecuritizing construction of text around the refugee. The newspaper display efforts to contest any causal explanation between the ethnic, cultural and religious identity markers of the refugee and the alleged increase in terror attacks and criminal offenses. This change of discourse seems to be motivated by an increasing concern in Der Tagesspiegel with the political rise of AfD, and as such, it reflects an effort to resist the far-right discourse that makes a direct link between the ethnic and cultural characteristics of the refugee with the surge in violent crime and terrorism.

#### **5.1.1. Non-securitizing period: January-September 2015**

Until September 2015, Der Tagesspiegel did not articulated text presenting the refugee situation as a security threat. On the contrary, they framed the refugee situation in humanitarian terms, discussing the global context in which the refugee crisis is happening as well as the causes of displacement. In the same line, they referred to the right to seek for asylum as a human right and recognized the vulnerable situation in which asylum seekers arrive in the EU, due to the lack of regular channels for claiming asylum. Another interesting element is that they figured the refugee not as only young males, but as a diverse social group including women and children.

But it has been evident for some time that people in Germany are significantly farther than some people have thought. That they have taken note of the fact that it does not leave

Europe untouched when more than 60 million people are on the run worldwide - half of them children and adolescents. (Der Taggespiegel 2015b)

To this humanitarian construction of the crisis, Der Taggespiegel added a representation of German society as open, solidary and responsible. The newspaper praised the wide humanitarian and voluntary response of the German people in helping asylum seekers and sustained that the social and psychological conditions avoided a popular xenophobic and violent reaction, as opposed to the social response to the refugee crisis of 1991-1992, when forced migrants from the Balkans arrived massively. This changed social conditions were presented as a result of Germany's strong economy and low unemployment rates, as well as to the welcoming culture of German society. Because of this social context, Der Taggespiegel called for integration policies including language courses, professional training and recognition of education diplomas, so that refugees could be absorbed into the job market. In this fashion, the newspaper saw refugees as an economic opportunity for Germany in the face of declining demographic rates and of an EU immigration policy.

Today the economy is booming. Never had more people work. Unlike 1992, no one has to be afraid that refugees could dispute their jobs. Due to the demographic development, Germany benefits from immigration. (Der Taggespiegel 2015a)

This context allowed Der Taggespiegel to celebrate and defend the Federal Chancellor's decision to keep open the borders to asylum seekers, suspend the application of the Dublin Regulation and not follow the EU securitizing trend, in the face of criticism from the CSU Bayern Prime Minister, Hörst Seehoffer. Der Tagesspiegel perceived Merkel's decision as pragmatic and correct due to the inevitable reality of the massive influx of refugees from Hungary.

On 21 August, Angela Merkel did not negligently suspend by the Dublin Regulation, which stipulates that refugees must be registered in the first EU country they enter. The Federal Government was urged to do so by the country's completely overburdened interior ministers, because the police were simply overrun by the refugees. (Der Taggespiegel 2015c)

At the same time, the newspaper supported the Government decision of sending asylum-seekers coming from the Balkans to reception centers where they can then easily be deported, for they were considered to be economic migrants who had no legal basis for claiming asylum in Germany. Although they recognized that Roma could be among the asylum seekers from the Balkans, they opposed the idea that they should be given asylum arguing that discriminated minorities in this region are receiving EU cooperation. Furthermore, Der Taggespiegel also supported the

government efforts to promote a more even refugee burden-sharing mechanism within the EU as well as to reduce the number of asylum seekers coming to the EU. But for that, they did not support the adoption of security policies and closed borders. Instead, they called for attacking the root causes of forced displacement and increasing the funding for international organizations and the cooperation to countries neighboring Syria so that refugees would not have to migrate to the EU.

### **5.1.2. Securitizing period: October 2015-July 2016**

By October 2015, a change in the tone of the articles becomes evident and eight moments of articulation of a securitizing discourse construction can be identified in Der Taggespiegel articles, of which only one can be considered as a securitizing move, as it asks for the immediate closure of German borders, which is a measure involving a rupture with the existing legal framework as well as the use of the state's security apparatus. The reasons for this change are threefold: the seemingly disordered and unprepared response of the government to the refugee crisis, the rise in xenophobic violence, and the perception of refugees as being a source of physical insecurity for German citizens. First, the large number of culturally different people being granted asylum in Germany and being distributed by the government around the country is presented as causing pressure on public services and social discontent. In this way, the refugee starts to be depicted not in humanitarian terms, as victims, but in security terms, as cultural aliens, illiterate and low-skilled.

If, in large numbers, people of other religions and cultures, the illiterate, the poorly educated and the traumatized, who in most cases do not know our language, are pushing into the community, then it is about more than preserving the status quo. Then all the certainties are questioned: who receives first scarce kindergarten places? how is security ensured? who takes precedence in the allocation of social housing and employment promotion measures? (Der Taggespiegel 2015d)

This deteriorating popular mood is then presented as a result of the incapacity of the government for its apparent lack of preparation for a challenge that was voluntarily accepted and to its perceived incapacity to coordinate adequately the humanitarian response. This perceived incapacity of the state to govern the situation is accompanied by concerns on the ability of the state to control its external borders and provide certainty and internal order to social community.

Whether "we can do it" or the statements that there is no upper limit for asylum applications and that it is not possible to build a 3000-kilometer fence around Germany: interlocutors do not acknowledge them with admiration nor curious questions as for what they mean,

but rather with incredulous astonishment. The protection of borders and the control of who comes to their own country are at the heart of state sovereignty. And Germany seriously doubts that it is capable of doing so? (Der Taggespiegel 2015e)

Second, the text also shows an increasing concern over the political and social polarization produced by the refugee policy which threatens social cohesion. The violent xenophobic incidents against refugee shelters and the growth in popular support for the AfD led Der Taggespiegel to express concern for the future of German democracy and internal peace. Although right-wing extremism is condemned, the commentators also attribute their actions to the government policies. The lack of fast integration programs for refugees and policies for fighting right-wing extremism is mentioned along the government's asylum policy for promoting fears of cultural alienation in the population.

It is still puzzling what Angela Merkel actually wants to "create" with regard to the refugee problem. What does integration mean? Is it about a political commitment to the Protestant ethic of a new "leading culture" or just a gigantic job creation program, as the merger of employment agency and asylum authority suggests? The Chancellor knows that most Germans and their whispering intellectuals fear cultural alienation even more than the threat of job competition. (Der Taggespiegel 2015g)

In these constructions, ontological insecurity caused by the open-border refugee policy and the massive arrival of culturally different foreigners is presented together with a construction of right-wing extremism as causing physical insecurity to refugees, who in this case are also presented as valued, referent objects. This shows an ambiguous representation of the situation, both in securitizing and desecuritizing texts, and a growing concern on the capacity of both the state and of society to maintain the social cohesion and the existing social contract in the face of a changing social and cultural environment. As a consequence of this change of tone, the government's refugee policy starts to be criticized and portrayed as disordered and uncontrolled, thus allowing the influx of both refugees and irregular economic migrants. In this fashion, the refugee becomes increasingly figured through the binary genuine/illegitimate which shows a growing distrust on the capacity or will of the government to enforce asylum procedures. This decaying level of trust in the government and the state coincides with increasing dissatisfaction with some of the government measures affecting the interests of citizens, such as the expropriations for building refugee shelters, and with the lack of results from the government efforts to redistribute refugees within the EU.

Third, the incident in Cologne on New Year's Eve reinforced the change of mood in Der Taggespiegel discourse against the government's refugee policy and added a frame for securitization by which the refugees are constructed as sources of physical insecurity. After Cologne, the text construction consolidates the notion of refugees as ontological insecurity sources due to their cultural, religious and ethnic identity markers (Arab, Muslim), while introducing the notion that refugees are also a public order threat. For instance, an article published on January 8 constructs the refugee as people coming from illiberal states with no knowledge of German laws and social conventions, especially the relation between sexes, and thus unprepared for the rule of law. (Der Taggespiegel 2016a) Similarly, an article of 22 January presented the refugee situation as dangerous and as leading to internal security problems as well as to the rise of xenophobia and extreme right-wing populism. In response it calls for following the example of other EU countries and closing the German borders, and reinstalling migratory controls.

The mood in the country has changed. The benevolent approach -the citizens now see- does not work, either at the external borders or at home. That is why a "European solution" is actually getting closer to the refugee crisis, only in a different way than the Chancellor promised: not a solidary distribution but "closed borders". In theory, there were four options to curb the influx. [...] If that does not work, Germany will have as a fourth option to close the national border and control the entry. (Der Taggespiegel 2016b)

By March 2016, the critique to the government's open-border policy added a new element as the commentators were presenting it as the cause for AfD's electoral success. In the wake of the double-digit votes for AfD in Hesse, an article in Der Taggespiegel asserted that the opposition to refugee policy was the main subject mobilizing AfD voters. The disruption of the political environment provoked by these results were also presented as influencing the government's hardening of its discourse on the refugee, calling for more restrictive measures. This criticism became more acute after the signing of the EU-Turkey agreement on migration, which was pushed by Germany, and which was presented by Der Taggespiegel as contradicting the 1951 Refugee Convention and deterring forced migrants from claiming the right to asylum in the EU. This change of discourse is strongly criticized for showing a lack of consistency and for going against the humanitarian frame that was previously given to the open-border policy. An article referred to the new government discourse as "deceptive, contradictory, inhuman and cynical." (Der Taggespiegel 2016c)

Perhaps the pact with Turkey was necessary because it was the least of all evils. Perhaps it also had to counteract the impression that Merkel is isolated within the EU. But that does

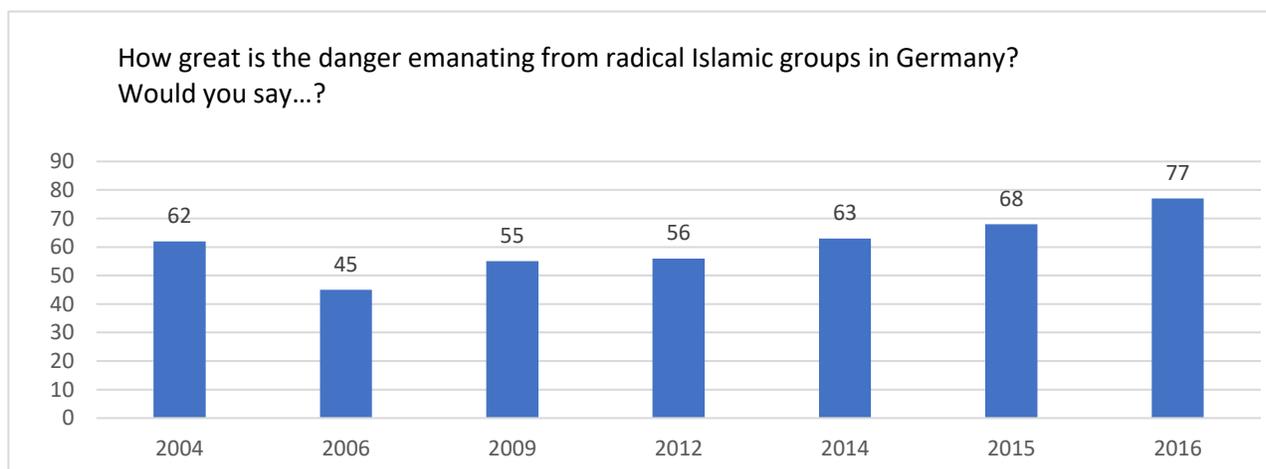
not relieve the Chancellor of the obligation to explain her changes in refugee policy. She has endured bitter learning processes, but now she has to withstand the dichotomy between humane aspiration and inhuman practice [...]. (Der Taggespiegel 2016c)

After the implementation of the EU-Turkey agreement, the newspaper recognized that fewer refugees were arriving to Germany. Nevertheless, Der Taggespiegel also recognized that the hostile popular attitudes towards refugees have not changed after the Cologne incident and that was reflected in the increasing support for the AfD. In this fashion, the hostile attitudes were said to have nothing to do with the number of refugees, and instead were attributed to a perceived general sense of fear among the population. This sense of fear was not only the result of the events in Cologne, but it was also the result of the spread of fake news in the Internet where false violent incidents were being made up by right-wing movements and attributed to refugees, and, most importantly, of the increase in Islamist terror attacks in Europe. In an article of 17 July discussing the terrorist attacks in Nice, terrorism is presented as being the greatest security concern for German society. “Not only in France but also in Germany the feeling of being threatened is increasing. [...] 73 percent of Germans are currently afraid of terrorism. [...] Compared to the previous year, the fear of terror of Germans has increased by 21 percent.” (Der Taggespiegel 2016g) In this context, the figuration of the refugee as Muslim allowed commentators in Der Taggespiegel to construct the linkage between the refugee’s cultural identity and the risk of terrorist attacks in Germany. An article of 10 April on case of the perpetrator of the Brussels’ Airport attack of 22 March asserted that: “[...] the Brussels bomber Salah Abdeslam was stationed undisturbed in an Ulmer refugee shelter.” (Der Taggespiegel 2016d)

### **5.1.3. Desecuritizing period: July-December 2016**

The feeling of unease created by the link between Islam and the refugee crisis with Islamist terrorism increased importantly after the attacks of Ansbach and Würzburg, thus strengthening a trend that had been growing in German society since the occurrence of the terrorist attacks in Europe, mainly in neighboring France, during 2014, 2015 and the first months of 2016.

### **Figure 14. Public perception on the threat of Islamist terrorism in Germany. August 2016**

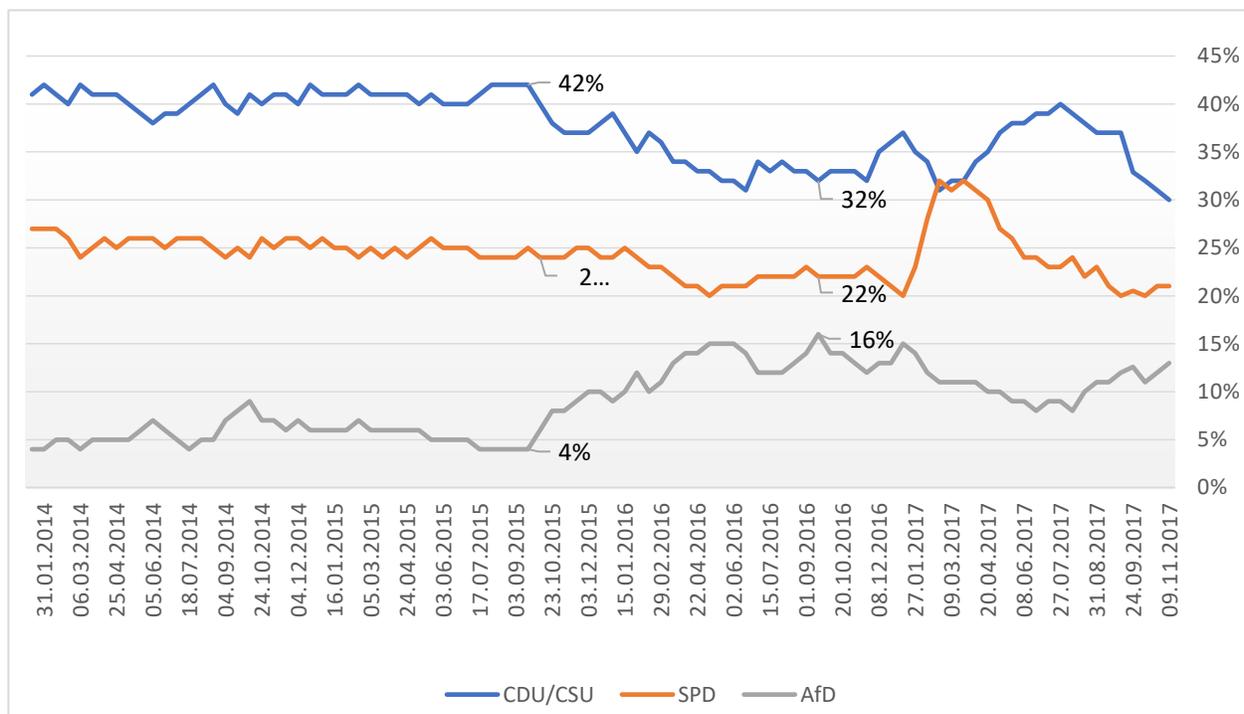


Nevertheless, the articles of *Der Tagesspiegel* made an effort not to portray neither the refugee nor the Muslim community as potential causes of terrorism: “The refugees who came to Germany in their overwhelming majority are neither criminals nor extremists.” (*Der Tagesspiegel* 2016g) This tendency to de-securitize Islam and the refugees can be identified from summer 2016 to the end of the year in the articles of *Der Tagesspiegel*. In fact, a strategy of replacement can be observed, by which the newspaper presented right-wing populism and extremism as threats to German social cohesion, institutions and values, and to the refugees and the Muslim community themselves. The journalists of *Der Tagesspiegel* show consistently their concern on the increasing Islamophobia predicated by AfD, Pegida, neo-Nazi groups and important sectors of the population.

There can also be observed a renewed debate on the reasons behind the electoral success of AfD. In the context of the Berlin and Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania elections, one commentator contests the causal relation between the electoral results of the AfD and the government’s refugee policy as flawed. In an article of 02 September, it is recognized that there is a correlation between the rise of the AfD and the open-border policy, but that the reason for the increasing support for AfD was also found on the discontent with the EU and the economic policies of the government. “In September 2014, a full year before the start of the refugee crisis, 22 percent of Germans said they could imagine voting for the AfD at the next federal election.” (*Der Tagesspiegel* 2016h) Another article issued after the Berlin elections, on 12 September, portrayed the situation somehow differently and attributed the AfD success to the opposition to the government’s open-border policy: “And so the Berlin election result becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. The massive losses of the CDU and the high result of the AfD are in any case attributed

to the refugee policy of the Chancellor [...]”. (Der Tagesspiegel 2016i) In any case, opinion polls showed that AfD voting intention increased from 4 % in September 2015 to 16 % in September 2019 and that this trend was correlated to the growing popular discontent with the refugee crisis and the government’s refugee policy.

**Figure 15. Evolution of voting intention in Germany (CDU/CSU, SPD and AfD). 2014-2017**



Finally, after the attacks at the Christmas Market in Berlin, on 19 December 2016, a new desecuritizing effort is performed by Der Tagesspiegel, through the publication of an article in which four refugees coming from Muslim countries, who are journalists, were given the opportunity to talk about their living situation and their vision of the terrorist attacks. In this fashion, Der Tagesspiegel aimed at presenting the refugee as professional, who shares the same fear and disgust for religious fanaticism and violence. As expected, the refugees were also scared that the public opinion will become hostile to refugees and that the Government will hardened even more the refugee policy, thus affecting them. Therefore, they called for the government to implement more controls on the identity and background of the asylum seekers, warning that there might be

radical Islamists infiltrating the country. Another article of 06 January 2017, dealing also with the Berlin terrorist attacks followed this desecuritizing line and raised concerns for the for the stronger security discourse that emerged in the government and in the moderate parties after the attack, and which is portrayed by Der Taggespiegel as aiming at not losing more voters to the AfD.

So far, Germany has not succumbed to the temptation of political overreaction. The measures taken in asylum and refugee policies - such as facilitating deportations and declaring the Balkans to safe third countries - were moderate. But the desire to show "clear edge", intensifies with the approaching election dates [...]. Politics easily gets into a tightrope the more humanitarian action is taken. A change in political culture is emerging. (Der Taggespiegel 2017)

## 5.2. The text construction in Die Welt

In contrast to the trend observed in Der Taggespiegel, in Die Welt we see a more pronounced tendency to securitize the refugee crisis, but mostly in ontological terms. In fact, while in Der Taggespiegel we found 8 instances of securitizing text out of 57 articles analyzed, in Die Welt the study shows 24 instances of securitization out of the 56 articles sampled. The majority -16 cases- falls into the category of ontological insecurity, with five having economic security as the frame for securitization, nine having the ordering capacity of the state (political security) as frame, and two having identity (societal security) as frame. A minority -ten cases- falls in the category of physical security, with eight cases using the internal security frame for securitization, and two using the state security frame. Finally, of all the cases, seven are securitizing moves, for they follow the grammar of security as stated by CoS. (Buzan, Waever and Wilde 1998) These securitizing moves were framed in political security (two instances), state security (two instances) and internal security frames (three instances).

**Table 9. Instances of securitizing text in Die Welt's discourse**

Type of securitization	Securitization frame	Number of instances	Securitizing moves
Ontological	Economic security	5	0
	Political security	9	2
	Societal security	2	0
Physical	State security	2	2

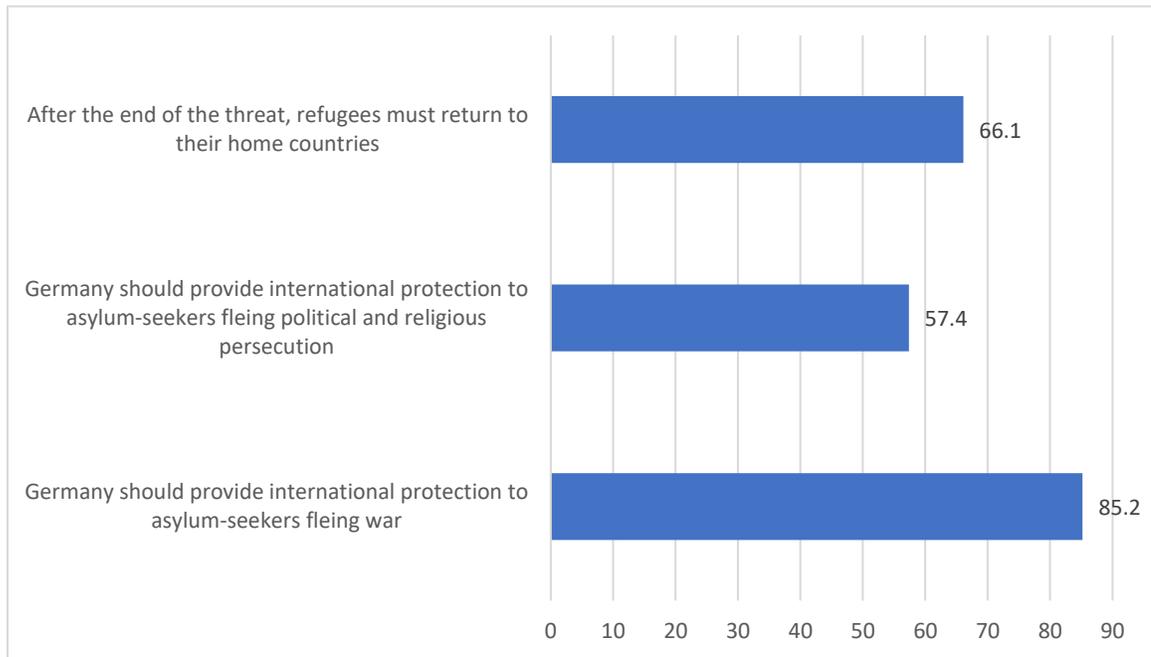
	Internal security	8	3
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Die Welt's construction of text in security terms has three characteristics. First, the securitizing text starts to be articulated after the government adopts the open border policy, in September 2015. This securitization process presents the influx of refugees mainly as a threat to Germany's economy and fiscal position, but also as a threat to the cohesion and political future of the EU. This is the result of an editorial line that shows a clear neoliberal inclination, which constantly calls for the reduction of the size of the bureaucracy and the state, for the de-regulation and liberalization of the labor market and for fiscal austerity. This economically orthodox position leads Die Welt not to oppose migration, but rather to favor an immigration policy oriented -as in the Canadian model- to attract high-skilled workers in order to improve Germany's economic competitiveness. In fact, the way in which Die Welt articles construct Germany's national identity is often related to economic markers -a welfare country, an export-oriented economy, an economic international power, the leading economy of the EU and so on- as well as to political and social markers. Given the editorial line and the imagined collective identity of the country, Die Welt fears that the large numbers of refugees arriving, which are presented as mostly poor and low-skilled, would not be integrated in the German economy and thus would overburden the welfare system, putting in jeopardy the country's fiscal discipline, potentially leading to rising taxes and contracting new sovereign debt, and affecting economic growth. In this sense, the meaning attributed to the refugee crisis presents it as a source of ontological insecurity using the economic security frame.

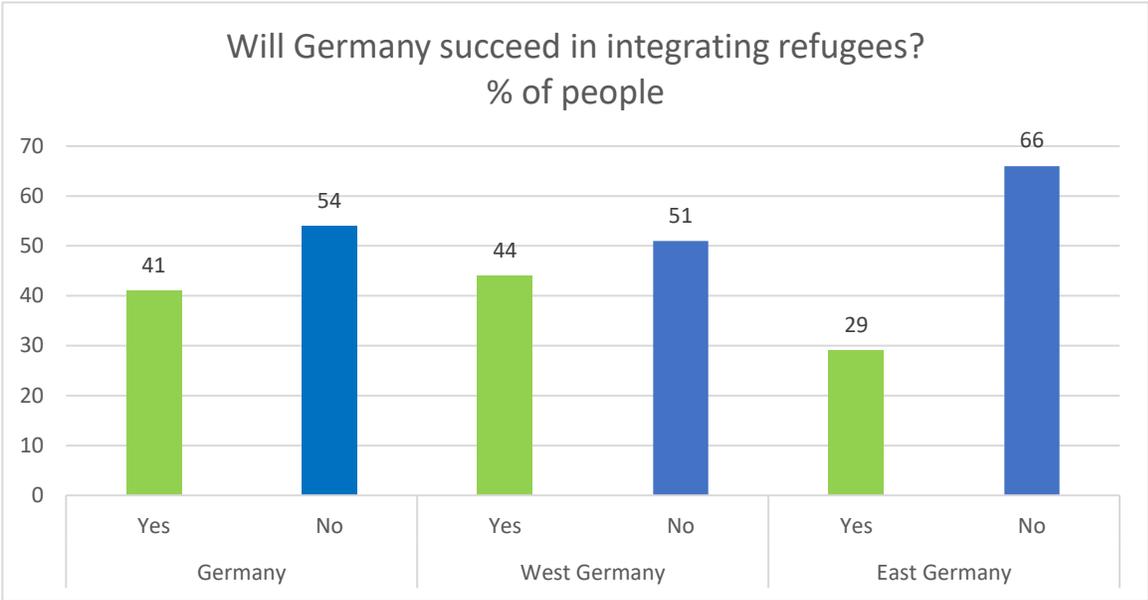
The move in Die Welt's discourse to the construction of securitizing text is also correlated, as in the case of Der Tagesspiegel, with a change in popular support for the Federal government's refugee policy caused by a sense of incapacity of the state to cope with the large numbers of refugees arriving, as well as with the continuity of Germany's collective identity. For instance, by December 2015, the majority of Germans were doubting that the government's integration policy would be successful due to the ethnic, cultural and religious markers of the refugees, and to the perceived lack of capacity of the state to duly implement it. Although the polls show still by November 2015, an overwhelming support for awarding asylum to people fleeing war (85.2 % of the population) and a majority support for awarding asylum for reasons of political and religious persecution (57.4 % of the population), two in three German citizens (66.1 %) thought that once the situation improves in the countries of origin, refugees should be sent back, thus rejecting the possibility of their permanent integration. (Marktforschung 2015) Interestingly, the distrust on the government's policy is much greater in East Germany than in West Germany, where two in three

citizens believe the policy will fail, a fact that serves to understand the rise of Pegida in Saxony and the electoral success of AfD in the states of the former German Democratic Republic.

**Figure 16. Public Opinion on Asylum in Germany. November 2015**

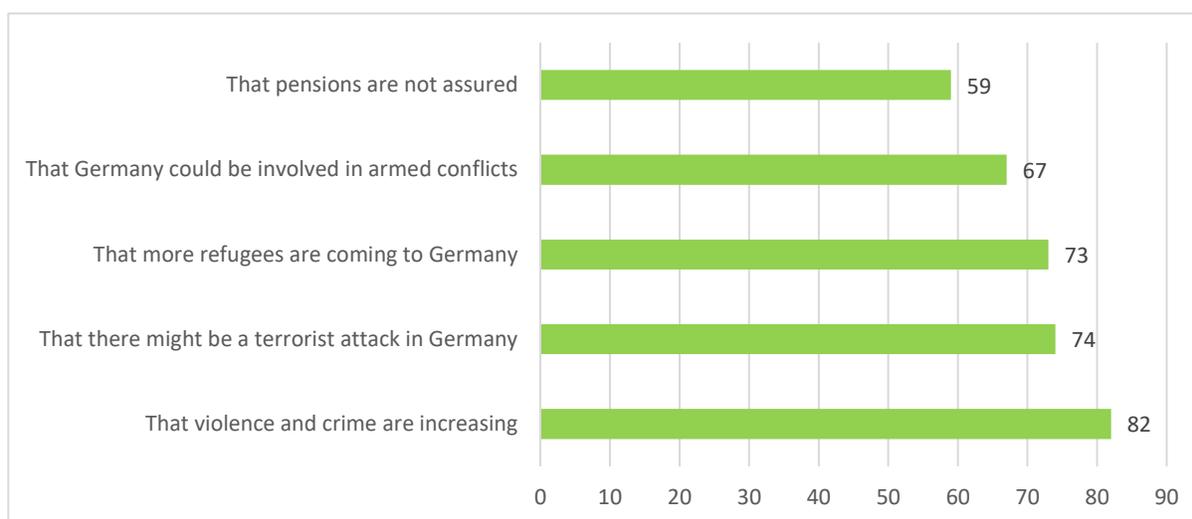


**Figure 17. Public opinion on the prospects of success of integrating refugees in Germany. December 2015**



Second, after the external shocks provoked by the criminal incidents in Cologne in 2016 New Year's Eve and the terrorist attacks of July 2016, Die Welt adds a further construction of the refugee movement as an internal security and public order question, because of its potential use as a vehicle for the spread of terrorism, on the one hand, and because some refugees are portrayed as having problems with interiorizing the German legal order and the social conventions, on the other. This construction coincides with the fact that by that time general public opinion had as major security concerns the incidence of violent crime and terrorist acts.

**Figure 18. The greatest security concerns for German citizens at the beginning of 2016**



Nevertheless, in contradistinction to the more salient representation of the refugee as an ontological threat, his construction within the physical security frame is less predominant and contingent to the context. Interestingly, the religious and ethnic markers of the refugee are not highlighted in his representation as a physical threat. This is the result of an effort by Die Welt not to construct a linkage between the refugee's identity markers and the occurrence of criminal offenses and terrorist acts, which also echoes Der Tagesspiegel's similar efforts. Instead, the securitization process using the state security frame is directed to the open-door policy, for its possible use for terrorists to enter the country. In the same line, the securitization process using the internal security frame makes emphasizes more the policy measures demanded for preventing new crimes at the hands of refugees and asylum seekers, rather than a cultural or political incapacity to understand and respect Germany's legal framework and social norms. As a result, the refugee crisis is constructed as a source of unease and symbolically attributed the characteristic of security subject by the type of technologies of government asked to deal with him.

As a consequence of the two last points, the open-border policy towards refugees is permanently attacked by Die Welt. The commentators of the newspaper, for the most part of the articles analyzed, neglect to consider the humanitarian crisis causing the refugee movements as well as the humanitarian basis of the government's refugee policy and instead, they frame the situation mainly in an economic perspective, figuring the refugees indistinctly as economic migrants, and Merkel's refugee policy as aiming at filling the demographic and economic needs of Germany in the absence of an immigration law. This construction is problematic because it puts into question the extent to which Merkel's decision was based on a humanitarian moral imperative and thus reinforces the perception that the government has not a clear position on the issue, and

thus cannot present appropriate policies for managing the refugee crisis. Furthermore, this economist text leaves aside the fact that refugees are politically persecuted people and forced migrants, thus it opens the door for reading the refugee as an economic migrant abusing the institution of asylum due to the German government permissiveness. In consequence, being the aspect that legitimates asylum claims the economic value of the individual to German society, the text hinders the emergence of popular empathy and solidarity towards the refugee. The policies that Die Welt support are, then, the restriction of the refugee flows to Germany, the integration into the job market of those already give the status of refugees, the deportation of those that cannot be integrated, and the adoption of measures that reduce the social and financial benefits for asylum-seekers.

**Table 10. Public opinion on the Federal government’s open-door refugee policy.**

% of people / September 2016			
Shall the Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel fundamentally correct the refugee policy?	Yes	Partially	No
	28	54	15
of which respondents supporting the <b>CDU</b>		67	
<b>...SPD</b>		59	
<b>...Linke</b>		52	
<b>...Grünen</b>		50	
<b>...FDP</b>		46	
<b>...AfD</b>		14	

Source: Der Spiegel 2016

Die Welt’s contestation of the open-border policy and the calls for ending it in this second moment coincides with the now overwhelming public rejection of that policy. Despite the fact that the number of refugees decreased considerably in 2016, as compared to 2015, by September 2016, 83 % of Germans wanted corrections in the refugee policy, especially those that traditionally vote for the parties of the Great Coalition, the CDU and the SPD. In fact, a vast majority of people attributed the reduction in the number of refugees, not to the Turkey-EU agreement, which seems the most likely cause, but to the closure of borders in neighboring countries, a fact that serves to infer that this is the policy most people were favoring for Germany. Nonetheless, German citizens

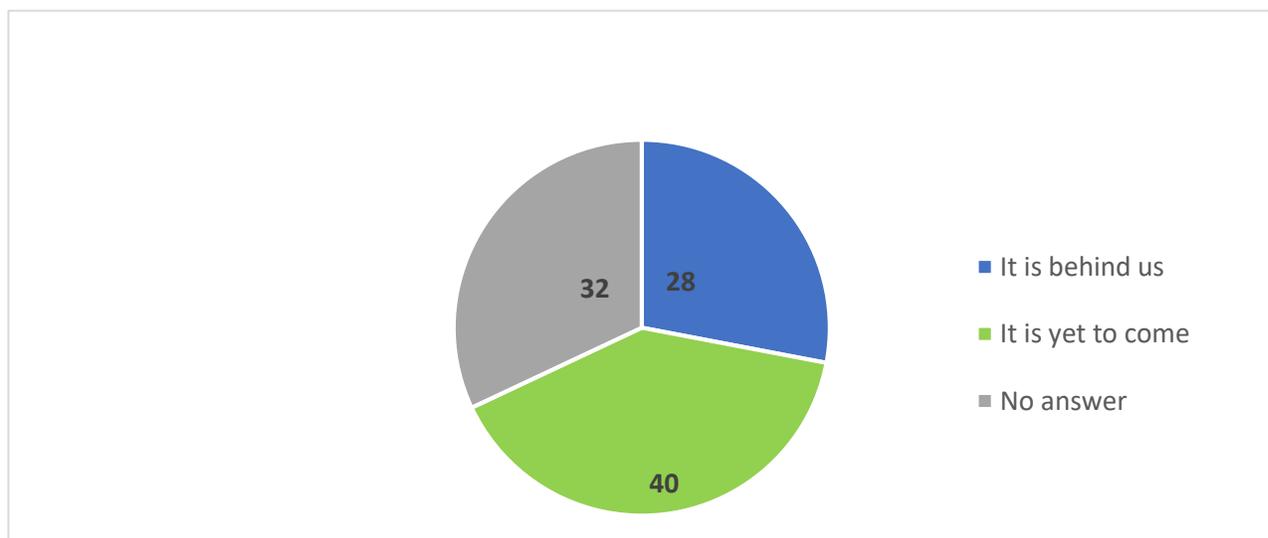
still manifested anxiety for the refugee crisis, believing that due to the government’s policy the number of asylum-seekers coming to Germany would increase in the future.

**Table 11. What are the main reasons for fewer refugees currently coming to Germany?**

% of people / June 2016	
Because of the policies of the EU/Germany	21
Because neighboring countries have closed their borders	83
Because the situation in the countries of origin has improved	4
Because of adverse weather	14
Not specified	6

Source: Institute für Demoskopie Allensbach 2016c

**Figure 19. Public perception on the state of refugee flows to Germany. June 2016**



### 5.2.1. Ontological insecurity frames

The construction of the refugee crisis as a threat to the collective sense of being can be observed from September 2015 on, in two different expressions. First, the refugee crisis is presented as an ontological security threat due to cultural and economic elements, being the latter dominant. Second, the refugee policy and the government discourse are presented as inconsistent, thus creating the notion that the state cannot provide with certainty and order to the political community. Both expressions have the same origin: the attribution of meaning to the refugee, not as a forcibly displaced person, but as an undifferentiated economic migrant threatening both the welfare

system and the ordering function of the state. As a result, the non-discriminatory principle which is at the basis of the right to asylum, and by which the status of refugee is given on the grounds of political persecution and not on the level of education or professional skills, is denigrated and presented as allowing an “unchecked and unintended” immigration resulting in economic failure. This text detaches the legal institution of asylum from its humanitarian and ethical dimension.

The fact that civil war refugees and failed third-generation migrants are being offset by neurobiologists from Singapore or machinists from Argentina is absurd. This type of immigration, unchecked and intended as a humanitarian gesture, has nothing to do with the one we desire. Chancellor Angela Merkel knows that. (Die Welt 2015a)

Representing the refugee as an economic migrant conduces the commentators of Die Welt to portray the reception of large numbers of refugees as a situation in which the state fails to perform its ordering function and apply its sovereign power of deciding who can be part of the social and political community. “The problems of the still increasing mass immigration to Germany touch a fundamental level of social coexistence, that of security and order.” (Die Welt 2015e) Thus, in Die Welt’s discourse, it can be read that the failure to perform this primordial role produces uncertainty on the continuity of the social and economic status quo, and anxiety for the consequences that the situation could bring to the German fiscal position and economic performance.

Germany is experiencing an almost unmanageable onslaught of refugees. [...] The refugee drama is an expensive affair for Germany. Creating housing for tens of thousands of people is virtually impossible given the lack of housing in many cities. [...] Since many refugees coming to Germany are for the most part destitute, they are quickly also clients of the welfare state. As touching and commendable as clothing and material donations are, as heroic as it is endearing is the involvement of neighborhoods, churches, and social organizations, in the end this uncontrolled form of migration will demand an overdimensioned welfare state, and ultimately new taxes on the taxpayers. Integration succeeds best where migrants have a regular job. Parallel societies and crime grow where work as a daily interaction with the host community fails. [...] Regulation and de-flexibilisation prevent many migrant workers, who have risked all their possessions for a life in a free, capitalist society, from quickly finding employment opportunities. (Die Welt 2015c)

The figuration of the refugee as both economically deprived and low-skilled facilitates his construction as undevelopable, and as such as a risk for public order by sustaining that the lack of working perspectives will derive in a lack of integration in German society and push the refugee

to engage in criminal activities. In this fashion, the refugee becomes also a threat to social cohesion, a construction that is reinforced by invoking his ethnic and religious identity markers.

The problems of the still increasing mass immigration to Germany touch a fundamental level of social coexistence, that of security and order. The frontline police officers see themselves at the limit of resilience, on the ground, in mass housing. There, the ethnic and religious conflict situations that have migrated with the people from their countries of origin are causing much greater need for action. (Die Welt, 21 September 2015)

In consequence, the political responses demanded by Die Welt are framed in security terms and aim at deterring asylum-seeker from traveling to Germany, restricting the numbers of refugees recognized and deporting those that are not granted asylum. In all these cases, the indiscriminate formulation of the needed measures evidences the intention of changing the national legal framework without considering international obligations towards asylum seekers. An example of this position is found on the construction of text after the announcement of the government that thousands of refugees from Albania and Kosovo were traveling to Germany in the summer of 2015. Coinciding with the government's position, Die Welt called for giving these countries the status of safe countries of origin, due to the process of accession to the EU in which they were engaged. The basis for this claim is that the accession process to the EU requires candidate countries to already possess sound democratic institutions and be subject to the rule of law, which made the existence of political persecution unthinkable. Thus, Die Welt presented automatically the asylum seekers from these countries as economic migrants and demanded their deportation.

Within weeks, over 25,000 Kosovars have made their way to Germany. The chance of being recognized as a refugee in Germany is between 0.1 and 0.2 percent. In other words, Kosovo and Albania are also safe countries of origin! As soon as possible they have to receive this status, so that all those prospective emigrants be clear that their departure for Germany is hopeless. No citizen of a state wishing to become a member of the EU and applying for admission may be entitled to refugee status. (Die Welt 2015b)

In the same line, Die Welt defended Bavarian Prime Minister and CSU Secretary General, Horst Seehofer, in his opposition to Merkel's open-door policy towards refugees, expressed both vocally and through a legal process initiated against it in Germany's Federal Courts. Die Welt justified Seehofer's actions on the uneven pressure that Bavaria was experiencing due to the massive arrival of refugees, because of its condition as Germany's border state, and more importantly, on the need of more political opposition to Merkel's policy in order to foster amendments. This text shows a construction in which Merkel is portrayed as acting unilaterally on the refugee situation,

not only at the EU level, but also within the government coalition, and as moving the CDU political agenda away from its traditional conservative values, adopting positions traditionally attributed to the left-wing agenda.

Nevertheless, Seehofer's objections are important to the structure of the [Christian Democratic] Union and the well-being of the political landscape as a whole. It may be pleasing for the Chancellor to keep up with the spirit of the times, but the [Christian Democratic] Union and the country will be better off if there are also people who act as correctives and remind us that our people's parties are not really interchangeable. (Die Welt 2015f)

Reflecting its franc opposition to Merkel's open-border refugee policy, Die Welt praised the measures adopted by the government through the Asylum Packages I and II, in September 2015 and January 2016, which made the refugee policy more restrictive through measures destined to diminishing social benefits for refugees, accelerating deportations, and tightening the right of residence. The adoption of Asylum Package I was portrayed as a wake-up moment in which the Government realized the scope of the challenges presented by a mass migratory movement which showed no future certainty of the numbers of people it would involve. (Die Welt 2015d) The second package instead was celebrated for the speed in which it was agreed within the governing coalition and was attributed to the political pressure instantiated by the growth in popular support for the AfD and the concern for the results of the coming regional elections of March. (Die Welt 2016c)

The summer fairytale includes the awakening. And this awakening begins now. For skeptics and pessimists, the bill proposals of the Ministry of Interior are a relief. They signal that after all the Sunday speeches, the grand coalition recognizes how much the beginning of a mass migration challenges our beloved status quo. [...] Once again, it is the task of the center to hold the shop together and to do what is necessary with a sense of proportion and with the utmost ease in order to make the migration flows manageable and to maintain the rule of law [...]. The first legislative package is a start. There is no need for prophetic powers to predict that further tightening of the asylum laws will be essential [...]. (Die Welt 2015d)

In another expression of its opposition to the refugee policy, Die Welt celebrated the decisions of other EU countries to close their borders to refugees and enforce deportations, such as Sweden, which announced the decision to deport half of the asylum-seekers in its territory (Die Welt 2016b), as good examples of political behavior, as opposed to Germany's refugee and integration policies which were still presented as wrongful, based on "moral megalomania" (Die Welt 2016e) and

against the EU trend, thus isolating Germany from its peers and putting the EU cohesion and stability at risk. Furthermore, the EU-Turkey agreement on migration was heavily criticized, not for its barely legal and ethically dubious conditions, but because of the negotiating power it provided to the Turkish government, which is considered by Die Welt to be non-democratic, nationalistic and a promotor of Islamism. (Die Welt 2016f)

[Europe] has made itself blackmailable and will remain so -thanks in part to German policy- if the EU does not rush to protect its own borders. Just as EU Council President Donald Tusk suggests. Some Germans still consider their own policies to be European and are convinced that diverging interests of EU members are an expression of outdated nationalism. It is time to wake up and realize that the majority of Europeans do not consider German refugee policy to be desirable, so a compromise must be made. It will only be achieved if Berlin, with other EU members, lifts a police force of several thousand people for the external borders. (Die Welt 2015h)

Finally, the uncertainty provoked by the refugee crisis on the one and by the government's open-border policy on social cohesion is expressed by Die Welt in the concerns on the increasing social and political polarization. In an article of 22 February 2016, the government is made responsible for the spiral of violence. Although the newspaper condemns the "xenophobic perpetrators" and arsonists attacking refugee shelters, it also condemned the harsh language used by government authorities to refer to these perpetrators, such as of being "not humans", a "pack" and as part of a "dark Germany". (Die Welt 2016e) Additionally, the article presents the refugee policy as having turned Germany in a "borderless country" which is causing increasing ontological insecurity on citizens, who do not feel at home anymore. This sense of losing the home attributed to the government refugee policy is accompanied by a sense of losing Germany's collective identity, thus pushing people to become more xenophobic, nationalistic and romantic, which can be observed in another article of 13 February, 2016.

We race into the future at a speed of 400, but more and more citizens are staring into the rearview mirror: they long for the good old days with the Deutschmark, the borders, the cheerful nation-state. At the moment, the mood is dropping with every thousand contingents of refugees arriving in Germany. Confidence shrinks as the challenge grows. (Die Welt 2016d)

### 5.2.2. Physical security frames

In the case of the construction of the refugee and the government policy in physical security terms, there are two important trends observed. First, this construction adds to, and does not replace, the ontological insecurity text and it is observed after the occurrence of contextual, external shocks. And second, the text construction refrains from linguistically linking the refugee's ethnic and religious identity markers to terrorism or to a natural inclination towards criminality. The securitization of the refugee is articulated mostly practically and symbolically, by constructing the refugee crisis as a source of constant risk, and through the call for the adoption of the state's security *dispositif* to deal with it, which is theoretically in the line of the sociological approach to securitization of the Paris School. In consequence, by concentrating its threat construction on the government's refugee policy, and not on the refugee as foreigner, Die Welt refrains discursively from portraying the refugee as an enemy-Other. Examples of this text are found in the articles published after the Cologne incidents of New Year's Eve and the domestic terrorist attacks of July and December 2016:

The political instrumentalization of the [Cologne] event is underway, and for a year in which integration with or without a cap must challenge a free, open society, this test is a bleak souvenir. At the center should be the elucidating and investigating work of the judiciary, then it may be necessary to take the (also harsh) consequences and bring asylum tightening by a broad majority of the Federal Council and Bundestag. Incidents like those in Cologne cannot be accepted. When women become victims of mass attacks, the very nature of our coexistence is called into question. The police must finally be put in a position to fight this type of crime, to arrest perpetrators and hand them over to an unperturbed judiciary and - if the convictions are confirmed - to deport them quickly. (Die Welt 2016a)

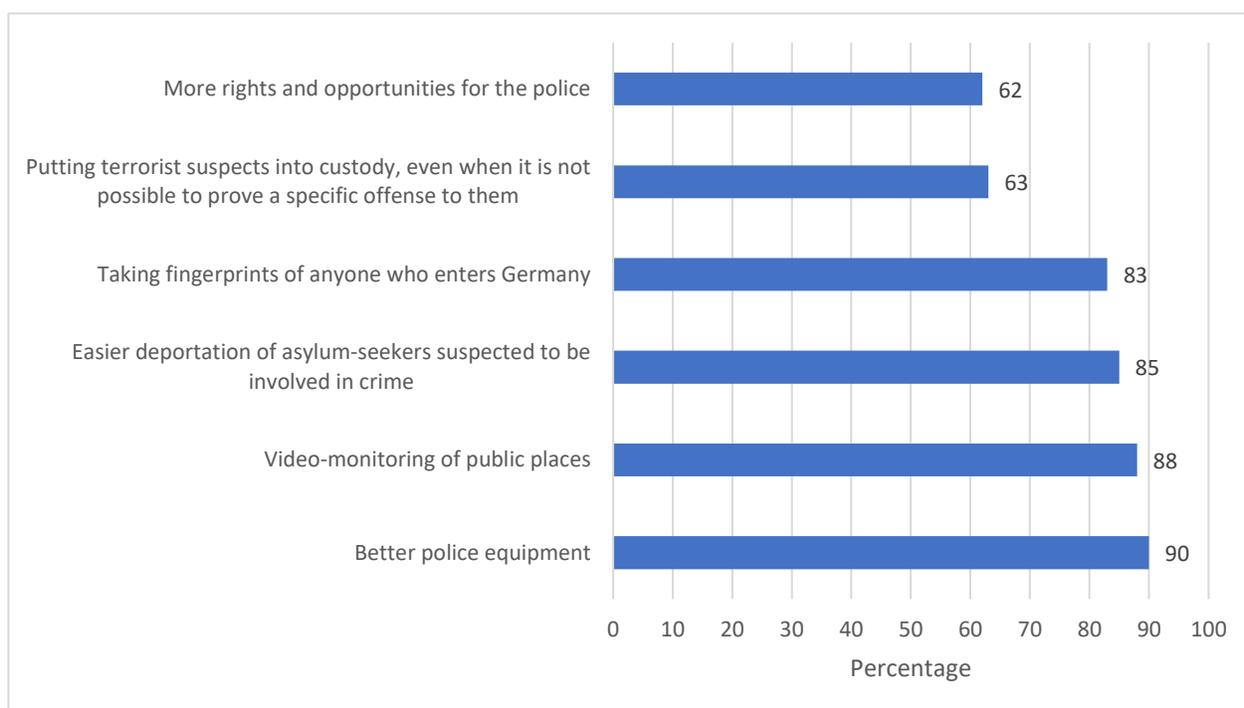
In the case of IS perpetrators, it can be seen as a pattern that they have long been mentally unstable, known to the police and, moreover, that they are Muslims. The authorities know criminal records and religion, they also need to know about lability. Such people need to be monitored. This is a sensitive issue that touches on the medical secrecy, the prohibition of ethnic-religious profiling and more. [...] Finally, the refugee policy is in some detail to the test. We need to know who is there and who is coming. Preventing deportations to civil

war countries from the outset requires the clear clarification that this applies only to law-abiding refugees. (Die Welt 2016g)

To close this flank, Europe must, among other things, do two things: it has to know for sure who is within its borders. And it has to be able to identify those who are not allowed to live within its borders. This requires border controls, in which the identity of people is clarified. It is no longer acceptable for a person to be without a passport, without identity - and thus be able to escape the monopoly of state power so cheaply. In addition, people who do not receive asylum must be deported. If you cannot be deported because you do not have identity documents you must be in detention. It cannot be that one accepts that people without residence rights live. This does not put a refugee under suspicion. The opposite is true: if Europe wants to help people who really need protection, it has to separate them from those who have no right to protection. (Die Welt 2016h)

The policies demanded not only reveal the call for the increase of emergency powers to the security agencies of the state, they also show a willingness to transgress the current legal framework both in its normative and ethical dimension. Examples of this are the calls for reinstalling border controls in Germany, thus putting into question the Schengen Agreement; disregarding the principle of non-refoulement of international refugee law; and using ethnic-religious profiling to prevent terrorist acts, neglecting entirely the right-wing terror acts committed by ethnic Germans. In this way, the measures demanded involve the creation of exceptions to certain liberal and democratic norms, and coincide with a trend in public opinion by which German citizens were more open to accept such illiberal practices due to their increased fear to terrorist attacks and violent crime.

**Figure 20. Security policies supported by German citizens to counter crime and terrorism.  
August 2016**



Nonetheless, Die Welt also made recurrent calls for promoting integration policies for recognized refugees instead of favoring other solutions such as their confinement to refugee camps. This integration policies, specially through the labor market, reflect an effort not to present the refugee as individual as a physical threat and to reduce its quality as a source of ontological insecurity, by making him valuable for the German economy.

Only the robust economy has made possible this kind of joy of charity and humanism. [...] Especially for the tens of thousands of unqualified refugees, a low-wage sector must now be set up, which allows companies quick access - without opening the door to abuse. [...] There are no better integration instances than work and training. (Die Welt 2015g)

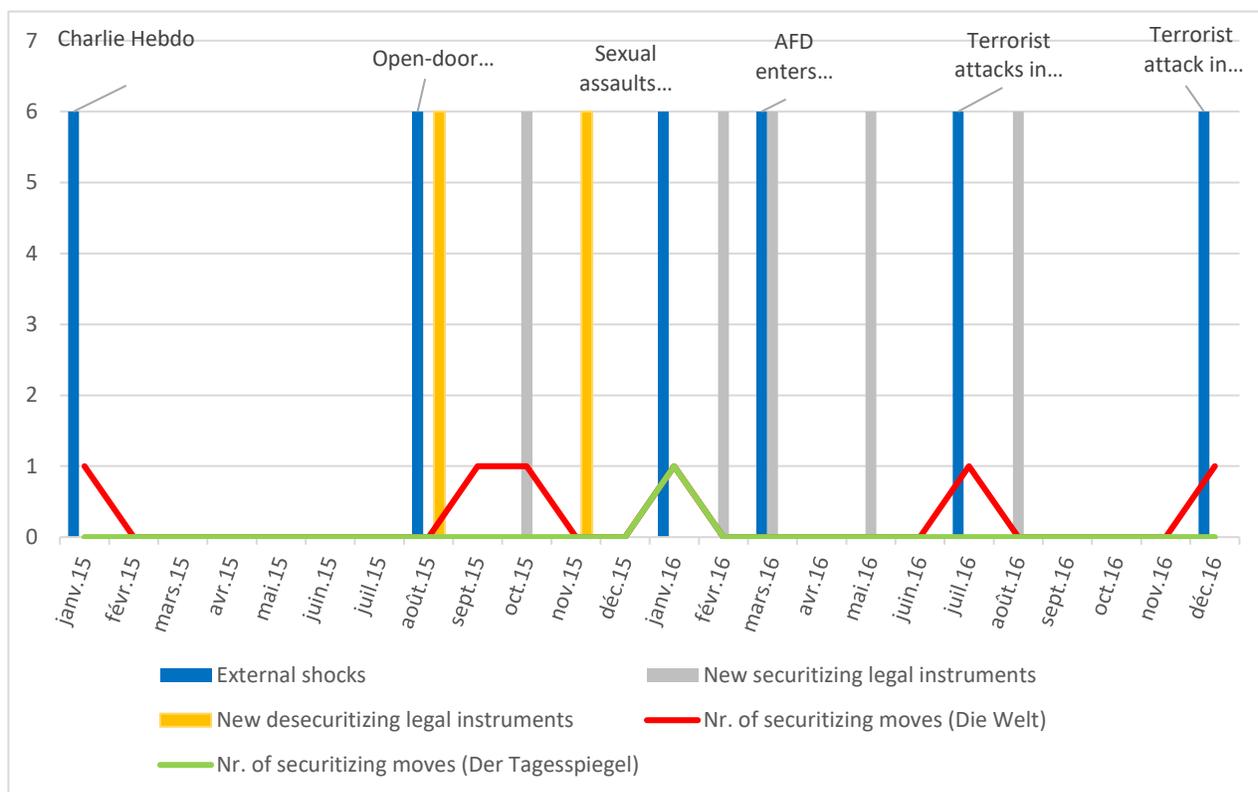
### 5.3. Conclusion

The analysis of the construction of discourse in the German written press evidences the double role that media plays in the securitization process, as both audience and securitizing actor, when framed within the evolution of the socio-historical context. The analysis of both text articulation and opinion polls serve to demonstrates that media is as a channel for amplifying society's reactions on the discourse articulated and the policies proposed/adopted by the political elite on a specific subject. In this role, the media functions as a spokesperson for broader social sectors,

and thus, within the securitization process, as part of a larger audience: the political community whose opinions, social manifestations and electoral decisions facilitate or constrain the definition of an issue as a security threat and the adoption of extraordinary measures to contain it. At the same time, because media is granted authoritative power to speak to political elites thanks to the massive consumption of their communicational products, in times of traumatic events they have the capacity to perform securitizing or desecuritizing moves in the name of society. In this sense, media can systematically demand political elites to recognize -or not- a subject or issue as a security threat and urging the adoption of security measures that break with the normal democratic process of rule-creation.

In this sense, the analysis of Der Tagesspiegel's and Die Welt's opinion articles and commentaries has revealed the role of media as a securitizing actor during the refugee crisis, after the impact of external shocks. As Figure 21 shows, Die Welt performed securitizing moves after the attack on Charlie Hebdo in Paris, France, in January 2015, after the Federal government adopted the open-door refugee policy, and after the terrorist attacks of July and December 2016, while Der Tagesspiegel performed a securitizing move after the Cologne sexual attacks.

**Figure 21. Securitizing moves in Der Tagesspiegel and Die Welt in context. 2015-2016**



On the other hand, by contesting and supporting the Government’s discourse and policies relating to the refugee crisis, Der Tagesspiegel and Die Welt acted also as audience in the political debate on the crisis in Germany. Both newspapers participated actively in the intersubjective processes of construction of meaning around the refugee crisis as well as in its political response, reflecting the different general states of mind of German society in their historic evolution. The relationship they established with both the Federal government and the AfD was not unidirectional and passive, accepting or rejecting their constructions of text as audience, in the sense given by Buzan, Waever and Wilde (1998). On the contrary, by maintaining a periodic conversation with the political elites, through opposing and supporting aspects of their text construction and the political measures proposed to deal with the refugee situation, and by instantiating themselves securitizing moves, both newspapers fostered a sort of Habermasian political debate, in which original truth claims by the (de)securitizing actors were supported, contested, modified and amended.

This role of the press in the security debates is reflected in three instances. First, the newspapers’ opinion articles amplify the position of a public opinion concerned with the humanitarian situation of refugees coming to the EU and a representation of Germany as an

economic power and open society able to help and show solidarity, thus offering a context in which the government's open-border policy was politically feasible of being adopted. The second instance is found when this favorable context starts to change after September 2015, when the massive number of refugees and the uncertainty of their future numbers trigger a sense of ontological insecurity which is clearly expressed in both *Der Tagesspiegel* and *Die Welt*. The increasing anxiety observed in the articles is correlated with a first turn in the government's policy in which it adopts the first package of restrictive measures and starts pushing for an EU solution to restrict the refugee flows. The third instance is found in the turn of public opinion after the incident in Cologne and the increase in Islamist terrorist attacks in Europe in 2016, which are correlated to an increase in the securitizing discourse of the newspapers, linking the refugee crisis to a sense of physical insecurity.

In conclusion, the evolution of public opinion and its amplification by the newspapers show that, regarding the government discourse, its clear intention of desecuritize the refugee crisis is contested since the impact of the first external shock thus pushing it progressively towards discursive inconsistency and securitization. Regarding the AfD, the newspapers perceive it as a factor of ontological insecurity as well: as a threat to Germany's political order due to its electoral success, which is attributed to the party's discourse on the refugee crisis. This situation reflects that the securitization of the refugee crisis in Germany was not a top-down process instantiated by the political elites, as in other EU countries like Hungary or Great Britain, but a bottom-up process in which the population and media pushed the government to change its discourse and policies, through the expression of their dissatisfaction, as in the newspaper articles, through the use of a marginal party such as the AfD as a channel for this opposition into the formal political arena, and through the securitizing moves performed by the media.

## **6. CONCLUSIONS**

This study has aimed at deconstructing the discourse articulated on the 2015-2016 refugee crisis in Germany by the government, the political opposition and the media in order to decipher the role that security has played in it. Departing from prior evidence showing competing desecuritizing and securitizing discourses around the refugee, the study had the objective of finding what discourse became hegemonic during this period and the conditions of possibility that brought this result. For this, the study contrasted the construction of text with the contingency of the socio-historical context and the impact of external shocks. Furthermore, through the textual and contextual analysis, the study examined the translation of the hegemonic discourse into state policies

governing the response to the crisis and to the movement of refugees into Germany. Both the linguistic representation and the forms of governmentality at the same time reveal the socio-psychological process of othering that has prevailed in the period studied.

### **6.1. The dominant discourses during the refugee crisis and the policy responses**

The analysis shows that during the refugee crisis, there were three moments according to the dominant security discourse. The first moment, between January and September 2015, was characterized by a dominant desecuritizing discourse around the refugee. This discourse is found both in the Head of Government's speeches and in written media's opinion articles. The construction of text around the refugee portrayed him as a referent object of security: as a victim of persecution and war. This articulation corresponded to a desecuritizing strategy of replacement. In this strategy, the refugee crisis was first explained in its root causes and in its consequences and then policy responses were proposed, adopted and implemented. The crisis was explained as originating in the armed conflict in Syria and the systematic violation of human rights by Islamist terrorist groups and by the Assad government, causing a massive flow of asylum seekers to the EU. In consequence, the German government articulated a humanitarian response, manifesting its will to assist refugees in distress and to provide the necessary international protection.

This policy was adopted within a context of broad popular support, evidenced in public-opinion polls and articulated by the written media. It was a desecuritizing process and thus, an anomaly in an international and European context of increasing securitization of asylum and of the refugee crisis, and it reached its climactic moment in August 2015 with the Federal Chancellor's decision to suspend the application of the Dublin Regulation, to keep open the borders to asylum-seekers and not to impose limits to the number of refugees that were going to be accepted. This process was not entirely supported, of course, and resistance to it was found within the Chancellor's own party and the Great Coalition parties, as well as in the political and violent manifestation of a reduced part of society.

The second moment initiated in September 2015 after the number of refugees arriving to Germany increase dramatically -the number of refugees were originally forecasted to reach around 400.000 at the end of the year, but were updated to 800.000 by the summer of 2015- and started to be distributed around the country. Despite the impressive exhibition of solidarity and hospitality towards the arriving refugees in some sectors of German society, the disruption of the social environment in cities, towns and communities by the large number of foreigners began to cause increasing general anxiety and to jeopardize the popular support to the open-border refugee

policy. The dominant security discourse as found in AfD, in the press and in opinion-polls, portrayed the refugee crisis and the refugee himself as a source of ontological insecurity. In this frame, the refugee was perceived as a threat to Germany's economy, fiscal soundness, employment and housing opportunities, and to the welfare system (the economic security frame). The refuge was also represented as a threat to the continuity and reproduction of an imagined German collective identity, because of his ethnic, cultural and religious markers (the societal security frame). Finally, the refugee crisis was constructed as a threat to the EU's and Germany's institutions, mainly to the EU's single space and to Germany's sovereignty in defining who can be part of the social and political community according to the economic needs of the country (the political security frame). As the securitizing discourse framed on ontological terms became dominant, the government-led desecuritizing process started to tremble. Although the Chancellor's discourse still maintained its general desecuritizing line, the government's policies showed a growing tendency towards securitization and turned out to be dominated by dispositions restricting the rights of refugees and the conditions of humanitarian reception.

Also, during this period AfD's xenophobic and Islamophobic discourse gained momentum by channeling in the political arena the social anxiety caused by the massive flow of refugees, a situation reflected in its growing voting intention. Starting in June 2015, the discourse of the AfD changed its focus from its original Eurosceptic stance to a fierce opposition against immigration and asylum, specially of people coming from the Muslim world. From then on, AfD construction of meaning on the refugee showed consistency, with a clear securitizing aim. In its most defining features, the discourse fixed a conservative and romantic idea of Germany's Self-identity which turned the refugee-Other automatically inimical. In contradistinction to Merkel's idea of German identity, characterized by social openness, multiculturalism and cosmopolitanism, AfD's discourse defined Germany's collective identity on ethnic (ethnic Germans), religious (Christian) and cultural (Western) terms. These markers were to define German society and to be the basis for the German political community, that is, the ground on which citizenship rights should be granted. In this construction, immigration has little room to play, especially if it originates from non-Western countries.

Thus, by opposing a multicultural and multiethnic society, the AfD constructed the Arab and Muslim refugee as a threat to the markers defining the German Self, and in consequence as an enemy of German society. This discourse resulted in a socio-psychological process of abjectification in which the AfD de-individualized and dehumanized the refugee by accentuating his inferior and inimical nature through the use of different figures of speech and predications,

especially metaphors in which the refugee is represented as masses of undevelopable individuals -mostly men- and as such, as a civilizational and sexual threat to Germany and the West. (Webber, 2016b) This strategy overshadows the causes of his forced displacement as well as his vulnerable situation in order to suppress feelings of empathy in German society and reinforce the AfD's political and security agenda.

The third moment, which goes from January to December 2016, was characterized by a dominant securitizing discourse framed in physical security terms that resulted from the impact of two main violent external shocks in which refugees and asylum-seekers took part: the allegedly massive sexual assaults in Cologne and the terrorist attacks of Ansbach, Würzburg and Berlin. These events provoked a turn in popular perception by which the figure of the refugee evolved from a source of ontological insecurity to a more immediate and existential threat, both to the state and to society. In this period, the hegemony of the securitizing discourse is evident as revealed in the opinion of the press, in the majoritarian popular rejection of the government's refugee policy showed in opinion polls, and in the electoral success of the AfD. Most importantly, the new moment is characterized by the securitizing moves made by the Federal Chancellor at the national and EU level and the emergency policies effectively adopted by the government to handle the refugee crisis.

This volatility in Chancellor Merkel's discourse increased the contradiction between the linguistic representation of, and the forms of governmentality applied to the refugee. The government's policy measures do not only fostered the restrictiveness in the humanitarian reception of refugees, they also evidenced ruptures with the liberal institutions of the German state. Fundamental rights such as family reunification, freedom of movement within the country, and privacy were suspended. Standards of international protection were lowered, and the permanence of refugees in Germany became dependent not to humanitarian imperatives but rather to their capacity to integrate German society. Finally, forced and voluntary return became preponderant in the political approach and were enforced through the use of force and financial incentives and through international agreements with third countries.

## **6.2. Theoretical implications**

### **6.2.1. The scope of desecuritization in the German case**

The analysis of the dominant discourses and its translation into policies shows that the refugee crisis was in fact subject to a process of desecuritization, as it is affirmed in parts of the literature (Dingott Alkopher 2018 and Mushaben 2018). But contrarily to what some authors sustain, it was

not a sustained process. As this study has found, Merkel's discourse during 2015-2016 remained desecuritizing in nature and this was reflected in the maintenance of the open-border policy. Nevertheless, after September 2015, the policies associated with the definition of the refugee status and the right to remain in the country, as well as policies determining the scope of humanitarian reception, showed a process of securitization, for they were increasingly restrictive, aiming at lowering the number of people subject to international protection in the country disregarding the grounds of their forced migration, and because they increased the competences of the state's security apparatus for handling the refugee flows. In this sense, the refugee was symbolically attributed by the government the quality of unwanted immigrant and of source of security risk. In consequence, the desecuritization process performed discursively by Merkel is reversed after September 2015 by a practical process of securitization, which continues to this day.

Why was the process of desecuritization so short-lived? The findings of this study point out to three reasons: the strategy of desecuritization adopted by Merkel, the lack of consistency in her discourse and the change in the socio-historical context. Hansen (2012) argues that rearticulation is the most sustainable form of desecuritization because it brings back to the normal political debate issues that are securitized and dealt outside the public control, and because it transforms the relationship between the political community and the subject of security away from inimical terms. In this sense, rearticulation implies a change in the locus of debate over a public issue from the Schmittian state of exception to the Habermasian open and rational argumentative debate. It also implies a form of othering in which the knowledge produced on the security subject allows its treatment in non-security terms. Finally, rearticulation implies not only a discursive change in the representation of the Other, but also a practical change in which the technologies of governmentality used fall outside the security realm, therefore detaching the subject from the symbolic attribution of a threatening nature.

Some of these aspects are found in Chancellor Merkel's desecuritizing discourse. Merkel engaged in the debate on the nature of, and response to the refugee crisis in a fairly public, open manner, thus approaching a Habermasian communicative-action logic. Second, adopting a replacement desecuritizing strategy, Merkel fostered a discursive representation of the refugee as a non-threatening actor, and framed him as a victim of war and persecution deserving the protection of the German state. Furthermore, Merkel presented the German state and society as able to cope with the refugee crisis in a humanitarian and responsible way. These predications were part of an effort to transform the security frame in which the refugee was inserted and to

represent him as victim and vulnerable individual who therefore did not threaten German society.

Nonetheless, although predominant, this discursive representation of the refugee was not consistent in time and was not accompanied by a disarticulation of the security practices governing the refugee flows. The inconsistency in Merkel's construction of the refugee was caused by the impact of external shocks and as a reaction to the subsequent social discontent, which called for a securitization process. The social pressure on the government for adopting security measures was partially channeled and instrumentalized by AfD, whose growth in popular support caused concern on the established political parties and forced the government to change postures on the refugee crisis. Merkel's discourse showed a constant subcategorization of the refugee using different binaries in order to securitize some of these categories according to the context. This ambiguity in Merkel's discourse was reinforced by the internal contestation of the Chancellor's stance within the governing coalition. This provoked a perception in the general public that the government lacked political clarity and the capacity to respond to the refugee crisis in an adequate and coherent way, a perception that affected the approval ratings of the government and led an important sector of society to vote for the populist far-right.

Finally, the failure to implement the desecuritizing strategy of rearticulation was due to the lack of effective disarticulation of the security practices governing the refugee flows. Besides ordering the suspension of the application in Germany of the restrictive Dublin Regulation -which was made through an administrative disposition and not a legal reform-, Chancellor Merkel did not adopt other measures aiming at substantively disarticulating the security practices associated with asylum. On the contrary, as we have seen, during 2015-2016 her government passed legal dispositions reinforcing those security practices. One limitation for disarticulating security practices was the changing social and political context, as it was stated before, but another important limitation has to do with the fact that German asylum policies are determined by legal instruments at the EU level, such as the Dublin Regulation. Assuming that the Federal Chancellor embraced a disarticulating agenda on security practices in the asylum procedure -a situation that the evidence does not support-, reforms of the common EU asylum and immigration laws would have been needed. And given the political context in 2015-2016, such ambitions would have been naïf at best. In conclusion, and in relation to the second claim presented in this study, the evidence shows that Merkel's desecuritization process of the refugee crisis, although fostering a transformation in the relation between German society and the refugee-Other through a process of communicative action, did not end up in the disarticulation of existing security practices,

because the socio-historical context turned to be constraining rather than enabling to such a process.

### **6.2.2. The role of power in securitization**

The study also showed that power in the securitization process is not positional as the CoS sustains (Buzan, Waever and de Wilde 1998), but relational and contextual, as defended by Stritzel (2007) and Salter (2012). According to CoS, the facilitating conditions for a successful securitizing move that ends in the adoption of emergency measures are the correct articulation of the security grammar, the authoritative power of the securitizing actor, and the social intelligibility of the meaning attributed to the threat. Thus, because CoS departs from a state-centric perspective to securitization, it can only conceive authoritative power -the power to speak security in front of the audience- as the legitimacy, influence and competence provided by the position that the security actor occupies in the state apparatus. This conception is not without merits. As explained by Balzacq (2005), the disposition of an actor in the hierarchy of the state can provide to him legitimacy to speak of a security issue and access to massive communication channels through which he can persuade a large part of society of the nature of the threat.

According to this hypothesis, a securitizing move on the refugee crisis contesting Chancellor Merkel's desecuritizing process could not have been successful if it had not been performed by an actor within the structures of the state, such as opposition members of the *Bundestag* enjoying broad public support. However, what the study found is that the securitization process began not in the structures of the state nor in the political elites, as a top-down process, but as a popular reaction against the refugees. This reaction was articulated through the mass media, through violent actions against asylum-seekers, through street manifestations such as PEGIDA, and through the increasing support for far-right populist parties, such as AfD, but also the filo-Nazi National Democratic Party -NPD- which also entered some state parliaments. In this manner, the securitization process of the refugee crisis in the German case supports the third claim of this study which states that authoritative power is not pre-existing nor dispositional, but relational, historical and contextual.

For instance, the change in the German context after the Cologne incident provided AfD with social recognition as a political actor representing the security demands of an important sector of the population. This recognition was the result of an iterative interaction between German society and the AfD, in which the party maintained a coherent, securitizing discourse around immigration and asylum, consolidated after July 2015, which gained social support when the

context provoked a general perception of the refugee as a security risk. This social and contextual attribution of authoritative power is reflected in AfD's electoral success which became by 2017 the third major political force in Germany. The consolidation of AfD as a socially recognized securitizing actor produced great concern in the Germany's established political elite, thus leading them to accept the security demands of the population and adopt security measures that contested and contradicted the overall securitizing discourse of the Federal government in order to contain the increasing sense of insecurity associated with the refugee crisis and stop the growth in support to the far-right. In consequence, the rise of AfD as a political phenomenon during the refugee crisis was perhaps the most important factor determining the success of the bottom-up process of securitization of the refugee in Germany.

### **6.2.3. The role of societal security**

According to CoS's securitization theory (Buzan, Waeber and de Wilde 1998), security can be compartmentalized into five categories according to the nature of the referent object. These categories are the military sector, in which the referent object is the existence of the state as an independent, territorially integral and sovereign political unit; the environmental sector in which the referent object is the environment at the systemic -global-level; the economic sector, in which the referent object are economic issues and economic systems; the societal sector, in which the referent object is collective identity; and, the political sector, in which the referent object is the institutional architecture of the state. This compartmentalization was the basis used by Waeber et. al (1993) to theorize societal security as the process of securitization of collective identities in the face of issues that threaten their continuity and reproduction. In this frame, the main threat to societal identity is international migration (Buzan 1993) in its varied forms: economic and forced migration.

Using this approach, in this study I initially argued that a massive arrival of ethnically, culturally and religiously different immigrants, in the form of asylum-seekers, would trigger social anxiety due to fears of cultural alienation, thus leading to a process of securitization, fixing the markers and limits of the imagined national collective identity, and adopting emergency measures to contain the migratory flows. But after the analysis of the sample, the German case shows that while the refugee crisis did trigger ontological insecurity by disrupting the social environment and the routines of German citizens, the securitization process was not predominantly framed under the logics of societal security; in other words, the securitizing actors did not construct the German collective identity as the most threatened referent object of the massive and abrupt immigration in

2015-2016, as the CoS's sectoral approach would claim. The securitizing moves identified in the Federal Chancellor's discourse used predominantly the state security and internal security frames, while fighting all attempts to provoke ontological insecurity in German society. In the AfD's discourse, because of this party's nationalistic and romantic stance, we expected to find a predominant use of the societal security frame for securitization, but it was also not the case. The AfD's securitizing moves largely used the state security frame, followed by the political security frame. Only after the use of these two securitization frames, the AfD constructed the German collective identity as a referent object threatened by the refugee crisis. This trend is also found in the analysis of the written press. In *Der Tagesspiegel's* discourse, in the sole securitizing move found, the securitization frame was internal security. Finally, in the text construction of *Die Welt*, in the seven securitizing moves observed, none of them used the societal security frame and instead, focused on the political security, state security and internal security frames. In sum, the data leads to conclude that societal security is not the main frame for securitization in the case of a migratory crisis, let alone the only frame for securitization.

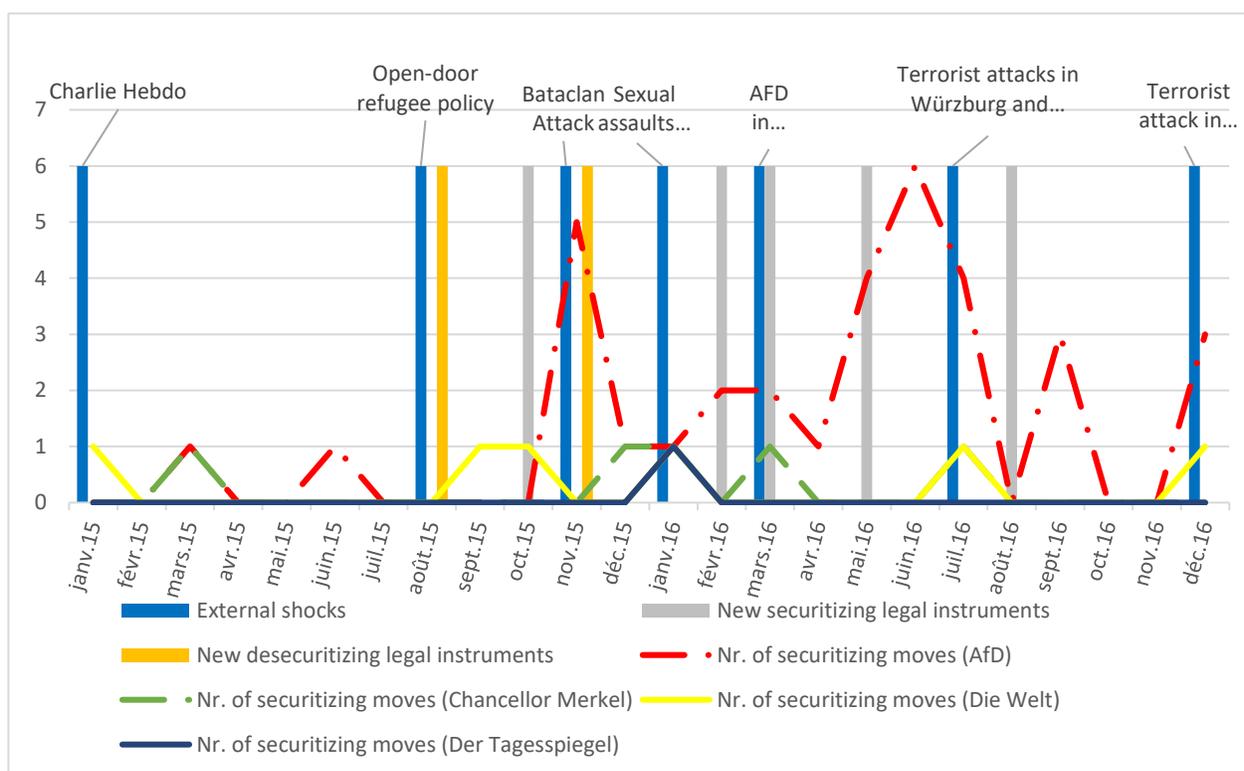
On the contrary, physical security frames are predominant and securitizing moves using this framework have shown to lead to the adoption of the most drastic emergency measures. Furthermore, after the physical security frames, the following most used securitization frame is political security, among the ontological security frames. This situation leads us to infer that, in a country such as Germany, the national collective identity has evolved according to globalization and has accepted its newly condition of immigration country and the multiethnic, multicultural and cosmopolitan markers of its Self-image, just as articulated by Chancellor Merkel and reflected in written media's opinion articles. In this context, immigration, even in a massive scale in a relatively short period of time, did not cause an identity crisis in German society leading to societal securitization, rather, on ontological security terms, we see that the event caused mainly a concern on the capacity of the German state to control the movement of people, enforce the legal framework on the newly arrived, and maintain the country's liberal political system. In consequence, I cannot sustain the first theoretical claim made for this study, that a state of ontological insecurity caused by an abrupt disruption of the social environment will trigger a securitization process in which collective identity is the main referent object.

#### **6.2.4. On the nature of securitization as a social mechanism**

Finally, the German response to the refugee crisis confirms that securitization is a social mechanism with recognizable patterns of political moves that are contextually triggered and produce institutionally anchored responses. The German case shows that after September 2015, society, the media, opposition parties and elements within the coalition government started to push for a redefinition of the refugee crisis impacting Germany as a security threat. Although the number of refugees arriving in Germany had been increasing since 2014, by the fourth quarter of 2015, the situation changed when Chancellor Merkel opted for maintaining the borders open to asylum seekers and suspending the Dublin Regulation. This political decision coincided with -and according to Merkel was an inevitable response to- the escalation of the number of forced migrants arriving to the EU mainly from Syria-. Thus, the large numbers of foreigners receiving the status of refugees becoming part of German society triggered the securitization process in a bottom-up manner.

Contrarily to the conceptualization of securitization as a speech act, the German case shows that the securitization process does not follow the logics of illocutionary linguistic acts. While it does contain linguistic events that CoS defines as securitizing moves aiming at triggering policy responses, the securitization process is a more complex linguistic construction in which a policy issue is constantly spoke using different ontological and physical security frames which prepare the social and political scenario for the adoption of emergency measures. In this study, we have conceptualized this lengthy process as *discourse construction* or *text articulation*. With the setting of the overall frame around an issue by different political and social actors, the German case shows that the impact of external shocks in public opinion and in the public psyche does trigger securitizing moves. In this sense, within the frame of a hegemonic discourse, contextual disruptions reinforce the discourse in the form of speech act events. The process is clearly shown in Figure 23, in which the large majority of securitizing moves is observed between September 2015 and December 2016, after the adoption of the open-border policy and after the impact of violent contextual events, both inside Germany and in neighboring France.

**Figure 22. Securitizing trend in Germany during the refugee crisis. 2015-2016**



Nevertheless, not all speech act events led to the adoption of emergency measures and at the same time not all emergency measures were preceded by an illocutionary act. The analysis shows that, of the six securitizing laws that the German government adopted, half did not result from a direct securitizing move on the part of Chancellor Merkel, the press or the AfD, while the other half did. Only Asylum Package II, the Act of Faster Expulsion of Criminal Foreigners and the Act classifying Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia as safe countries of origin were the perlocutionary acts that followed securitizing moves. On the case of the Integration Act and its Ordinances, the project seems to have been influenced by the Würzburg and Ansbach terrorist attacks, but its draft was actually presented to the *Bundestag* in May, 2016, that is, before the securitizing actors -Merkel included- performed securitizing moves calling for anti-terrorist measures in the asylum procedure. In this way, the German case evidences that securitization is not an event, but a process in which security discourses are constructed, contested, supported, intensified or weakened, and followed by security measures. The study also confirms that linguistic constructions of public issues are not enough to perfect the securitization process; for that, security practices have to be implemented. However, this security practices might, or might not follow a specific linguistic event. In this sense, the text construction serves as the framework in which the security measures are going to be proposed, debated and adopted, but without enough certainty of the triggering moment, without

certainty of their success in being implemented and without certainty of the effects of such measures.

The analysis of the security practices adopted in the German case for dealing with the refugee crisis also contradicts some aspects of the theorization of securitization as a non-linguistic process resulting from the insertion of a public issue into the routinized practices of a security field. This sociological understanding of securitization, as articulated by the Paris School, puts too much emphasis in the expansion of the logics and technologies of security to traditionally non-security fields and in its disappearance from the public debate -that is, dealing with a public issue in a non-democratic fashion, in secretive spaces and exclusively through security practitioners, with little or no accountability to the general public-. The analysis of the securitization of asylum policies in Germany do not fully sustain this conceptualization. First of all, the German case shows that there is always a political motivation for securitizing an issue, which is always linguistically articulated by the political elite, not necessarily as securitizing moves but certainly in the form of securitizing discourse construction. Thus, the secretive and a-political expansion of the security field theorized by the Paris School has no basis.

Second, although some of the securitizing dispositions contained in the laws passed by the *Bundestag* during 2015-2016 increased the powers and competences of security agencies on the asylum procedure and the refugee integration process, allowing them to monitor subjects of interest among asylum seekers and refugees, most of the security measures adopted did not fall into this category. What the study found is mostly policy measures of a bureaucratic nature that restrict fundamental rights and social benefits, and that make it more difficult for asylum seekers to obtain refugee status in Germany. Evidently, these administrative measures have to be ultimately enforced through the use of security forces, mainly the police and border control. But in essence, the security measures are not predominantly inserted in the *security field* as the Paris School would have it. The German case shows that, despite the fact that the securitization process occurs in a field of practices, those practices are not inherently or automatically of a security nature, but become *securitizing* through their political aims, their governmentality effects and their symbolic attribution of meaning.

In this sense, the nature of the security measures sustains Huysmans' description of security acts: they are little security nothings. These banal, routine, everyday bureaucratic activities such as issuing an ID card for refugees and asylum seekers, distributing asylum seekers to different reception centers according to their country of origin or replacing cash money for in-kind benefits in those centers, are security measures that neither have their origin on a speech

act event nor are inserted in the Schmittian logic of exceptional politics. These administrative measures are not the result of a securitizing move because such acts are theorized by CoS to take place in a space of high politics and to represent a disruptive moment in which the current legal, institutional and political order are reevaluated in order to find out if it can provide with the policy tools to respond to an existential threat. This is the highest notion of security as survival and it provokes the invocation of sovereign authority in order to decide a rupture with normal politics and the instantiation of a state of emergency. This exceptional moment is also theorized as ephemeral because the new political order that it creates lasts until the suppression of the threat so that survival is assured and the normal state of politics resumed. While some measures, such as the rejection of asylum claims ex officio of people of certain nationalities, the devolution to Turkey of asylum seekers arriving irregularly to the EU or the suppression of the right to family reunification are transgressions to the current national and international legal order, the majority of the legal amendments made by the German government to the asylum procedure and the conditions of humanitarian reception do not have an exceptional nor extraordinary nature. They are normal activities performed on a daily basis by the regular bureaucratic apparatus and therefore are neither called for in speech act events by high authorities, nor create a new Schmittian moment of sovereign exceptionalism. In this sense, the security measures implemented by the German state for governing the massive and abrupt flow of refugees fit within Huysmans' Latourian reading of security acts in the modern world, that is,

[...] unspectacular processes of technologically driven surveillance, risk management, and precautionary governance [...] [which are] [...] less about declaring a territorialized enemy and threat of war than about dispersing techniques of administering uncertainty and 'mapping' dangers. (Huysmans 2011, 6)

In conclusion, the analysis of the security measures adopted by the German state regarding the asylum procedure further contradicts some scholars (Dingott Alkopher 2018 and Mushaben 2018) who argue that Germany has desecuritized its asylum policies during the 2015-2016 refugee crisis. Those studies focus on the discursive construction of the refugee and the adoption of some measures, such as the open-border refugee policy. By looking at Merkel's general framing of the refugee crisis as a humanitarian imperative for Germany and at the political redefinition of Germany as an immigration country, and by focusing on the absence of security measures of an exceptional form disrupting the political and institutional order, those studies did not consider the more banal and routine practical measures which socially construct the refugee as a source of risk, and therefore as a potential enemy.

This construction of the refugee as a security issue can only be unveiled if one does not follow the hypothetical modes of securitization found in the predominant theoretical approaches - the Copenhagen and the Paris School-. If the empirical analysis of securitization process remains limited to speech act events or to the inclusion of a public issue in the operations of security agencies fighting other threats such as terrorism, drug trafficking or money laundry, other types of political process of securitization will not be exposed. Thus, this study has shown that an integral analysis of discourse construction, socio-historical context and policy measures, using a pragmatic reading of the effects and politics of security, is the best approach to study securitization processes as it has the potential to reveal subtler forms of social construction of threats as well as consistency and contradiction between the linguistic representations and the practical handling of security issues.

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