DOCTORAL (PhD) DISSERTATION

The Securitization of Immigration on the EU Level after 2015

by

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Abbreviations

AfD	Alternative for Germany (Alternative für Deutschland)
AFSJ	Area of Freedom, Security, and Justice
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CDU	The Christian Democratic Union of Germany
COPRI	The Conflict and Peace Research Institute
CSDP	The Common Security and Defence Policy of the European Union
CSU	The Christian Social Union in Bavaria
EES	Entry/Exit System
ETIAS	European Travel Information and Authorisation System
EU	European Union
EUAA	European Union Agency for Asylum
EUGS	EU Global Strategy for Foreign and Security Policy
eu-LISA	The European Union Agency for the Operational Management of Large-Scale IT Systems
EURODAC	European Dactyloscopy Database
EUROSUR	European Border Surveillance System
FRONTEX	The European Border and Coast Guard Agency
IOM	International Organization for Migration
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
NATO	The North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PM	Prime Minister
SIS	Schengen Information System

TFEU	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
TCN	Third-Country Nationals
UNHCR	The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
VIS	Visa Information System
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council

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The Securitization of Immigration on the EU Level after 2015

"*Security is mortals' chiefest enemy*"[1]
-Macbeth, William Shakespeare

1. Introduction

Europe as a continent has been seen as a place of refuge, opportunity and stability for many who seek to change their lives, especially for the better. People who are immigrating or seeking refuge came to the European Union's (EU) borders to have a better future for themselves. Attracting talent, workforce, and people was one of the primary perks of the EU, and it still is in a sense.[2] However, what has happened in this century, especially since 2011 certain developments concerning migration and international protection has changed. Integration and cooperation were the cornerstones of the EU, but now integrating the so-called others is a useful source of fear for the population to gain power. Overall, migration and security stand as two different, however closely interconnected subjects which have become increasingly relevant.

In this dissertation, for a clear terminology clarification, term of third-country nationals (TCN) is directly used where nationality rather than protection status is relevant. A TCN can simultaneously be an applicant for international protection, refugee, beneficiary of subsidiary protection as well. An applicant for international protection refers to a person whose application for international protection is pending, whereas refugee refers specifically to a person who satisfies the applicable legal requirements for refugee status.[3] The broader term of migrant is used only where the relevant source or analysis does not distinguish a specific legal status in the context.

Securitizing immigration and the question of whether immigration had been securitised on the EU level shapes the centre of this thesis. This question transcends the generic topic of immigration to a completely complex level, which draws the many different sides of society overall. This study focuses on this topic through theoretical assumptions and certain methodological approaches to further reflect on the securitization theory and the securitization process of immigration on the EU level. Making this process transparent and

[1] Shakespeare, William. *Macbeth*, ed. O. J. Stevenson (Vancouver, Toronto, and Montreal: The Copp Clark Publishing Co. Limited, 1916), 48.
[2] Kirkegaard, Jacob Funk, Sudha David-Wilp, and Rachel Tausendfreund. *Keeping Europe Competitive*. German Marshall Fund of the United States, 2024, 6.
[3] United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), "Asylum and Refugee Status," UNHCR, August 6, 2026, https://help.unhcr.org/global/asylum-and-refugee-status/

visible, there should be concrete cases and targeted tools to claim this is indeed happening right now.

Furthermore, taking the Refugee Crisis of 2015 and its effects on the EU in general provides a substantial opportunity to broaden the research on securitization of immigration. The statements, policies, transformed/invented institutions and gradual approach to the crises unfolded since the Arab Spring and the Refugee Crisis encouraged this thesis to analyse it even more to clear on what is really transpiring. Measuring the intensities of threat framing and securitization of immigration on the EU level will help the academic field to broaden the understanding of what the EU is transforming into.

The primary subject of this thesis is the securitization process in the EU's theoretical aspects of security and how it attempts to manifest at the EU level, with some questions regarding the legitimacy of such securitization in the EU context. The 21st century brought globalization or, more fundamentally, new threats against immigration, terror, and security risks regarding cyber-attacks are also given examples. This research proposes to analyse select immigration focused and broadly defined security-related EU legislation and their threat framing intensity. Increased threats to global security find solutions remaining fragmented across the national sovereignty of the EU's 27 Member States, in fact, counterproductively hindering a joint EU security policy. The several tensions between the national interest and the EU's collective policymaking are key to understanding security politics in the Union. This study will focus on immigration as an important secured issue, in that the 2015 refugee crisis had the effect of changing the internal and external security dynamics of the EU, not only toward the issue of immigration but also along with a collective securitization of its management. By analysing securitization, resolved or divided by the national territories and sovereignty, at times with conflicting histories and policies, the EU still feels and appears to be a prominent political entity, perhaps too complex if only understood in political terms, as it also evolves as a space for legal and cultural realities. In the details, the thesis will analyse how immigration securitization also symbolizes broader trends in European integration, governance, and security policy formation, in response to some current challenges across Europe.[4]

[4] Stivas, Dionysios. "Variations in the intensity of the securitization narratives at the EU level: securitizing the European refugee crisis." *Frontiers in Political Science* 6 (2024): 2-5. See also: Uslu, Ömer Doğukan. "Securitization on EU Level." In Recent Challenges of Public Administration 4: Papers Presented at the Conference of '4th Contemporary Issues of Public Administration' on 10 December 2021, edited by Erzsébet Csatlós, 77–82. Szeged: Iurisperitus Kiadó, 2022.

Approaching this topic through the framework of the Securitization Theory of the Copenhagen School allows this thesis to construct its own visualization of the securitization process while making it even more visible to the public and to the academic community. Systematically pulling apart the branches of the securitization is a way of analysing the mechanisms through which threats are constructed, legitimized, and embedded within policy frameworks, allowing for a deeper understanding of how security narratives shape political decision-making and governance, especially over immigration in current times.

Fundamentally, according to the Copenhagen School, security is created through specific inter-subjective social and discursive interactions between influential actors who define risks and pertinent audiences who accept these definitions.[5] In short, it is a sense of order through discursive processes by securitizing actors. The term *Securitization* comes from the Copenhagen School and Barry Buzan in origin. The securitization of immigration inside the EU takes the form of a dynamic interaction between the application of policies and methods that address these emerging security issues and political considerations. This thesis attempts to analyse how immigration has been framed as a security concern, justifying drastic measures that change the EU's stance on migration, using the prism of the Copenhagen School's Securitization Theory. This theoretical approach sheds light on the mechanisms via which certain narratives that depict migrants as possible dangers to cultural identity, public safety, and social stability acquire traction and impact public opinion and policy-making throughout the Union. According to the Copenhagen School's Securitization Theory, state actors use securitization to turn ordinary political concerns into certain *security* issues in international relations and national politics.[6] This research's skeleton based on the securitization process itself and how it has been employed on the EU level through certain components and tools which will be detailed thoroughly in the coming chapters to demonstrate this process while explaining what Securitization Theory really is.

This study overall challenges the general perceptions of the threat framing of the migration on the levels of supranationalism of the EU. This study also investigates how securitization mechanisms shape decision-making processes about political discourse on national sovereignty versus collective governance with example of certain relevant Member States

[5] Stępka, Maciej. "The Copenhagen school and beyond. A closer look at securitisation theory." In *Identifying Security Logics in the EU Policy Discourse: The "Migration Crisis" and the EU*, (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2022), 18.

[6] Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde, Security: A New Framework for Analysis (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998), 22-25.

while comparing the opposite ends of their approaches to this crisis such as Hungary and Germany. Deconstructing embedded security narratives in EU migration policies, this research aims to unpack political and institutional processes transforming migration into a security issue and assess the consequences of this framing for policy coherence, humanitarian commitments, and the evolution of EU integration more generally. Ultimately, this thesis suggests how these securitization dynamics plays a broader role inside the EU while reinforcing the tensions regarding the security driven approaches to the crisis at hand. Showcasing the challenges between the fundamental rights, solidarity among Member States, and the Union's foundational values makes additional points on how the securitization of immigration reshapes the EU's migration governance at the end.[7]

Another main attraction for this topic is to demonstrate to the public that these things happen on a supranational level while they are cogs in a gear of political and security mechanisms that shape policies, influence governance, and redefine the balance between national sovereignty and collective EU decision-making. Moreover, to understand all these effects and the results brought up, this thesis will attempt to outline the fundamental changes in how the EU's migration policies changed and what they were made to represent before, so the comparison could define the securitization process' existence on the EU level as well. In addition, the overall explanations and observations would also link the existing literature through these assumptions while making a relevant framework in general.

In the coming chapters, focus will be given to the tools of the securitization process that are considered relevant to the subject while observing and commenting on their gradual transformations, intentions and inventions. These observations and comments are made considering the transformations and inventions made through the EU's and Member States' approach to migration and international protection. These approaches to the topic give this thesis a framework of collective securitization to study which is allowing an unpacking of policy making of the EU while discovering a systematic and gradual threat framing on the immigration. Moreover, the EU's agreements and cooperations with several third countries to fend off this overflowing immigration fundamentally demonstrates the direct externalization of the migration control while reinforcing the securitization process by shifting border management responsibilities beyond EU territory. These partnerships and

[7] Michela Ceccorulli, "Back to Schengen: The Collective Securitisation of the EU Free-Border Area," in *Collective Securitisation and Security Governance in the European Union* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2020), 78.

cooperations reflect a strategic effort to contain migration at its source with political diversions of the subject which further embedding security-driven policies within the EU's broader governance framework.

Furthermore, the studied research questions throughout this thesis had been the "*What are the tools and policies of Securitization of Immigration on EU level?*" and then as a connection evolved into the "*How did the policies and tools have been adapted to the securitization process on EU level?*" to determine the transparency of this structure in detail. In short, focusing on what gave this study a greater freedom on comparisons between policies and actions. While answering on how, the institutional structure of EU on migration issue had been kept on close observation because of its important relativity regarding the Refugee Crisis as well. Another question was to understand and answer, "*How is the securitization rhetoric used by the EU in the context of immigration and border control, and how does this rhetoric shape perceptions towards immigration and migrants in the EU?*" to make a clear view on how the gradual threat narrative had been built on the EU level which in the coming chapters all these questions will be addressed and build upon to create a framework of understanding.

Moreover, the comparison of Hungary and Germany is highly needed to understand the EU's national level rhetoric over securitization because securitization can be implemented, adapted and operationalised within Member States as well. Targeting Hungary and Germany for comparison is used during this thesis in pursuit to clearly define their contrasting approaches to securitization and how they represent securitization of immigration through different lenses which reflect on the EU in general. For example, Hungary accordingly to this research choose to follow a more direct/over securitization to push TCNs who arrive irregularly, including persons seeking international protection where relevant while pointing them as threat to their values, culture and national security. On the other hand, Germany chooses to approach these people through being more open while establishing a bureaucratic form of securitization, in which migration is not always presented through overt and open threat narratives, but is managed through administrative, legal, and border-control practices within the society. Another point is basically their theoretical and political contrasts which the author mentioned previously during this chapter. Moreover, to connect this topic to the third research question of this study, by comparing two Member States that adopted markedly different political and policy responses after 2015, the analysis makes it possible to examine how broader EU-level security narratives are reproduced, adapted or challenged

at the national level. In connection, Chapter 10 will provide the principal comparative analysis for answering the Research Question 3 mentioned above. This comparison essentially helps identify the extent to which EU securitization discourse is reflected in national rhetoric and border-control practices and how these different interpretations of securitization processes contribute to constructing immigration either as security concerns or as issues framed through alternative political and humanitarian perspectives to be used as facilitating conditions. Therefore, comparing these two countries allows this thesis to show and produce an understanding of how securitization of immigration on the EU level does not just create a uniform national response but it can also be reshaped domestic political aims, policies, priorities, institutional practice and public narratives. In relations to this thesis' third research question, this given comparison in the coming chapters essentially strengthens the analysis by demonstrating how securitization rhetoric shapes perceptions of immigration and migrants through both explicit threat-based discourse and more indirect bureaucratic forms of control while reflecting on the umbrella of the EU itself.

Furthermore, in short, a critical discourse analysis approach had been used to examine the language used in policy documents, speeches, and certain media coverages regarding the immigration and border control in the EU, as well as to identify patterns in the way that securitization rhetoric is employed and its impact on policy decisions through the references of adopted new policies and actions. To answer this question, this thesis divided documents, articles, policies and speeches through keywords of this study's selection which are related to the securitization, this can be seen in the methods section. Moreover, connecting to the new utilized and invented institutions and policies' expected effects in general. These observations and methods regarding these institutions and policies will be expanded upon in the coming chapter to provide a clearer analytical account.

Also, to determine how the institutional structure for policymaking in the EU has facilitated the securitization process against refugees after 2015, this question forms one of the foundations of this research, as understanding the evolution of EU norms is essential to analysing the implementation of securitization. The EU's approach to border protection reflects its political and realist stance on migration governance, emphasizing security over humanitarian considerations. Examining the key dimensions of securitization within this context necessitates an analysis of policy transformations and ideological shifts to understand how security concerns have reshaped migration governance. This research seeks to conceptualize securitization by investigating the evolution of policies, institutional

responses, and security narratives that have shaped the EU's approach to migration control. Furthermore, this study assesses securitization through various theoretical models of security studies, with a primary focus on the Copenhagen School of thought. Given that theorists from the Copenhagen School emphasize the security speech act as the primary instrument for evaluating securitization, qualitative analysis particularly critical discourse analysis is also anticipated to be an effective method. However, a comprehensive approach was required, as analysing securitization at the EU level involves not only speech acts but also the facilitating conditions, including policy tools and institutional mechanisms. This research, therefore, seeks to determine how securitization has been operationalized by examining both the discursive framing of migration as a security threat and the concrete policies that have reinforced this narrative.

In the next chapter, the author will explain and detail the methodology used during this thesis to answer its research questions with their explanations in detail.

2. Methodology

This chapter of the thesis outlines the methodological framework that was used to examine the securitization of immigration on the EU level specifically after Refugee Crisis of 2015. The main purpose is to present how this thesis' research design, data collection and analytical observations justify the relations between the presented research questions of this dissertation overall. Attention was given to certain EU institutions and their transformations throughout the years to draw attention to the gradual securitization process over immigration on the EU level. Also, to better understand the complexity of the securitization process, especially when the context is EU, this study focused on both discourse and policy driven changes.

Moreover, the study also adopts a mixed-methods design that integrates qualitative and quantitative approaches. The qualitative approach of this study is securitization theory and critical discourse analysis (CDA) to examine relevant EU and national policies of certain Member States, laws, regulations, quotes of the political actors and official statements which were supported by a review of relevant scholarly literature. These observations and studies fundamentally illuminate how the narratives of security have been constructed and institutionalized on the EU level. Furthermore, the quantitative approach of this thesis employs for example, relevant statistics, tables, figures, digitally self-drawn maps and

illustrations. All this is to make a better connection of the multidimensional analysis of the securitization process within the broader EU context.

2.1. Research Questions and Their Structure

Research questions during this thesis tried to be direct and complementary to each other overall, as the author intended to make securitization of immigration on the EU level transparent and visible in general. The author aimed to focus on not *what* (such as examples or policies) but on *how*. Focusing on how gave the author a greater freedom on comparisons between policies and actions. While answering on how, the institutional structure of EU on migration issue had been kept on close observation because of its important relativity regarding the Refugee Crisis as well.

1. *What are the tools and policies of Securitization of Immigration on EU level?*

2. *How did the policies and tools have been adapted to the securitization process on EU level?*

To determine how the institutional structure for policy making of the EU to convey the securitization process against refugees after 2015, this question lays one of the foundations of this research because to implement the securitization process, the author has to know how the EU's norms evolved to that point. On the point of showing that the EU's approach of protecting their borders reflects its political and realist approach on the topic.

Listing the proportions of the questions of what through this topic brought the author of this thesis to the conceptualization of how within the context of securitization for that reason the transformation of policies and ideologies need to be answered.

Furthermore, the author assesses this question to understand the methods for identifying the securitization through certain models of understandings with different perspectives of security schools but of course mainly through the Copenhagen's school of understanding. One would anticipate that qualitative analysis, and critical discourse analysis in particular, would be sufficient for examining the success of a securitizing move given that the theorists of the Copenhagen School of Security Studies highlight the security speech act as the most important instrument for assessing a securitization process, especially on the EU level studies it requires a through research to determine not just the speech act but also the

facilitating conditions (tools and policies) for this dissertation and this question at hand, pinpointing the *how* after *what*.

Also, the author kept focus on the speech act and the discourse of securitization with implementation of new policies, so it brought up this research question.

3. *How is the securitization rhetoric used by the EU in the context of immigration and border control, and how does this rhetoric shape perceptions towards immigration and migrants in the EU?*

A CDA approach had been used to examine the language used in policy documents, speeches and certain media coverages regarding the immigration and border control in the EU (self-translations also had been used), as well as to identify patterns in the way that securitization rhetoric is employed and its impact on policy decisions through the references of adopted new policies and actions. To answer this question, aim was to divide documents, articles, policies and speeches through keywords of the author's selection which are related to the securitization, this can be seen in the methods section. Moreover, connecting to the EES and ETIAS' expected effects and by observations of the author, tried to answer this question and also this question and examples will refer to many more possibilities for further studies.

Furthermore, to link these questions through a ladder, the author articulated an approach of causality. First observing and studying the core of securitization theory while dissecting its components through visualisation, the author created a framework of transparency to make the focus of the thesis even more visible and open (described in detail in Chapter 2). Since securitization is in essence not visible through usual methods and could be mistaken for any other effects or subjects, visualisation is important while listing and expanding on the components that also sit at the core of this thesis.[8] Building on this foundation, the first research question, *What are the tools and policies of securitization of immigration on the EU level?* draws the attention from theoretical mechanisms of securitization to their concrete manifestation at an institutional and discursive levels. The analysis basically attempts to map out the EU-level mechanisms, including legislative measures, policy frameworks, externalization agreements and operational agencies such as FRONTEX or even theoretically EES/ETIAS alongside rhetorical tools such as crisis narratives, migration policies through threat framings and emergency justifications, to map out how the

[8] Ciută, Felix. "Security and the problem of context: a hermeneutical critique of securitisation theory." Review of international studies 35, no. 2 (2009), 304.

securitization unfolds in practice. The questioning here leads from the abstract dimensions that are characterizing the securitization theory towards the more concrete reality of its foundations under the EU governance, thus opening up a way to identifying patterns of maintenance and change and fast-tracked evolution in the aftermath of the 2015 Refugee Crisis (described in detail in through Chapters 5 to 8). Therefore, focusing on tools and policies does not merely serve as a display of the technical and legal side of processes represented by securitization, but also as a basis for looking at how emergency measures were legitimized, institutionalized, and communicated through both EU and Member States.

Secondly, now focusing on the conditions and how those conditions allowed the transformations of the EU's securitizing policies, second question, *How did the policies and tools have been adapted to the securitization process on EU level?* Focuses on the interplays of the process on the EU level. As was visualized before during this dissertation, the components of the securitization process are not static in nature but evolve in response to crises, audience reception and shifting political/security agendas (the evolving crises described in detail in Chapters 4). In connection, to answer this question, author essentially explores the processes of how the presented legal instruments, regulations, institutions, operational practices and policies were recalibrated or introduced during or after the wake of the Refugee Crisis of 2015. This dissertation also highlights the conditions of the evolution and adaptation of these policies and action taken within the EU's migration governance (listed in detail in Chapter 5). To further reach the answers presented by this research question, the author continued to apply the CDA approach over institutional communications, policy documents, regulations and legislative texts which were supported by quantitative evidence such as migration statistics, budget allocations, cost changes and operational data from certain EU agencies. Through this multi-layered approach the author attempted to connect these changes and recalibrations to reveal the institutional pathways towards a securitization process which was adopted by the EU.

Thirdly, a comparative analysis approach was needed to answer the question of *How is the securitization rhetoric used by the EU in the context of immigration and border control, and how does this rhetoric shape perceptions towards immigration and migrants in the EU?* to determine the extent to which how the EU's narrative over immigrants fuses with Member States' and how their practices shapes the rhetoric. Furthermore, based on the findings, there is a two-way dynamic at play: the securitization choices of Germany and Hungary do not merely receive the EU frames but also, once formed, feed back into collective securitization

within the Union. The author in essence, traced how national rhetoric, laws, and operational practices are also reflected to the EU level (explained in detail through Chapters 5 to 8) and then they also formed back as EU policy scripts and narratives in a comparative design. In this dissertation's mixed-methods, critical discourse analysis of laws, policies, and official communications, observed with quantitative indicators (Eurostat/UNHCR data, FRONTEX, EES and ETIAS outputs and budget reports) and visual tools (maps, tables, graphics, illustrations), author linked the shifts in language (crisis, threat, emergency), institutional manoeuvres (expanded mandates, new instruments), and material signals (resources being deployed and enforcement) at different levels. With such triangulation, the author was able to trace how German and Hungarian practices managed to help set some security framings into normalcy at the EU level, while EU measures further consolidated or recalibrated national approaches, thus identifying a pattern of collective securitization.

Methodologically through the combination of these research questions, this study aims makes the securitization claim more transparent, replicable and provable through three strategies:

1. *Triangulation of sources:* It combines official discourse (Communications, Regulations, agency strategies and official announcements) with quantitative indicators (FRONTEX budget reports/allocations and mandates, Eurostat entries, further statistical assumptions) to minimize the risk of misinterpreting securitization from the rhetoric.
2. *Process tracing and comparative analysis:* Key inflection points such as the 2015 refugee crisis, the 2016-2024 legislative cycles system roll-out which are traced alongside with a comparative examination of Hungary's and Germany's national securitization approaches. This procedure basically demonstrates how the domestic securitization patterns are interconnected with the EU-level securitization dynamics in general.

When combining and tracing all these research questions and process through the methodology as it is explained and listed, this dissertation was able to calculate a theoretical method of making securitization of immigration on the EU level transparent even for future studies.

2.2. Sources of Data

In this thesis, the principal goal of this study is to prove the securitization of immigration happens on the EU level specifically after the 2015 Refugee Crisis. Assessing this study field required assumptions, proving this phenomenon required a systematic analysis of the relations between certain dynamics of politics, events, crises and institutional responses, as well as the several discursive practices through which migration was framed as an extraordinary security issue. These analyses involved examining how the certain EU institutions and Member States, particularly Hungary and Germany, constructed immigration as a threat, how such constructions were put in legal and policy frameworks and how they were reinforced or contested across different political and social contexts. To gather the necessary information, the author mainly used online legal databases such as EUR-Lex (regulations, directives, decisions, communications), government websites and official EU institutional online portals, as well as national legislative archives from Hungary and Germany as primary sources for the qualitative data interpretations. These interpretations of qualitative data provided this study to interpret for meaning, discourse, framing and context.

In addition, policy papers, regulations, press releases, quotes from political and institutional actors and interviews were studied to capture both formal legal frameworks and political discourse. The source of data from these studies is mostly taken from official EU institutions, such as the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union or the targeted EU institutions such as FRONTEX's official online website. Other sources had been used for quotes and events came from radio talks, news agencies and media materials such as CNN or BBC News to further state the connections between the framing of security and political discourses. Moreover, official annual risk reports from FRONTEX throughout the years after 2015 were also consulted to reflect better on how immigration had been transformed and framed into a security issue on the EU level (described in detail in Chapter 6).

Moreover, process of securitization broken down through several indicators: (1) securitizing actors (EU officials, national political leaders); (2) referent objects (EU internal/external security, public order, border integrity); (3) threat (markers and statistics of risk, crisis, emergency); (4) audience (parliamentary assent, Council conclusions, polling where applicable) and lastly (5) facilitating conditions to further the initializing the securitization process (emergency procedures, new mandates, resource reallocations), all observed as if

they were a part of a grander system (described in detail in Chapter 3). Furthermore, adopting CDA for supporting the claims of securitization rhetoric had been used through studying keywords within legal texts, policy outputs, official institutional communication, literature, quotes and media coverage in order to trace how specific terms and narratives contributed to the construction of immigration as a security issue (described in detail in Chapter 5).[9]

In continuation, regarding the quantitative data, this study incorporated a wide range of visual and numerical sources to contextualize the securitization of immigration on the EU level. This thesis utilized statistical data and empirical sources of indications to point out and support the qualitative findings. For example, core statistical datasets were obtained from Eurostat (asylum applications or migration numbers), UNHCR and IOM (International Organization for Migration) or observing FRONTEX's budgetary numbers or operational spendings to further link the quantitative data to qualitative data for highlighting the existing dimensions of the securitization on the EU level.

In summary, primary and secondary sources are both used in this research's methodology to find the answers to its research questions. The Securitization Theory of the Copenhagen School serves as the foundation for this study's analysis of the securitization process on the EU level with a focus on immigration and refugees following the Refugee Crisis of 2015. Content analysis, quantitative, and qualitative with certain legal regulation analyses had been used to find the indications of facilitating conditions. Moreover, comparative case studies for certain immigration policies (chronological change of asylum and immigration policies of the EU) on the EU level and transformation of various EU institutions' (FRONTEX, EES and ETIAS) different effects on immigration and compared Hungary and Germany's responses to immigration flow to reflect better on the securitization process on EU level as well.

2.3. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

The securitization of immigration on the EU level after 2015 is examined in this research through using the critical discourse analysis methodology. The purpose of the analysis was to identify, evaluate, and comprehend how the dominant discourses around immigration and security are created, reproduced, processed and challenged in the discourse surrounding the EU's changing immigration policies as well as the reform of its certain institutions. Critical

[9] Chapter order was to create a coherent line to align with the research questions that were mentioned numerically.

Discourse Analysis (CDA) is an approach to studying how language produces and sustains power relations; in this thesis, author used CDA to code and search keywords, speech acts, and framing devices across EU and national laws, policy texts, official communications, given interviews and certain media to reveal how immigration was constructed and framed as a security threat specifically after Refugee Crisis of 2015 and to link those patterns to indicate the securitization process on the EU level and within certain Member States (budgets, enforcement outputs) in this thesis' methods design.[10]

This analysis involved several steps such as, identifying related keywords tied to security, migration, asylum seekers, third-country nationals (TCN) and refugees. Furthermore, the dominating discourses that emerge from the data are then identified using a CDA approach. In order to develop and defend securitization policies through modifications to various institutions and courses, this analysis looked at the language utilized in specific texts and speeches as well as the rhetorical devices and metaphors used. At the same time observing statistics via several sources (e.g., Eurostat) on the rising numbers regarding the analysed quantitative data on migration flows, asylum applications and refugee populations, as separately defined by the relevant statistical source reflected the tied securitization rhetoric tied to the securitization process which helped me to conclude certain facilitating conditions through this research.

Connected to the topic at hand, "*serious problems that threaten the lives or well-being of many*" reflects the issue of othering and processing the pressured threat.[11] The author also come to the understanding of also Schengen Area had also been gradually transformed through certain policy discourses while reflecting on the security rhetoric against the cross border movements of third-country nationals and people who are seeking international protection which supports the claims of the thesis on the existence of securitization process of immigration on the EU level.

In order to inform the analysis and the interpretations of the findings, in the interest of clarifying the analysis and the interpretations of the aimed findings, the author also consulted

[10] Norman Fairclough, "Critical Discourse Analysis," in The Routledge Handbook of Discourse Analysis (London: Routledge, 2023): 25.
[11] Teun A. Van Dijk, "Principles of Critical Discourse Analysis," *Discourse & Society* 4, no. 2 (1993): 250.

appropriate literature in CDA and securitization theory.[12] Below gives an example of the utilized method during the certain parts and chapters of the thesis:

Categories	Document Themes	Keywords observed	Timeline	Quantified
Security	Security, danger, illegal immigration, cross-border violations	Security, immigration, refuges, crimes, violations	Years	Keywords Frequently used keywords
Migration	Migration, asylum, refugees	Threat, security, terror		

***Table 1**: Author's own compilation based on concepts through selected various research and ideas for this part of the study*
***Type of Documents:** EU legal documents, public announcements, officials' speeches, academic articles.*

For this adopted CDA methodology, terminology in the analysed materials is carefully distinguished from the legal terminology used in this dissertation altogether. Terms such as "*migrant*," "*illegal migrant*," "*refugee*," and "*asylum seeker*" are kept as discursive keywords when used in the source texts to present an analysis. Their use in coding does not imply legal equivalence. The analysis instead applies legal categories where relevant, including TCNs, applicants for international protection, refugees, beneficiaries of international protection, and irregularly staying third-country nationals.

Moreover, the keyword selection process had been created through a deductive and targeted process of what might have been fit into a security rhetoric over official documents, policies or speeches. Essentially, these terms were derived from the securitization theory and the academic literature studied and observed on EU migration policies and securitization of immigration by the author. The list of chosen words above mentioned were then refined after an initial reading of the documents to include recurring EU-specific expressions to point towards a securitized existence. Later on, the coding and observation process combined these keywords with textual reading. These identified keywords, which were then categorized according to the following criteria: securitizing actor, referent object, securitized issue, security response, and legitimizing argument. The keyword analysis was used as the primary exploration method to identify trends and patterns that could indicate the process of securitization. The frequency of particular words or their combination was used to determine

[12] This idea was to bridge the gaps between theory and methodology which defines the centric problem of securitization overall.

the level of interest in a particular topic area. However, it was not used as the primary basis for analysis and conclusions but as a support to the claims since other factors might affect the frequency of a word or phrase, such as its volume or other characteristics. Instead, emphasis was placed on the context in which particular words or phrases were used and the role these elements played in the discussion of the topic area, it is always important to note that securitization cannot be directly identified and the author frequently aims to make this procedure closer to transparency to reflect that. In the core, specification over these keywords were the main approaches.

In summary, linking the security rhetoric through certain speeches, policy documents and strategies while connecting them through select keywords based on the discourse against and asylum-related discourse gave substantial indications of securitization during this research. Furthermore, this empirical strategy derived from these presentations and explanations is that linking speeches, policy documents and strategies through select keywords which are best framed as a corpus-assisted/keyword-assisted CDA designs.[13] These targeted keywords essentially function as empirical entry points that identify and define security clusters which dives into identifying security-related discursive patterns concerning migration, asylum and international protection overall. While observing these points, this CDA method provides a demonstration on how these clusters act and shows the security's status within the immigration through the gaps of these keywords (as contextual or quantitative indicators).[14] For a better explanation and visualisation, this study's selection criteria of legal/policy documents, speeches, communications and media sources for observation through CDA method can be listed as below:

- EU Treaties.
- EU regulations, directives and decisions.
- European Commission communications and policy papers.
- European Council and Council conclusions.
- European Parliament resolutions and reports.
- EU migration and asylum strategies/agendas.
- FRONTEX and EU agency reports.
- EU budget documents and funding programmes.

[13] Walker, Richard John. "Patterns and Meanings in Discourse: Theory and practice in corpus-assisted discourse studies (CADS)." *麗澤大学紀要* 98 (2015): 129-130.
[14] Scott, Mike. "PC analysis of key words—and key key words." System 25, no. 2 (1997): 233.

- Official speeches by EU leaders and commissioners.
- Official speeches by Hungarian and German leaders related to the topic at hand.
- Press releases and media statements.
- EU official web materials.
- Policy evaluations found in the academic literature.

Furthermore, the empirical results produced by utilizing the CDA method will identify and interpret the securitization patterns through which the immigration is constructed as a security issue on the EU level. Analysing the above-mentioned documents and policies over selected keywords, periods and timelines which were also shown during this chapter previously in the *Table 1* is expected to reveal the securitization process and make it even more transparent to the reader. Based on these, author also expects the linguistic focus on the selected keywords' recurrences within the targeted documents overall will contribute to the openness of the securitization of immigration. In particular, author's utilization of CDA aims to connect the EU to the securitization process' component of securitization actor. In this sense, presentation aims to reveal the institutions of EU are acting and they are not just administrative or policy-making bodies, but they are actors that participate in construction of migration as a threat. Therefore, choosing the CDA method was not just to reveal the discourse but also to reveal how this discourse functions on the EU level. The empirical presentations and application of CDA are mainly carried out within the Chapters 7-10, together with their subchapters. These chapter analyse the EU documents, speeches, budgets, official press releases in order to identify and dissect the discursive mechanisms of securitization through which immigration is securitized on the EU level and within the selected Member States of the EU for this research.

Moreover, methodologically this strategy also provides this study a translation of these policy documents and usage of the included targeted keywords to security rhetoric.[15] As a result, combining this strategy and the aimed translation of security rhetoric through keywords demonstrated how threat, referent objects and legitimating arguments are produced, intended and normalised on the EU level for a securitization process at the end.[16]This method essentially ensures and measures securitization as a relational linguistic

[15] Author of this thesis essentially used a multi-level CDA logic to determine this translation of security.

[16] Mautner, Gerlinde. "Checks and Balances: How Corpus Linguistics Can Contribute to CDA." In Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis, edited by Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer, 156. London: SAGE Publications, 2015.

practice while making it transparent enough for it to be seen, connecting migration and asylum-related discourse with security discourse explicitly over targeted keywords.[17]

2.4. Thesis Outline

In Chapter 1, this thesis outlines the most important points of the subject while pointing towards the theoretical framework that underlines the study, defining certain key concepts, pointing research questions and its scope in general. This part of the thesis also clarifies key assumptions and introduces essential concepts to further conceptualize the importance of this study. Furthermore, during Chapter 2, the author presents the combined methodology of this study to answer the research questions of the thesis in detail.

In Chapter 4, the author lists and compares the related literature regarding immigration, securitization and the target study. This part of the thesis surveys the established literature on Copenhagen School's securitization theory and subjects connecting to mainly the EU post 2015 Refugee Crisis. Comparing core concepts and trying to observe the clashing ideas between significant research identified gaps of the broader study and linked with this dissertation's aims. This chapter fundamentally presents the mixed study designs and specifies this study's contribution to literature.

In the next part of the dissertation, the author explained the basics and the key concepts of the Securitization Theory of the Copenhagen School. This chapter explains the historical background of the theory while referencing its founders (Buzan, Wæver, de Wilde) and presents the author's visualization of the securitization (threat, referent object, securitizing actor, audience, intended outcome, speech act and facilitating conditions) to explain and connect the post 2015 statue of the EU regarding immigration. This visualization also sits at the core of this thesis which touches every part of this study's observations and work. Chapter further explains the components of the securitization process in detail while connecting them to the collective securitization process of immigration on the EU level to form a foundation for the dissertation's later chapter that would explain in specific details.

Later, in Chapter 6, the dissertation explains the roots and the reasons of how the Arab Spring started and caused the Refugee Crisis of 2015. Presenting digitally hand drawn maps of the migration routes and target countries to show the geographical patterns of movement and the main destinations of refugees during and after the 2015 Refugee Crisis. Moreover, usage of

[17] Baele, Stephane J., and Elise Rousseau. "At war or saving lives? On the securitizing semantic repertoires of Covid-19." *International Relations* 37, no. 2 (2023): 205.

graphics and statistics of applicants for international protection and broader migration flows who were coming to EU and its Member States served to illustrate the grander scale, distribution and shifts of migration flows through the years and framing them as a threat in order to contextualize the securitization dynamics.

In Chapter 7, the author examines the evolution of the EU's migration policies specifically after 2015 and compares them through the lenses of securitization. Focusing on how the institutional responses reflected and reinforced the processes of securitization on the EU level. Outlining the legal and policy frameworks such as the EU-Turkey Agreement or the subsequent reforms under the New Pact on Migration and Asylum highlighted the mechanism that framed immigration as a security threat. Dissecting these policies and changes through this chapter benefited the author by providing a clearer understanding of how EU level legal frameworks and institutional measures contributed to the securitization of immigration on the EU level.

In connection with the previous chapter, Chapter 8 presented how FRONTEX was an essential tool of the securitization process over immigration. Studying and listing the changes through certain historical points while how this institution evolved after 2015. Demonstrating how FRONTEX's mandate, scope, power and resources changed explains how the EU transformed this institution as a tool for its own framing mechanism towards coming immigrants. During this chapter there will be visual presentations of graphics, tables and statistics also based on FRONTEX's annual risks reports and officially published budgets through the years. This chapter stands as an essential part of the dissertation because FRONTEX's evolution and activities over the years indicates a concrete example of the securitization process on the EU level.

Furthermore, several other examples of securitization tools of the EU to reach a concrete presentation are also given in Chapter 9 which were EES and ETIAS. Different from FRONTEX's evolution, EES and ETIAS are entirely new instruments and didn't directly evolve from an old one. However, this chapter holds a theoretical point of view and analysis because EES and ETIAS were not functional yet during this thesis' observations. During this chapter functioning and the creations of these tools are mentioned and studied through the lenses of securitization and their potential impact over the coming immigrants. To put it briefly, the author reflected these tools' potential aim as to be a profiling tool and to be used

as another facilitating condition within the EU to further brand immigrants as a possible existential security issue.

Moreover, in Chapter 10, the author continued to aim to make securitization of immigration on the EU level more transparent through comparing two different Member States of the EU that stood on the different sides of reaction towards immigrants which were Hungary and Germany. Analytically comparing them over historical and legal perspectives, author tried to achieve a common aspect of how EU's supranational effects and these Member States' actions also corresponded with each other to reveal the mutually reinforcing processes through which securitization of immigration is shaped at the EU level and reflected also into national policies.

Lastly, in conclusion, the author aimed to give a direct comprehensive summary of everything that was mentioned and elaborated during this dissertation while tying the dots of securitizing components together. Putting the pieces in a collective argument while presenting securitization of immigration on the EU level had been the main conclusive point.

3. Significance of the Study

Contribution and the significance of this study is its aim to improve the understanding of EU migration governance through its demonstration of how immigration securitization developed into an established EU security framework since 2015 and through its demonstration of empirical research methods which study this process without reducing it to rhetorical patterns or theoretical frameworks. The study presents three main contributions because it tries provide a replicable method to trace securitization across different levels of EU governance the study establishes the distinction between securitization and possibly politicization in the EU context and the study aims to enable researchers to track security reasons and framings through EU policy procedures while observing their resulting impacts on immigration.

The study serves as an interpretive and theoretical research framework which applies to institutions that maintain their security through multiple distinct processes, which include problem/threat definitions and policy translation and legal adjustment. The researchers investigate securitization through interpretive analysis and empirical indicators which try to show its existence through the connection of threat framing and exceptional instruments and institutional changes. This approach connects between two opposing perspectives which do not connect between regular security practices and security operations which handle

administrative matters. The study at hand aims to improve its conceptual accuracy through its establishment of securitization as a transparent concept as well. The political battle over immigration shows how citizens (audience) view the issue while securitization creates a shift toward security governance which operates through dedicated authority and risk management and enforcement mechanisms. The identification of these dynamics stops researchers from making excessive claims about securitization which helps them to examine EU developments and policies especially after 2015 with more directness.

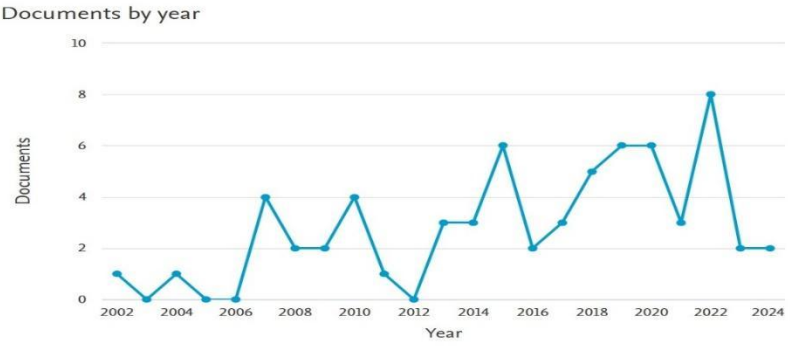
The dissertation presents its objective to solve the problem of EU securitization which operates without transparency. Securitization moves forward in an unpredictable environment which agencies and expert procedures and agenda items and gradual policy instruments create through minor modifications that exist in different categories and guidelines and data systems and coordination methods which remain invisible to discourses. The study uses statistical methods together with comparative analysis and policy observations to show these changes which result in improved accountability research by tracking how security authorities (securitizing actors) change their security justification methods toward more overexaggerated security policies which they establish as necessary.

Essentially, the dissertation aimed to provide a skeleton on how securitization can be made transparent even through multileveled policy making processes such as within the EU itself. Overall, the study tries to provide a durable and dependable analytical framework which is conceptual and methodological that helps explain variations across policy fields and Member States' approach to securitization on immigration and aims to equips future research and academics to test how securitization operates in the EU and how it can be transparent especially beyond the post-2015 period.

4. Literature Review

Securitization of Immigration has evolved into an immense area for research during the last decade especially inside the framework of the EU. The significant areas of research and study while intersecting security, immigration, borders and various discourses became topics of high-level interest. Scholars who find these topics intriguing claim immigration had not just been politicized but also had been securitized. Pushing a phenomenon known as immigration to a point of existential or a national threat became an event of well-known issue during our times.

Furthermore, this literature review examines how migration and third-country nationals has been framed as a security concern and a threat within the EU, particularly in response to external migration crises, terrorist threats, and shifting political landscapes. It draws inspiration and foundation from the groundbreaking work of the Copenhagen School of Security Studies, which highlights the process by which issues become securitized. During this literature review the plan is to compare and explore the past related research and studies from the perspective of various scholars while pointing towards the needed notes. Giving an out-spanning analysis through the eyes of the different scholars of this securitization phenomenon is always essential.



Graph 1: *Author's own compilation based on the Scopus Database of articles through the years. Source: "Scopus Preview - Scopus - Welcome to Scopus." n.d. www.scopus.com. https://www.scopus.com/home.uri?zone=header&origin=sbrowse.*

Moreover, observing the increased related research volume also reflects the interest on the subject at hand and also can indicate the gaps of the research as well. The generated graphic above is based on the Scopus' database which is based on the terms EU, immigration and securitization to categorise related research. The selected terms for categorisation shows a clear trend of increasing academic interest in the intersection of these topics over time, especially since 2005. In the early 2000s based on the graph there were a relatively low number of studies which reflects a period when the securitization of immigration within the EU was still emerging as a field of scholarly interest. Also, this early period reflects the early stages of the EU's development of more modern immigration and border security policies as well.

However, after 2010 there is a high spike of interest towards securitization, EU and immigration which could be related to the Arab Spring's effects. Later on, the spikes in certain years such as 2015, 2018 and 2021, suggesting heightened interest or key events that spurred academic output. After 2015 the high jump of academic focus on the topics can be

connected to the start of the refugee crisis in which millions of displaced people flowed towards Europe. Fundamentally, this period of increase also correlates with the significant political and social events that intensified debates on the EU's stance on immigration and securitization.

Overall, the relatively low number of studies about these topics shows there is still a notable gap in the literature addressing the intersection of EU, immigration, and securitization. The shortage of studies indicates a clear gap in the reviewed literature. This scarcity of research points towards how the relevant aspects of EU's securitization on immigration still left undiscovered and this thesis will try to address them thoroughly while connecting and comparing impactful scholars' opinions on the subject. Moreover, many articles presented or existing (systematically reviewed top-quartile Scopus International Relations studies using Copenhagen School's Securitization Theory) continue to argue they apply, operationalize or empirically demonstrate the securitization. However, because of the theory's methodological vagueness challenges evidentiary demands that is why this chapter and this overall thesis compiles and presents a system to argue an empirical framework throughout this study by also presenting and comparing the ideas of scholars as well.[18]

At the end, it should also be noted that throughout all of literature no research ever included (as far as author's own research and identification) or integrated CDA within EES or ETIAS since these systems were made available recently.

4.1. Theoretical Foundations of the Securitization Theory in the Context of Immigration

The specific literature on the securitization theory highlights certain themes such as the existence of threat, political discourse and institutional responses in shaping migration narratives. Spearhead of studies originates from the works of *Buzan, Wæver* and *de Wilde* that lays the foundations of the securitization theory that we know of today.[19] A key component of this study is comprehending securitisation and highlighting the significance of *speech acts* in turning non-security issues into existential threats and thanks to the theoretical framework given by those scholars that especially highlights the importance of narratives and discourse, so that this study can have a clear view overall.

[18] Silva, Caroline Cordeiro Viana, and Alexsandro Eugenio Pereira. "Securitization theory and its empirical application: a literature review." *Revista de Sociologia e Política* 32 (2024): 15-18.
[19] Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde, Security, 1.

This chapter will continue to explore the context over the foundations of securitization through the studies of selected relevant scholars and research that are relevant to the securitization of immigration as well. This securitization process of immigration is deeply connected and rooted in the discussions of security, political discourse, safety and identity in general. First, this study needs to understand the underlying reasons of how an issue such as immigration can be identified as a threat and to understand that we need to look deep within the theoretical frameworks of securitization theory through the lenses of relevant scholars and researchers.

Engaging in a debate to determine if immigration is a threat or not is an issue of philosophical debate, however we can try to observe the cornerstones of academic debates. The concepts of security and how these concepts deem immigration a threat varies. In 1983, Barry Buzan who was a prominent figure and a scholar in the Copenhagen School of Security Studies claimed in 1983 that the conventional definition of *security*, which primarily refers to the existence of individual sovereign nations and the military challenges they face, was insufficient. As a result, Buzan and his associates created a framework that centred security strategies around moral decision-making and human agency. This basically emphasised how crucial players and actors are in framing selected problems, specific people, or groups of people, as security risks (such as the rise of anti-Muslim or immigration prejudice in our times by certain political leaders of world superpowers).[20] Providing the new concept over framing a threat, The Copenhagen School opened the doors for understanding how the political elites and groups are constructing (securitizing) our current problems from normal to extremes.

Moreover, according to *Weaver*, securitization is a *speech act* in which political elites attempt to persuade their audience of a special claim to use whatever means are necessary to block it by utilising terminology connected to security.[21] This whole process of persuasion attempts to make the audience to accept normal trends as an existential threat makes the foundations of this theory. Political elites or groups seek to portray immigration as a danger to economic stability, social cohesiveness, or even national identity by securitizing it. However, rationalising this process of securitization also creates frictions within a society.

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[20] Nafisa Abdulhamid, "The Securitization of Immigration in the European Union: A New (Cultural) Racism," Potentia: Journal of International Affairs 9 (2018): 47.

[21] Ole Wæver, *Securitization and Desecuritization*, vol. 5 (Copenhagen: Centre for Peace and Conflict Research, 1993): 6-8.

Husymans points that the securitization of such trends and approaches could lead a society to grow xenophobic or even racist tendencies in general.[22] Which in result can backfire and make the political elite/groups to lose control of the situation to a much worse issue. Later on, these frictions lead on to an environment of fear and chaos. However, these kinds of events could also be useful to generate even more securitization processes and intended outcomes, thus an environment for security is created by deeming the perpetually revolving threats. *Balzac* argues that in connection, elites or securitizing actors are always in need of a legitimacy to back their actions to gather even more support (essentially political or actual power) and to do so the claims of the actor must persist and exist all the time.[23] Therefore, even though the domain of the audience is thrown into a state of rising fear, these actors capitalise it and boost their legitimacy and power over the rule.

Furthermore, there are also critics about *speech act* itself within the process that boosts the field of fear inside the society (*the audience*) to gather legitimacy from them in the long term. Several scholars and bodies of literature argue that the role of media is always boosting the process of securitization if used correctly by the actors in general. For example, *Bonino* argues that the media discourses and feeds accelerate the overall securitization of immigration in Europe through economic and societal fears.[24] Moreover, in relation to this thesis' topic, the framing of migrants and persons seeking international protection in 2015 Refugee Crisis also persists through media which *Greasing* and *Boomgaarden* claims that the immigration had been continuously framed to be an issue by several media tabloids as well.[25] So far it can be observed that the scholars and a bulk of the literature is continuously suggesting that the *speech act* is an essential and important part of the securitization process. The author agrees with this assumption as part of its analytical framework and this assumption will be reflected in the coming chapters.

In addition, framing a threat in a general context is not just a passive action within the process but an important and an essential part in general. Essentially, within the broader framework of migration and international protection, the foundation of securitization provides great opportunities and tools for securitizing actors to pursue their intended goals overall. For

[22] Jef Huysmans, "The European Union and the Securitization of Migration," *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 38, no. 5 (2000): 752.
[23] Balzacq, "The Three Faces of Securitization," 190-191.
[24] Alessandra Buonfino, "Between Unity and Plurality: The Politicization and Securitization of the Discourse of Immigration in Europe," *New Political Science* 26, no. 1 (2004): 24.
[25] Esther Greussing and Hajo G. Boomgaarden, "Shifting the Refugee Narrative? An Automated Frame Analysis of Europe's 2015 Refugee Crisis," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 43, no. 11 (2017): 1750.

instance, scholars *Léonard* and *Kaufert* notes that the EU constantly utilizes various institutions, policies and partnerships to surround migration as a threat, therefore basically framing it as a security issue in general.[26] While this research suggests that the EU is actively framing the immigration, asylum seekers and refugees as a threat, it should not be forgotten that the EU's migration policy also operates within the borders of the humanitarian rights framework.

In relation to the previous statement, *Cuttitta* makes the case that their Mediterranean search and rescue missions which in return offer a crucial counter narrative to the securitized strategy adopted by the EU officials over the issue. By redefining migration as a humanitarian issue that calls for compassion and legal protection rather than control and deterrent, he contends that these NGOs not only offer immediate help but also subvert and distract the increasing security paradigm and rhetoric within the EU. This viewpoint emphasises the significance of humanitarian responsibilities and highlights a notable deficiency and missing components within the securitization-focused studies that could ignore the role that humanitarian action and civil society play in influencing migration policies overall.[27] Fundamentally, narratives and framing surrounding the immigration could possibly change fluidly and potentially challenge entrenched securitized policies and foster a more nuanced understanding of migration as a complex issue that encompasses and grips not only security concerns but also human rights and humanitarian obligations within the EU in general.

Boswell also offers a distinct range between practice and discourse within the securitization process for a more direct analysis. She considers the relation of the process through two levels, basically securitization in discourse legitimizes the discourse. *Boswell* argues that securitization in discourse serves to legitimize certain security practices, yet these practices often operate independently of consistent public approval. In the context of EU migration policy, the framing of immigration as a security threat can only not just justify restrictive measures and empower administrative agencies to act with significant autonomy, often bypassing full public or judicial scrutiny. This process further reveals a disconnect between discourse and practice, while securitizing language (*speech act*) can validate many of the

[26] Sarah Léonard and Christian Kaunert, "The Securitisation of Migration in the European Union: Frontex and Its Evolving Security Practices," in *The Spiralling of the Securitisation of Migration in the European Union*, ed. Rik Coolsaet and Didier Bigo (Abingdon: Routledge, 2023): 94-99.
[27] Paolo Cuttitta, "Repoliticization through Search and Rescue? Humanitarian NGOs and Migration Management in the Central Mediterranean," *Geopolitics* 23, no. 3 (2018): 653-654.

specific actions, agencies may proceed without sustained accountability, influenced sporadically by public debate. As a result, demands for oversight and over security may emerge inconsistently and not always proportionally to the societal impact of decisions, underscoring the complex role of public framing in legitimizing and shaping EU-level migration policy.[28]

Moreover, specifying threats through localisation also suits the foundations of the securitization theory. *Nyman* introduces certain concepts of the securitization process while examining them through critics and counterpoints. This research values a critical approach on the limitations of the securitization theory which will be valuable for this thesis to look upon the EU level of securitization in the coming chapters. *Nyman's* approach to the limitations of securitization comes in the form of several critics. These critics argue that it remains insufficiently *critical* and rooted in traditional (neo)realist security assumptions, still prioritizing the state over alternative referent objects, like human security. The theory also lacks a normative stance, neither endorsing nor condemning securitization, and does not clearly guide when securitization might be preferable or ethically justified. This neutrality is viewed as a weakness by some, as it limits the theory's applicability in guiding positive societal change, such as using security concerns to support emancipatory causes.[29]

Additionally, several scholars such as *McDonald* and *Hansen* continue to argue that the securitization theory heavily focuses on the *speech act* which places it into the centre of the securitization process and pushes aside the practical parts of the securitizing moves.[3031] Furthermore, *Balzac* criticized securitization theory for lacking a substantial methodology and also putting emphasis on the audience acceptance for methodological vagueness, as defining and verifying *audience* agreement in practice which remains challenging. Finally, the theory's frequent analysis of only successful securitizations leads to confirmation bias, potentially overstating the theory's relevance as researchers often select cases that align with successful securitization instances.[32]

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[28] Christina Boswell, "Migration Control in Europe after 9/11: Explaining the Absence of Securitization," *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 45, no. 3 (2007): 589-592.

[29] Jonna Nyman, "Securitization Theory," in *Critical Approaches to Security*, ed. Laura J. Shepherd (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013): 60-61.

[30] McDonald, "Securitization and the Construction of Security," 571.

[31] Lene Hansen, "The Little Mermaid's Silent Security Dilemma and the Absence of Gender in the Copenhagen School," *Millennium* 29, no. 2 (2000): 287.

[32] Thierry Balzacq, "Securitization Theory," in Securitization Theory: How Security Problems Emerge and Dissolve, ed. Thierry Balzacq (2011): 9-17.

Another limiting factor for the securitization theory is the ambiguous treatment of the *speech act*. Stritzel states that the confusion over the speech act's function in the securitisation process results from the theory's presentation of it as both a single utterance and an *intersubjective process of constructing a threat*. The larger social connections and continuous articulations that make up securitisation are not captured when the speech act is seen as a single utterance. This ambiguity draws attention to a conflict in the framework of the Copenhagen School, which attempts to strike a balance between a more fluid, post-structuralist approach based on language and performativity and a structured social sphere (actors, audience, intersubjectivity).[33]

These limitations combined present an ambiguous concept of the speech act and framing of a threat while pushing practice out of the theory in general. This complexity surrounding the speech act complicates the understanding of threat construction as a social process which creates a need for a more direct approach for discourse. *By addressing these tensions, the literature can explore broader interpretative frameworks that capture the complex dynamics of securitization, especially relevant in the EU immigration context.* The thesis at hand aims to find these gaps and points towards on EU level while observing the securitization process to determine the reflection of framing.

4.2. Historical Context of the Securitization of Immigration

Through the years, the approach to immigration and its context has changed on a complex level of understanding, especially with the rise of recent conflicts, wars, politics and globalism. But this chapter focus will be the securitization of immigration within the EU that reflects both long-standing and evolving security dynamics shaped by political, social, and economic factors through the observations, comparisons and studies of various scholars.

Huysmans largely observes the migration in Europe as a large construct in the terms of labour mobility and economic opportunity, particularly during the post-1950s and 1960s era when countries welcomed migrants to rebuild their already devastated economies.[34] In his work he examines the EU's shifted policies while facing immigration and sees immigration as an economic opportunity while exploring historical influences which makes this work a valuable foundation to this thesis. However, securitization sees immigration as an

[33] Holger Stritzel, "Towards a Theory of Securitization: Copenhagen and Beyond," *European Journal of International Relations* 13, no. 3 (2007): 372-377.
[34]Huysmans, "The European Union and the Securitization of Migration," 753.

opportunity on a more complex level than *Huysmans*' work. But before that the historical foundations of this context should be studied through literature.

Bigot states that as the Cold War tensions intensified, political narratives/framing began to shift increasingly, associating migration increasingly with ideological threats and the control of external borders. Which later he adds to suggest how the Cold War-era security perspectives impacted the EU's approach to migration while analysing the framing of migrants as potential security threats.[35] Understanding how certain periods of times could reflect on various complex phenomena such as immigration itself is important to reflect on our times because the Cold War's aftereffects continues to shape our times as well.

Furthermore, based on the *Guild's* perspective this period of time set the stage for later securitization efforts by introducing certain concepts of internal and external security risks tied to the migration flows, establishing a foundation and a framework upon which later security practices would build. Which he offers a thorough examination of the relationship between migration and security in contemporary European policy, taking into account how historical antecedents have shaped securitisation tactics today.[36]However, there are also counter points to *Guild's* approach to migration and security within European policy making which Boswell claims that the EU commitment to human rights places certain limits on security-driven policies, creating a more complex policy landscape than securitization alone would suggest.[37]

However, this does not change the reality of the politics that affects the causality of the refugee crisis. *Ceyhan* and *Tsoukala* contend that migration is also viewed through the lens of risk and turned into a security issue by the Western populations instead of a challenge for economy or social issues, which aims to monitor and classify populations according to perceived risks in addition to containing threats, despite *Guild's* emphasis on the securitisation framework's dominance in forming EU migration policy. They contend that this strategy has resulted in the creation of advanced surveillance systems that cut over

[35]Didier Bigo, "Security and Immigration: Toward a Critique of the Governmentality of Unease," *Alternatives* 27, no. 1_suppl (2002): 73-76.
[36] Elspeth Guild, *Security and Migration in the 21st Century* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013): 176-178.
[37] Boswell, "Migration Control in Europe after 9/11," 604.

conventional boundaries and integrate migration management with more comprehensive risk assessment frameworks in EU governance.[38]

Moreover, *Waever* and *Balzac* address the significance of speech acts in the securitisation process from a different angle from that angle for us to understand the EU migration policies to be successful, they must also be in line with public attitudes and views can be understood in a sense. They contend that public support and even opposition influences how successful securitizing efforts are, even if authorities may portray migration as a security concern. In particular, *Balzacq* notes that this interplay between public opinion and policy frequently leads to a hybrid policy approach that takes into account both popular demand for greater considerations and security imperatives (specifically from the elites).[39] [40]

In continuation, the end of Cold-War brought about a mass migration flow to the EU which linked migration to the security concerns all together. Various political actors and groups later on developed a security narrative to seek ways to protect the EU's internal and external stability while managing the flow of migrants. As a result, a duality had been formed to manage the migration in effect. In connection, according to *Geddes*, the laid foundations of EU's policies for cooperation on security issues, tying migration closely to cross-border security concerns and setting a precedent for later policy frameworks that would approach migration through a risk-management lens. This growing preoccupation with security could be understood to lead to significant investments in coordination mechanisms, marking a shift from seeing migration primarily as an economic or social matter to framing it as a central security issue which continues to contribute to the duality of the situation.[41]

Following the Cold War's after affects, the processes of securitisation have also been dominant in determining the EU's attitude towards immigration, given that it has found a way to relate immigration to possible threats to both domestic and external order. In this case, it resulted in a policy framework that aimed at controlling the risks associated with the movement of persons across borders, framing immigration as a security problem. In addition to this, according to *Bello*, this whole process of securitization is not simple but rather complex, owing to the influence of national identity and embedded bias, as further elaborated

[38] Ayse Ceyhan and Anastassia Tsoukala, "The Securitization of Migration in Western Societies: Ambivalent Discourses and Policies," *Alternatives* 27, no. 1_suppl (2002): 24-25.
[39] Wæver, *Securitization and Desecuritization,* 3-4.
[40] Balzacq, "The Three Faces of Securitization," 176, 181.
[41] Andrew Geddes, *Immigration and European Integration: Beyond Fortress Europe?* 2nd ed. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008): 170-186.

by a cognitive constructivist approach. While some actors retain an integrative humanitarian view and campaign against securitization, others regard migration as a threat to national security and impose severe restrictions. This obsession with the opposing tendencies remains visible in the EU approach as migration policy is subjected to both pressures of securitisation and that of de-securitisation.[42]

There is also a historical counterpoint in play as well. Since the EU tries to utilize integration, human rights and uniting people with different backgrounds the securitization both leaves the foundation and also continues to find its dominant position in the EU's certain immigration policies. This paradoxical existence of securitization in this context creates a substantial gap within the literature. Related to these like it was explained before during this chapter, unlike through a nexus of immigration/security. The discussion of the complex interplay between migration and security while highlighting the security approach and then the migration approach which is why reflects certain insight to this thesis at hand. Security studies' approach is to strategically approach these issues in line with EU migration policies, which aim to manage borders and lower perceived risks related to migration and demographic shifts like *Koslowski* and *Rudolph* argues in general.[43][44] While emphasising humanitarian responsibilities, human security issues included into the EU policy which frequently continue to function within a securitized framework following the Cold War's end. This has, overall, in a sense, resulted in humanitarian actions that, despite their intentions, put state control and border security ahead of more comprehensive policies that welcome migrants. As a result, there is a conflict between maintaining state security and safeguarding persons as even humanitarian programs inside the EU are carried out in ways that support securitised migratory patterns. The EU's migration regulations demonstrate this strategy, which reflects the larger challenge of striking a balance between state security concerns and migrant protection.[45]

Despite these distinctions, historically the EU's policy structure regarding the definitions of immigration (like defining asylum seekers or refugees) continued to be static. Despite the

[42]Valeria Bello, "Introduction-The Spiralling of the Securitisation of Migration in the EU: From the Management of a 'Crisis' to a Governance of Human Mobility?," in *The Spiralling of the Securitisation of Migration in the European Union*, ed. Rik Coolsaet and Didier Bigo (Abingdon: Routledge, 2023): 11-15.
[43]Rey Koslowski, "International Migration and European Security in the Context of EU Enlargement," *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 12, no. 1 (1998): 42-44.
[44]Christopher Rudolph, *National Security and Immigration: Policy Development in the United States and Western Europe since 1945* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006): 41-86.
[45]Jef Huysmans and Vicki Squire, "Migration and Security," in *The Routledge Handbook of Security Studies*, ed. Myriam Dunn Cavelty and Victor Mauer (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009): 187-189.

EU's professed humanitarian obligations, such as those delineated in certain obligations are often operationalised within a system that is securitised. Because of this challenge humanitarian initiatives like asylum and refugee protection sometimes put border security and state control ahead of a comprehensive strategy for migrant welfare or acceptance.[46] According to academics like *Aradau*, this strategy depoliticises migrants in the end by portraying them as vulnerable or threatening instead than as complicated political actors with rights and demands.[47]

The EU's dual approach to migration regulation is reflected in this securitisation of humanitarian programs, underscoring the larger conflict between commitments to protect migrants and state security concerns. These inconsistencies are apparent in the EU's more general border policies, such as those in possibility of liking to FRONTEX in our current times as an example, where security measures frequently and actively take precedence over humanitarian obligations, so solidifying a worldview that views migration primarily as a security risk that has to be controlled. The difficulty of developing a cohesive migration system that can satisfy the security concerns of the EU while guaranteeing protections for migrants' human rights is best shown by this continuous struggle.[48]

There are also the points of the Schengen Agreement and its securitization of borders. Fundamentally, the EU has increased security around its external borders as a result of the Schengen Agreement's emphasis on open internal borders, which has strengthened the notion that stable borders are crucial for both national and regional stability. According to academics like Didier *Bigo*, Schengen signalled a change to a governmentality of unease, where the EU began to more closely associate migration with security issues. *Bigo* claims that by perceiving migrants through a risk-based lens, this securitisation reveals a willingness to govern migration in ways that put state security ahead of humanitarian considerations.[49]

What Schengen represents comes with the purpose of integration, but certain scholars suggest a consistent possibility of destabilization if given unrestricted movements. Although unrestricted movement inside Europe had been made easier by the Schengen framework,

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[46]Matthew J. Gibney, *The Ethics and Politics of Asylum: Liberal Democracy and the Response to Refugees* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004): 247.
[47]Claudia Aradau, "The Perverse Politics of Four-Letter Words: Risk and Pity in the Securitisation of Human Trafficking," *Millennium* 33, no. 2 (2004): 252-254, 270-276.
[48]Sandra Lavenex and Rahel Kunz, "The Migration–Development Nexus in EU External Relations," *European Integration* 30, no. 3 (2008): 443-445.
[49]Bigo, "Security and Immigration," 76-78.

others contend that its focus on external border security has led to a "*Fortress Europe*" attitude that frequently puts exclusion ahead of humanitarian duties regarding people who seek international protection. Because migrants and asylum seekers are increasingly viewed as possible security threats rather than as people in need of protection, scholars like *Elspeth Guild* argue and explain the Schengen's existence, its external security focus and the dangers of weakening the EU's commitment to human rights, from here a perspective of overall understanding can be gathered in totality.[50] Furthermore, certain policies tend to concentrate more on containment than on integration or aid, Lavenex and Kunz point out that this securitized approach makes it more difficult for the EU to respond compassionately to migrant crises. The selective emphasis on some forms of migration in this securitisation of migration has prompted more criticism.[51]

Furthermore, *Miller* and *Mills* also contend that the Schengen Agreement, which was once intended to promote free movement, has gradually changed towards a more security focused framework in response to outside pressures and crises. They make this claim by analysing the integration aims of Schengen and the emergence of securitization. The Fortress Europe concept, in which borders are tightened to control perceived security concerns, is exemplified by this trend. As migratory populations are largely seen through out of a security focused lens, this securitized lens might harm or even overcome humanitarian obligations, supporting *Guild's* various criticisms that security imperatives take precedence above humanitarian ideals.[52]

Based on the opinions of this thesis, the arguments of duality and the complicated nature of the EU's structure of idealism towards humanitarian needs clashes with the security of their borders. This whole duality creates a complex nature which at the end benefits securitization. This whole complex nature and duality make securitization on EU level unlocatable/unpredictable on a foundation level that is why this thesis values different approaches towards securitization on multiple levels by different scholars who hold uncommon opinions on it. However, understanding how the EU came to this point historically is also important because politics of the world changed with the new millennium as well as the scholars' opinions and approaches to the immigration and security overall.

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[50] Guild, *Security and Migration*, 179.

[51] Lavenex and Kunz, "The Migration-Development Nexus," 444-449.

[52] DeMond Shondell Miller and John Thomas Mills, "Schengen vs. Fortress Europe-EU," *Peace Review* 32, no. 2 (2020): 167-169.

Which brings this topic to the world after 9/11 attacks on the United States of America (USA). There are various approaches to how 9/11 attacks changed world politics and several academics argue that post-9/11 securitized the policies of the EU towards immigration. *Kaunert* and *Léonard* illustrate these examples on how 9/11 inspired an essential transformation in the EU approach to counterterrorism-from fragmented, state-centric responses to greater unity and a more EU-level strategic response-are shown. It reflects collective securitization wherein the terrorist threat has become pan-European rather than being seen as a narrowly national issue; hence, justifying the rush to develop EU-wide policies. The war on terror catalysed legislative cooperation, most notably on matters regarding intelligence sharing and cross-border policing. The effect was to crisp up the policymaking whereby crises increasingly drove European governance, reinforcing the importance of EU-level counterterrorism as a cornerstone of its security framework.[53]

Scholars like *d'Appollonia* presents a critique that the development as one that has treasured migration policies far too much with counterterrorism and thereby complicated humanitarian responsibilities, possibly alienating migrant communities. According to *Huysmans*, framing migration as a security threat consolidates exclusionary policies that undermine the EU's foundational human rights commitments, usually declared to form a core part of the Union's identity. This bevy of critique reflects a concern that post-9/11 securitization strategies, while addressing legitimate security needs, risk overreach at the expense of the EU's long-term commitment to justice and inclusivity.[54] However, when two sides of the coin collide between security and humanitarian ideals of the EU fear emerges. Based on this thesis, this emergence once again benefits securitization but as a result buries the traces of its process which is why it creates another gap in the research.

On the side of the terror's effects over the securitization, *Anthony M. Messina* examines the securitization of immigration through the classical securitization theory, stressing the role of elite-driven (securitizing actors) speech acts in making immigration into an extraordinary security issue, especially after events seen as a turning point of modern security threats, such as 9/11 event. Moreover, *Messina* understands that the terror is used by political and securitizing elites to justify extraordinary policy measures which is essentially legitimizing

[53]Christian Kaunert and Sarah Léonard, "Collective Securitization and Crisification of EU Policy Change: Two Decades of EU Counterterrorism Policy," *Global Affairs* 7, no. 5 (2021): 688-690.
[54]Ariane Chebel d'Appollonia, *Migrant Mobilization and Securitization in the US and Europe: How Does It Feel to Be a Threat?* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

their actions, although he harshly critiques that such securitization efforts are exaggerated with regard to their genuine magnitude and consistency.[55] As a different view to that, *David Moffette* and *Shaira Vadasaria* provide a more direct critique, arguing that there are racialized structures of liberal modernity that specifies the securitization of immigration in itself. They came to a conclusion that terror, instead of marking a qualification of the security paradigm, relieves the liberal inhibition against the existing racial violence, allowing for what they call *uninhibited violence*. At the end, while *Messina* considers that securitization is a strategic choice against terror, *Moffette* and *Vadasaria* would suggest it is that which exposes the historical racial governmentality at work within liberal orders.[56]

The following of the Cold War, basically Schengen and 9/11 gradually structured and laid the foundations of the collective securitization process towards immigration while branding the factor as a source of threat. Furthers brings the topic to the Arab Spring and the refugee crisis, which are the breaking points considered by many scholars. Following literature and the opinions of the selected scholars will reflect on how the Arab Spring and Refugee Crisis further enhanced securitization while exploring relevant studies. These reflections hold a special place within the broader academic literature because they divide the observation between what can and cannot be securitization at the end.

4.3. Arab Spring and the Refugee Crisis

When the topics are the Arab Spring and the Refugee Crisis scholars tend to mostly focus on the fact that the EU policies have been constructed in response to broader security concerns over time in order to analyse the effects of the Arab Spring and the Refugee Crisis on the securitization of immigration policies in the EU. The Arab Spring revolts of 2011 and the ensuing Syrian conflict produced an unprecedented refugee outflow that complicated the EU's crisis management process along both humanitarian and security fronts. According to *Triandafyllidou*, the surge of movement after the Arab Spring contributed to the stricter construction of asylum where migrants were seen as a threat that needed to be kept outside the geographical boundaries of the EU since there was nothing humanitarian about it and the

[55]Anthony M. Messina, "Securitizing Immigration in the Age of Terror," *World Politics* 66, no. 3 (2014): 531, 536-538.
[56]David Moffette and Shaira Vadasaria, "Uninhibited Violence: Race and the Securitization of Immigration," *Critical Studies on Security* 4, no. 3 (2016): 297.

emergence of framed threat started to happen regarding the flow of migration and asylum seekers.[57]

Furthermore, there are various conceptualizations of how the Arab Spring's resulting refugee crisis gave birth to a complex policy making process as well regarding the accession of EU's borders. *Fakhoury's* analysis of the EU's post-Arab Spring policies underlines an increased migration-security nexus, like the scholars from the past chapters observed, where migration from conflict areas, most particularly Syria, is repackaged as a crucial security threat. This has been shaped within an EU migration governance and policy making process that has moved away from traditional humanitarian approaches to those underlined by containment, including emergency suspensions of Schengen, enhanced border controls, and cooperation with third countries for the management of migration externally. The EU's Global Approach to Migration and Mobility (The GAMM) and agreements like the EU-Turkey deal most explicitly express a from a distance migration strategy, insinuating migration control into the EU's wider regional security response. As *Fakhoury* argues, this approach has an only twofold goal to minimize instability but also solidifies in the public view the perception that migration is an existential threat and thus merges both policies of migration and security into one framework which is maintaining European stability in light of geopolitical change.[58]

However, all these initiatives pose as a solution in first glance but in the long run they don't solve all the issues but rather create or pave the way for even more. Initially, according to *Hollis*, the EU has officially welcomed the Arab Spring and stated that it wishes to support the people's demand for freedom in its new initiatives and declarations. It even goes so far as to admit that its policies require a review and that, rather than relying solely on government-to-government contacts, there should be greater outreach to Arab civil society. On closer inspection, though, it becomes clear that the EU has more to answer for than its citizens are willing to acknowledge, and that the Arab uprisings have proven the EU's policies to be ineffective.[59]

Furthermore, According to *Asderaki* and *Markozani*, migration gets even more securitized in speech acts and institutional practices regarding the refugee crisis, which comes from the

[57]Anna Triandafyllidou, "A 'Refugee Crisis' Unfolding: 'Real' Events and Their Interpretation in Media and Political Debates," *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies* 16, no. 1–2 (2018): 200-203, 212-216.
[58]Tamirace Fakhoury, "Securitising Migration: The European Union in the Context of the Post-2011 Arab Upheavals," *The International Spectator* 51, no. 4 (2016): 75-79.
[59]Rosemary Hollis, "No Friend of Democratization: Europe's Role in the Genesis of the 'Arab Spring'," *International Affairs* 88, no. 1 (2012): 81-94.

theory created by the Copenhagen School. The theory states that migration is constructed as a security threat by and from the public discourse, like linking migration with terrorism or cultural risks, which in turn legitimises exceptional measures and taken actions of the actors such as militarised border controls. This approach effectively links rhetoric and actions in relation since the securitization is enacted through several technologies such as EURODAC (European Dactyloscopy Database) and EUROSUR (European Border Surveillance System). They say that the EU institutions increasingly framed migration as an internal security issue since 2013, drawing to robust policy shifts, particularly post-2015. In consequence, the migration-security nexus takes centre stage as the backbone that fundamentally links the discourse, policy, and practices. The academics, *Fakhoury* and *Asderaki* and *Markozani* shows how the EU's external migration strategies and internal security measures mutually constitute the perception of migration as a threat. This interplay of securitization and governance focuses on how the migration policy is deeply embedded within the EU's broader security architecture, responding to public opinion and geopolitical challenges in recent times.[60]

Differently than the other contributors and academics, *Gifra* looks at the 2015 Refugee Crisis as a multi-levelled crisis (also with the aftereffects of the Corona Virus Pandemic); she frames this mainly as a crisis of migrants' rights rather than a refugee crisis. This militated against humanitarian emergency measures, but did so by entrenching state sovereignty, weakening multilateral cooperation and prioritizing border management by way of militarization and externalization, such as through the EU-Türkiye Statement and the expansion of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) operations. While court judgments upheld the rights of some migrants, later interpretations underlined state control, playing security needs against human rights obligations. This seems to capture how, within EU policy responses to migrant crises, security and sovereignty are privileged over rights in a manner that has wider implications for the interconnections between migration and security. As is now the case across Europe, migration is securitized through militarised rhetoric and restrictive policies. It is such actions that pushes the conflict between national interests and moral obligations of protecting person who seek protection.[61]

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[60]Foteini Asderaki and Eleftheria Markozani, "The Securitization of Migration and the 2015 Refugee Crisis: From Words to Actions," in *The New Eastern Mediterranean Transformed: Emerging Issues and New Actors*, ed. Spyridon N. Litsas and Aristotle Tziampiris (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2021): 179-198.
[61]Laura Planas Gifra, "Securitizing Migration in Times of Crisis: Private Actors and the Provision of (In)Security," *Cogent Social Sciences* 10, no. 1 (2024): 7-8.

On a larger scale of a review, a thorough investigation by *Fargues* and *Fandrich* analyses the history of the Arab Spring's impact on migration and the refugee crisis by showing how the Southern Mediterranean revolts changed migration dynamics both in the region and toward Europe. Initially, it was thought that the Arab Spring would augment regular migration flows to Europe; this turned out to be the case only for temporary movements from Tunisia. However, two major refugee crises were induced by the conflicts in Libya and Syria. The authors at hand stress that it is the neighbouring Arab states and Türkiye that have been saddled with bearing most of the responsibility in the sheltering of displaced populations, while Europe has largely been bolstering its border controls and keeping strict migration policies which contributed this thesis' approach on the EU's attitude on the migration. Their findings in a further observation are also paradoxical to the response of the EU to enhance funding and partner with authoritarian regimes in an attempt to control irregular migration that risked squashing the aspirations for democratic change that the revolutions nurtured. The study also emphasizes how crucial civil society is in aiding refugees and calls for a more equitable strategy that consequently synergizes migration governance with the promotion of democracy and the protection of human rights.[62]

Furthermore, connecting the global echoes of the Arab Spring and the following Refugee Crisis had also been a challenging study for many more scholars, these studies focused on security, safety, health, cultural impacts and political reshaping of the existing world powers in general. Several scholars continued to view the Refugee Crisis and Arab Spring as an opportunity for Western nations to prove their liberal foundations to the rest of the world while some other scholars took a different approach to it. For example*, Andrey Korotayev, Alisa Shishkina* and *Alina Khokhlova* viewed these crises as the global wave of socio-political destabilization trigger that affects all the world.[63] While some others think that these events also boost several actors to stabilize their regional powers as well.[64] This point of view stresses the importance of the fact that while some regions in the world were basically going through increasing instability and challenges, other regions were taking full advantage

[62]Philippe Fargues and Christine Fandrich, *Migration after the Arab Spring*, MPC Research Report 2012/09 (Florence: European University Institute, Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, Migration Policy Centre, 2012): 2-5, 10-15.

[63]Andrey Korotayev, Alisa Shishkina, and Alina Khokhlova, "Global Echo of the Arab Spring," in *Handbook of Revolutions in the 21st Century: The New Waves of Revolutions, and the Causes and Effects of Disruptive Political Change*, ed. Jack A. Goldstone, Leonid Grinin, and Andrey Korotayev (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2022), 813.

[64]Andrey V. Korotayev and Alina A. Khokhlova, "Effect of the Arab Spring on Stabilization Capacity of the MENA Monarchies," *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 57, no. 2 (2022): 300, 303-304.

of the changing circumstances in the globe to consolidate their influence, power, bolster nationalist narratives and gather control over contested geopolitical areas. Thus, the dual nature of both the Arab Spring and the Refugee Crisis as sources of destabilization and as potential catalysts for the realigning of power in new strategic forms, highlight the very complicating global responses where humanitarianism and realpolitik are bonded together as *Gerasimos* suggests in his studies to consider these events in a multicomplex structure in relation in a sense of migration politics.[65]

Moreover, when the emphasis was given over the resilience of the monarchies or the global actors that benefited from these events can be wholly connected to the securitization of immigration at the end according to this thesis. This following pattern underscores how the securitization of immigration not just be used as a mechanism for internal policy shifts within the EU and other several states but also had been used to make some of the states a prominent partner to the EU while reinforcing their authority and strategic positions. Some of these states were not usual diplomatic or prominent partners in the past. Academics such as *Yom* and *Greenhill* observes that through framing these migration flows certain monarchies or even international organisations legitimized their strengthened border controls, enhanced surveillance infrastructures and more security measures while collaborating with each other, often under the guise of protecting national and regional stability.[66] [67] Through these assumptions this thesis aims to put the correlation that this securitization process is evidently is everywhere and is not just exclusively used by one kind of entity but a tool for all to gather power and legitimize their hold within the crises.

Connecting the different approaches of several different studies and the scholars' opinions mainly focuses on the rights and legal statues of third-country nationals, including applicants for and beneficiaries of international protection however this crisis combines their being by framing them as a threat. That is why this refugee crisis is highly complex and presents such an overwhelming clash of ideals while challenging the policies of the EU in general. In conclusion, finding and establishing a threat through the events that entails the Refugee

[65]Gerasimos Tsourapas, *Migration Diplomacy in the Middle East and North Africa: Power, Mobility, and the State* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2021): 192.
[66]Sean L. Yom and F. Gregory Gause III, "Resilient Royals: How Arab Monarchies Hang On," *Journal of Democracy* 23, no. 4 (2012): 81-82, 84-87.
[67]Kelly M. Greenhill, "Open Arms Behind Barred Doors: Fear, Hypocrisy and Policy Schizophrenia in the European Migration Crisis," *European Law Journal* 22, no. 3 (2016): 318-321, 325-327, 330.

Crisis and Arab Spring as a whole through the literature is also always essential to fully comprehend the securitization process on EU level.

In the next chapter, the author explains and discusses the origins and the effects of the Refugee Crisis with the Arab Spring to make a better framework for the further sections of the dissertation.

5. Theoretical Framework: Securitization Theory of the Copenhagen School

This thesis utilizes the Securitization Theory of the Copenhagen School to reach its conclusions, but what is this theory? The Securitization Theory developed by the Copenhagen School which was expanded and explored mainly by the academics Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, Jaap de Wilde and several notable others. Most of these writings and research came from the Conflict and Peace Research Institute (COPRI) in Copenhagen in the 1990s.[68] In summary, this theory conceptualizes security as a social process rather than an objective condition overall. It contends that an issue only becomes a matter of security because a certain speech-act is performed by a political actor (securitizing actor) calling the issue an existential threat to a referent object which might be culture, public safety or sovereignty). Once the audience accepts this claim, the entity making the claim can justify these extraordinary measures that can go beyond normal political procedures to protect it. This framework expands security studies beyond conventional military threats, incorporating environmental security, migration, and cyber threats, while emphasizing the dangers of excessive securitization that can lead to undemocratic practices and the curtailing of civil liberties.[69] In addition to this, there are also other kinds of risks of securitization such as, how it may be used to justify repressive policies, marginalize certain groups, or erode democratic governances in certain states or within the groups of societies.[70]

There are various examples which have been widely applied to analyse contemporary global security challenges through the Securitization Theory. One of these key applications and examples is the migration studies which sits at the heart of this thesis, where several governments or even groups of states frequently frame immigration as a serious national

[68] Holger Stritzel, "Securitization Theory and the Copenhagen School," in Security in Translation: Securitization Theory and the Localization of Threat (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 15.
[69] Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde, Security, 48.
[70] McDonald, Matt. "Securitization and the Construction of Security." *European journal of international relations* 14, no. 4 (2008): 565.

security issue, justifying restrictive border controls and strict policies on it.[71] There are of course many other examples of applications of the securitization such as environmental and climate changes, public health or even cybersecurity can be shown as one.[72]

Furthermore, these elements in combination in a certain perspective creates a securitization process that enables the perception of the threat at the end by the securitizing actor.[73] There are components which ensure this process works as its intended in theory which this thesis builds its skeleton on this process. In the coming pages this process will be visualized to better understand this theory and how this thesis builds its claims on the securitization of immigration on the EU level.

Through this visualisation of the securitization process with its components this thesis aimed to give the readers and the academics a broader perspective on how the securitization process' gears works and how they complete each other. Also, another point was to make the securitization more visible and transparent since from a methodological perspective it is near impossible to determine what is securitization and what is not. Below it can be observed the said visualisation and later on the components will be explained in certain details.

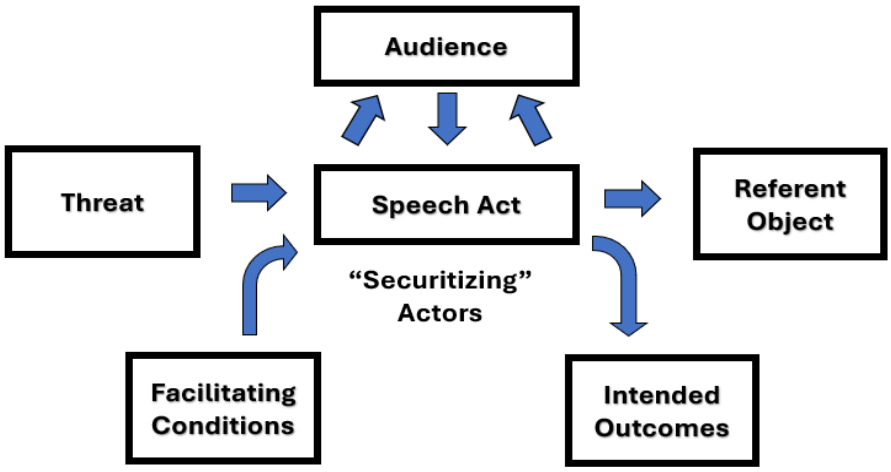

Figure 1: *Author's own compilation based on by the definitions indicated by: Buzan, B., Wæver, O., Wæver, O. and De Wilde, J.'s Security: A new framework for analysis.*

[71] Jef Huysmans, The Politics of Insecurity: Fear, Migration and Asylum in the EU (London: Routledge, 2006), 45.
[72] Rita Floyd, Security and the Environment: Securitisation Theory and US Environmental Security Policy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 52.
[73] Uslu, "Securitization on EU Level," 179.

First component to be introduced within this process is the *Threat*, the securitizing actor(s) introduces this particular topic as an issue or as a matter of concern to national security or to the people. Threat can be everything within the process If its processed enough.[74] Second one is the *Speech Act*; it essentially and unambiguously implies that the securitizing actor would employ colourful language and techniques to reach a certain end. Political speeches, billboards and use of almost every kind of communication in a broader sense can be listed under this component to affect the audience.[75] Third is the *Audience* which is basically the population of a country or a group of people from whom by the speech act, securitizing actor draws its strength and legitimacy from in the face of overstated threats. Direct example can be the population of a country.[76] The fourth one is the *Securitizing Actor* or actors which are either a person, group or else an organization that manages the securitization process to handle the threat for their interests. Political parties, leaders, companies or groups of power are among users.[77] *Referent Object* is the fifth component within this process which is to be protected from a threat that is being posed from inside or outside. Culture, valued ideals, identity or even security of one nation could be put under referent objects.[78] Next component will be the *Facilitating Conditions*: these factors have been effective in determining how well and how well renowned by an audience is the speech act.[79] Finally, the *Intended Outcome* is the one which is defined as the result sought or desired by the securitizing actor during this securitization process. It is very much self-explanatory, the whole reason behind this process is to gather the need and goal which is the intended outcome.[80]

These components contribute to the broader understanding of the process according to this thesis; this structure sits in the heart of the securitization process of the EU. At the core of this structure, it can be observed that the speech act maintains the power of the securitizing

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[74] Thierry Balzacq, "The Three Faces of Securitization: Political Agency, Audience and Context," European Journal of International Relations 11, no. 2 (June 2005): 173.

[75] Rita Taureck, "Securitization Theory and Securitization Studies," Journal of International Relations and Development 9, no. 1 (2006): 55.

[76] Sarah Léonard and Christian Kaunert, "Reconceptualizing the Audience in Securitization Theory," in Securitization Theory: How Security Problems Emerge and Dissolve, ed. Thierry Balzacq (London: Routledge, 2010), 75.

[77] Rita Floyd, "Securitisation and the Function of Functional Actors," Critical Studies on Security 9, no. 2 (2021): 82-83.

[78] Clara Eroukhmanoff, "Securitisation Theory," in International Relations Theory, ed. Stephen McGlinchey, Rosie Walters, and Christian Scheinpflug (Bristol: E-International Relations Publishing, 2017): 105.

[79] Vojtech Šulović, Meaning of Security and Theory of Securitization (Belgrade: Centre for Civil-Military Relations, 2010): 5.

[80] Combined components in a sense were to bring, you the reader, a visualized understanding to make everything understandable and interesting at the same time.

actors. Speech act frames immigration as a security threat rather than a socio-economic or humanitarian issue through using certain rhetorics to portray migration as a danger to social stability, national identity, cultural values or public safety in general.[81] These attempts on constructing immigration as a danger of course require relevant facilitating conditions to shape it as a threat. For example, as in the nature of an institutional mechanism that reinforces the perception of migration as a security threat, FRONTEX ensures the contextual factors that enable or strengthen the securitization process of the EU, of course these factors will be introduced and observed in the coming chapters of the thesis in a broader detail. Later on, with the establishment of the threat the referent object which in this case happens to be the EU's values, integrity of the Schengen Zone, national sovereignty, or even European cultural cohesion. By making immigration as a destabilizing force, securitizing actors justify restrictive policies, increased border surveillance, and even emergency measures to control migration flows securitizing actors ensures (EU, political leader or even individual Member States) intended outcomes of their own.[82]

Furthermore, in summary, fitting these concepts into the framework of this structure, these components when came together shows how the EU's securitization of immigration functions directly by framing migration as an existing threat, appealing to Member States and supranational authorities as securitizing actors and deploying speech acts in which migration appears as an existential danger to European stability.[83] These accounts invoke a referent object such as European identity, national sovereignty, or border integrity and strategically address an audience including EU citizens, policymakers, and Member States whose consent legitimizes restrictive migration policies. The process is further strengthened by enabling certain facilitating conditions. Among the examples are some particular tools of securitization that will be studied in detail later in this thesis, such as border management, geopolitical crises, economic instability, and populist rhetoric, all of which provide an environment in which more likely acceptance of securitization could be achieved. Finally, the intended results of the process of securitization are increased border surveillance,

[81] Ceccorulli, Michela. "Ontological insecurity and securitization dynamics: the co-constitution of borders between Italy and the EU after the refugee crisis of 2015." *Journal of Contemporary European Studies* 33, no. 1 (2025): 166-168. See also: Ömer Doğukan Uslu, "Securitization of Immigration through Populist Rhetoric in Italy by the Brothers of Italy (FdI)," Journal of Social, Humanities and Administrative Sciences 11, no. 2 (2025): 84.

[82] Uslu, "Securitization on EU Level.", 174.

[83] João Estevens, "Migration Crisis in the EU: Developing a Framework for Analysis of National Security and Defence Strategies," *Comparative Migration Studies* 6, no. 1 (2018): 3, 15.

externalization of management of migration, normalization of emergency measures; in shaping the long-term perspective of the EU in immigration governance.[84]

At the end this theoretical framework of securitization will enable this thesis to comprehend the complex layers of EU's migration governance through the lenses of security discourse, policy implementation and institutional practices that shape the migration as a controlled and regulated phenomenon.

5.1. Concepts of Security

Security is a pillar of a society and this pillar can reach towards many concepts, ideas and definitions. The basic definition of the term is; "*the protection of a person, building, organization, or country against threats such as crime or attacks by foreign countries*."[85] However, this explanation alone is not enough to fully describe what security is and how it exists within human cultures. Security in general encompasses identity, freedoms and order while protecting them against immediate threats.

A theoretical foundation for the analysis of immigration securitization at the EU level was constructed through the inclusion of this subchapter on the concepts of security. The different interpretations of security through realism and Copenhagen School's approaches highlights that the security transcends military threats and also includes political, social, and economic ones. The securitization theory of the Copenhagen School is of a particular interest to this thesis because it fundamentally describes how the political and security discourses can characterize and build immigration as an existential threat justifying unprecedented measures and policy changes. Immigration inside the EU has increasingly been framed as a security concern that is linked to terrorism, economic threats and cultural identity issues and this has resulted in border policies that are tightening with various emergency responses that pushes the boundaries of human rights in the name of security.[86] The distinction drawn by Buzan and Wæver between state security and societal security sharply illustrates that immigration is conceived not merely as a challenge to state sovereignty but also as a challenge to social cohesion. In this way, the theoretical foundations underpinning the analysis provide a critical viewpoint from which to analyse the way immigration is

[84] Uslu, "Securitization on EU Level.", 175.
[85] Cambridge Dictionary.
[86] Robin Konings, David De Coninck, and Leen d'Haenens, "The Role of European and National Identity and Threat Perceptions in Attitudes towards Immigrants," *Journal of Contemporary European Studies* 31, no. 2 (2023): 450.

securitized in the EU policy process, including implications for human rights and freedoms, and consequences of treating it as a security concern as opposed to a humanitarian or economic one.[87]

Furthermore, Barry Buzan explains security on a multifaceted nature while emphasizing that the security is not just about survival but also about maintaining the functional integrity of societies against external and internal threats. He states:

> "*Security is taken to be about the pursuit of freedom from threat and the ability of states and societies to maintain their independent identity and their functional integrity against forces of change, which they see as hostile. The bottom line of security is survival, but it also reasonably includes a substantial range of concerns about the conditions of existence. Quite where this range of concerns ceases to merit the urgency of the "security" label (which identifies threats as significant enough to warrant emergency action and exceptional measures including the use of force) and becomes part of everyday uncertainties of life is one of the difficulties of the concept*."[88]

He fundamentally argues against the traditional views of security and presents a more realist perspective while upholding a broader framework that encompasses the political, social, and environmental domains. This shows that various security risks are not just limited to the militarist/external events and can also originate from within a state's own institutions or even from their social fabrics. Understanding how security doesn't only limit its borders to individuals or even to countries opens up many conceptual possibilities.

Firstly, the complicated idea of security is reduced to a simple *synonym for power* by the realist concept on security, which sees it as a *derivative of power*. This point of view would have been pertinent during the World Wars, when nations appeared to be engaged in a never-ending power struggle. But in the years after the Cold War, security has taken on a far more nuanced and intricate meaning.[89]

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[87] Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde, Security, 45.
[88] Barry Buzan, "New Patterns of Global Security in the Twenty-First Century," International Affairs 67, no. 3 (1991): 433.
[89] Marianne Stone, "Security According to Buzan: A Comprehensive Security Analysis," Security Discussion Papers Series 1, no. 09 (2009): 433.

On a scale of realist view, security is a simple phenomenon, if there is a threat on a nation there must be a tool or tools to counter that threat to preserve the continued existence of the given nation's citizens. These tools may vary in various selections, but all serves the same purpose of protecting the lives of the citizens against any kind of foreign aggression. Security in the realist approach is ready to sacrifice various values for its sake. Limiting the individual freedoms, rights or even establishing new measures of security to ensure the survival of the state and its citizens since survival is the key factor in a realist approach towards security in general.

Fundamentally, according to realism, the most important tool for preserving a state's sovereignty and national security is its armed forces. However, feminist thinkers, critical theorists, and postmodernists were among those who supported expanding the definition of security and said that conventional methods of understanding it were inadequate. They argued that views of the objective world and human nature are imposed by realism.[90] Thus, the security within the concept of realism mostly served towards only one end, the state and its civilian's survival while becoming a simple tool for existence. In conclusion, the concept of security within the realist approach was more about countries rather than the people who are living in them.

In addition, there is also the Copenhagen School's duality of security which are the state security and societal security and also the Welsh School's human security approach. These two approaches further criticize the traditional concept of security that was mentioned before in this study. Expanding upon these concepts and the approaches of these two schools brings new horizons for the definition of security. Barry Buzan and the Copenhagen School of Security are always in a close relationship and Buzan divides the security into five distinct basic concepts which are military, economic, environmental, societal and political which makes the state the sole existing referent object.[91]

However, Buzan and Wæver also argue that if security is always centred around the state, it suggests that *societal security* would involve protecting the state from society, meaning society could be insecure even when state security is high. They view the state as the key focus for political, military, environmental, and economic security, while society is the focus for societal security. This perspective creates a dual understanding of security: the state

[90] Alam Saleh, "Broadening the Concept of Security: Identity and Societal Security," (2011): 230.

[91] Barry Buzan, People, States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post–Cold War Era, 2nd ed. (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991), 15.

focuses on protecting its sovereignty, while societal security is about maintaining societal identity.[92] Therefore distinguishing the state and social security while transcending the concept of it, emphasising the duality of it. In summary, the state security is the protection of the state's sovereignty against outside threats and the societal security is guarding the identity of the society while making sure there would be no cultural erosion or any other kinds of internal threats.

Furthermore, the Welsh School of security studies' according to Erikson, condemns the state-centric approach for contributing to the unrest, unfairness, and animosity that, regrettably, characterise international politics. Critical theory seeks to dismantle the practice that realism imposes. Consequently, rather than seeing nations as the primary reference point of security, the Welsh School views individuals as being at the core of it.[93] Putting the individuals as the referent objects of the security, the Welsh School's approach to the concept of security fundamentally opposes the realist approach that observes the states are the only direct providers of security. Because a state can be corrupt and proceed to use security for a means to an end.

Therefore, the Welsh School doesn't see the state of the world as it is but approaches it as what it should be in the concepts of security. Because security comes at the price of people, Booth thinks that neither power nor order can provide actual security; instead, he suggests that real security results from emancipation, that is, the absence of threat. At the heart of Welsh School thought is the notion that emancipation is the release of people from social, political, economic, or physical restraints that jeopardise their security as a means of achieving real security. "*Security and emancipation are two sides of the same coin"*, as Ken Booth stated greatly. This reinterpretation of the concept of security is based on the respect for human freedom and the elimination of tyranny, dominance and inequality that keep people from reaching their full potential.[94] In summary, we can comment that the Welsh School of security studies takes a very positive approach on security while seeking the absence of military and external threats to empower individual security.

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[92] Hawre Hasan Hama, "State Security, Societal Security, and Human Security," Jadavpur Journal of International Relations 21, no. 1 (2017): 10-11.

[93] Johan Eriksson, "Observers or Advocates? On the Political Role of Security Analysts," *Cooperation and Conflict* 34, no. 3 (1999): 312-314.

[94]Ken Booth, "Security and Emancipation," in National and International Security (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018), 447-448.

Lastly, on the aspect of security, taking a viewpoint on the human rights perspective is also very crucial. The relationship between security and human rights can be complicated in the terms of what kind of threat the individual or the state is facing. There are several key concepts of security in relation to human rights. These concepts can be mentioned as international security through human rights protection by states, negative individual security against the state, security as a justification to limit the human rights and positive state obligation to offer security.

The first concept argues that maintaining national laws protecting individual rights enhances global stability. The second is safeguarding people from the misuse of state authority and making sure that fundamental civil rights are not violated by the state. This concept of security highlights how crucial it is to restrict governmental power in order to stop breaches of human rights. The third one discusses how limitations on individual rights are frequently justified by citing public safety and national security concerns. Although these restrictions may be required in some circumstances, they must be carefully considered to prevent harming human rights. Lastly, the fourth idea emphasises how the state must actively shield citizens from harm brought about by other private actors, frequently by using legislative frameworks like the criminal code. In order to fulfil this proactive role, the state must ensure security by preventing or addressing threats within society.[95]

In conclusion, the meaning of security in the world can be stretched to multiple fields of life ranging from politics to human rights. At the end the necessity of security is an inevitable concept of life however it is crucial to remember that these concepts could also limit people's very rights for good or to push certain agendas by certain groups or individuals for their intended outcomes.

5.2. Applications of the Securitization Theory

The securitization process enables certain issues and concern to be addressed as national security problems which may offer strategic interest/opportunities to particular actors through this framework. This framework by itself can be utilized in various areas such as security, culture, economy and politics. Fundamentally revealing how different issues could have been constructed as security problems. In international relations, securitization of terrorism post-September 11, 2001 (9/11), has become among the most relevant examples.

[95] Piet Hein van Kempen, "Four Concepts of Security—A Human Rights Perspective," *Human Rights Law Review* 13, no. 1 (2013): 6-7.

The securitizing actors as it was explained in the past chapter configured terrorism as an existential threat to the nation and used this excuse to pass political policies, general surveillance, military interventions and emergency laws to basically pursue their intended outcomes.[96] It should always be remembered in these contexts and during this study, securitization is never an act of innocence even through the public eyes or debates.[97]

Simply put, to establish the acceptance of this threat narrative by the public legitimized policies that fundamentally changed civil liberties and redefined international relations since 9/11. Another great example of the securitization is that climate change has increasingly been securitized as such. By identifying environmental degradation as a threat to levels of stability within and outside national borders, political actors and their allied stakeholders mobilize support and push policy action. This strategy not only establishes the emergency of the case but also reframes political perception of climate change from a simple environmental issue to one of security.[98] Cybersecurity is now another area that has gained public attention for securitization. Governments and enterprises justify their expansion of surveillance programs and the development of advanced defence mechanisms through the claim of vulnerability of digital infrastructures from cyberattacks. As threats to national security and economic stability were perceived, more cyber security policies and the investment of resources proliferated. The securitization of migration is yet another example in which this theory finds application-the unjustified movement as a threat to cultural identity, cohesion within societies, and the economy thus justified border policies of more entrapment and external vigilance. It demonstrates how securitization may be used to justify practices of exclusion and contribute to the changing public mind-set against certain vulnerable groups. Overall, the application of securitization by different important issues redefines and pushes the goodness of the theory in a relatively broad perspective and how strong imagery of security affects policy and public perspectives.[99]

Moreover, these applications are just a general concept of how the global world politics are working right now, there are also singular targets of these processes to gain even greater

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[96] Catherine Charrett, A Critical Application of Securitization Theory: Overcoming the Normative Dilemma of Writing Security, Working Paper 2009/7 (Barcelona: International Catalan Institute for Peace, 2009): 28.
[97] Stahl, Bernhard. "Who securitized what, when, and how? A comparative analysis of eight EU member states in the Iraq crisis." In *ECPR conference in Turin*. (2007): 4.
[98] Angela Oels, "From 'Securitization' of Climate Change to 'Climatization' of the Security Field: Comparing Three Theoretical Perspectives," in Climate Change, Human Security and Violent Conflict: Challenges for Societal Stability, ed. Jürgen Scheffran et al. (Berlin: Springer, 2012): 194-195.
[99] Mark Lacy and Daniel Prince, "Securitization and the Global Politics of Cybersecurity," in *Securitisation in the Non-West*, ed. Maria Stern and Annika Bergman Rosamond (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018): 2, 10.

profits and intended outcomes. This thesis' main target of the application is the immigration, especially the immigration on the EU level which complicates this study's perspectives but makes it even more relevant in our times.

Furthermore, to observe the landscape of how this process sets in for application methods, securitization applies to an emergency politics model alone; it shapes the very considerations of a political order through mobilization of constituencies and the reconsideration of borders between the ruled and the rulers.[100] A constitutive force which can cause extraordinary politics, it can either reinforce exclusionary security logics for the societal segments or open up spaces for democratic engagement and transformation. Applications of this two-fold potential can be seen in the following examples: declaration of existential threats legitimizing state measures of exception and activation of constituent power reconfiguring political legitimacy and collective identity. Securitization essentially presents itself in its linkage to governance through the former's potential either to challenge or to stabilize existing structures either through formal institutions or through informal socio-political mobilizations. It is with this that securitization strengthens authority by centralizing or so to say pulling the centre of concern towards a decision-making in a state of executives while undermining established norms by opening up the way for new forms of political configurations contesting various security narratives. With this dynamic comes the more evident lines of fusion between security and normal politics, such that here risk management and disquiet increasingly characterize governance and frame laws and policies. Instead, it is an indicator that securitization forms most real political realities; thus, an understanding of this process is critical to comprehending how it shapes the changing landscapes of authority, legitimacy, and public participation which connects to broader concepts of security in general.[101]

Immigration when securitized finds its most salient application in specific geopolitical spaces, especially regions that are under great migratory pressures. This process often starts with politicization which is the reframing of cross-border movement from one of social or economic concern to that of national concern. This occurs mainly in western states after the end of the cold war, where immigration is associated with disorder in society, instability in

[100] Holger Stritzel and Sean C. Chang, "Securitization and Counter-Securitization in Afghanistan," *Security Dialogue* 46, no. 6 (2015): 554-556.
[101] Michael C. Williams, "Securitization as Political Theory: The Politics of the Extraordinary," *International Relations* 29, no. 1 (2015): 115.

economies, and threats to national identity in different forms the most optimal example of how this process works is the temporal and environmental change brought forth through the talking points of the regions that had begun to change dramatically in European immigration policy during the Syrian refugee crisis which in the coming chapter this thesis will expand upon it even more with various examples and methods.[102] In continuation to the topic, several political leaders from different European nations engaged in the discursive act of framing irregular migration as bringing harm to social cohesion and public safety. The voice of this kind of rhetoric was coupled with media narratives to underlie the public discourse for more restrictive border policies and tighter asylum procedures, for example towards immigrants could be used as a label as well. Besides, securitization processes clearly have direct repercussions on the way people live here. Those migrants who are branded as security threats tend to be more vulnerable by facing discrimination, limited access to social services, and concerning housing conditions of individuals. Such a paradox is the most apropos of the whole process of securitization in relation to immigration: security measures are justified in the name of the security of the host society but tend to increase the very insecurity of those, namely migrants to be secured.[103]

Moreover, when all these applications stacked over each other through the EU migration agendas or the general policy making within the Union, *Collective Securitization* emerges as an umbrella. Collective Securitization goes beyond the securitization theory and extends it through a more direct relationship between the actor and the audience which in this case refers to the collective union of several Member States and their common institutions constructed to have a shared understanding of certain threats. Essentially, this phenomenon occurs when an international organization which is EU and its members perceives and consolidates security threats into a shared response.[104] This type of securitization effects and touches many parts of national level however should not be directly tied to them since the convergence of threats are moving over different referent objects and a collective referent object.

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[102] Roxanna Sjöstedt, "Assessing Securitization Theory: Theoretical Discussions and Empirical Developments," in *Securitization Revisited*, ed. Thierry Balzacq, Sarah Léonard, and Jan Ruzicka (Abingdon: Routledge, 2019), 42-46.

[103] Emre Çıtak, "Migration and Securitization: An Assessment in the Context of Human Security," *Yönetim ve Ekonomi Araştırmaları Dergisi* 18, no. 3 (2020): 18.

[104] James Sperling and Mark Webber, "The European Union: Security Governance and Collective Securitisation," in Collective Securitisation and Security Governance in the European Union, ed. Sonia Lucarelli, James Sperling, and Mark Webber (London: Routledge, 2020), 9-11.

Importance of collective securitization for this research is fundamental since this dissertation's topic focuses on the EU itself as a primary actor and then puts the lens on several selected Member States for comparison purposes. This chosen approach allowed author to assess the extent of which constructed security threats had been articulated and legitimized at supranational levels while also identifying variations in how certain individual Member States interpret and respond to these shared concerns in comparison with their different approaches to securitization as a reflection on the EU. Therefore, focusing on collective securitization provides this study an analytical framework to examine the interactions and effects between EU level security narratives/rhetorics and national political themes on the perceived threat components. Since one of this thesis' main themes and aims had been the application of securitization this framework basically acts as a guide to further claims of this study accordingly to the author.

In conclusion, applications of securitization vary vastly however these applications always finds a foothold within societies based on fear and threat building which fits greatly within this thesis' approaches on EU and immigration. The next chapter will expand on the literature review regarding the related research of this academic area and list them through their relevance and focus on the divergence of their respected ideas through targeted subjects as well.

6. EU in Crisis: Arab Spring and Refugee Crisis

During this part of the thesis the focus will be on the origins of the Arab Spring and the Refugee Crisis. The aim is to lay the foundations of the challenges the European Union (EU) faces and to determine the events unfolded along the way while commenting on the further issues in general. The EU has faced a tremendous amount of challenges for more than a decade caused by several political, economic and social changes within the Middle East, North Africa and the world. The Arab Spring and the Refugee Crisis stands as the defining moments in recent European history while exposing the vulnerabilities of the EU's governance, political stability and institutional strengths. These challenges and instabilities go even further than borders and institutions such as the EU's test against institutional resilience, political cohesion, and normative commitments to human rights as well.

In short, unpredictable outcomes resulted from a Tunisian salesman's December 2010 self-immolation. After receiving degrading treatment and being forbidden from selling his vegetables in the market, the incident which was initially viewed as a lone and isolated act

of protest against the local authorities can be deemed the catalyst for a movement known as the Arab Spring, which had a significant ripple effect throughout the Arab world. Aspirations for freedom and democracy were accepted in the resulting unity of pan-Arab emotions by challenging the legitimacy of the ruling class. Longstanding dictators like Muammar Al Gaddafi (Libya) and Zine El Abidine Ben Ali (Tunisia) came to an end as a result of the protests that echoed throughout nations with authoritarian governments. Issues that are currently widespread in the Single Market include the Arab Spring-induced intensification and destabilisation in Syria, the rise of religious militant organisations such as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, and the unrest and continuous war in the Arab world. The speed of data interchange has been impacted by globalisation, and terrorist groups have mastered psychological warfare by leveraging the media and its benefits to recruit online. Once seen to be a "*Middle Eastern*" problem, the threat of religiously motivated terror has now spread within the Union's boundaries. A secular, pluralistic, and open society based on the principles of peace and stability is alarmed by the anonymity and seeming coincidence of this new way of conducting war.[105]

When all these pressures and consequences combined the tipping points starts to get even more complex thus making the issue an unforeseen challenge especially for the EU. The Arab Spring with the widespread changes, protests and civil unrest resulted in vast amount of migration movements towards safer places from the Middle Eastern countries such as Europe itself, especially Western Europe overall. The cross-border movement of displaced persons, including persons seeking international protection, especially during a specific window of time in 2015 to 2016, put enormous strain on the borders and the existing migration and asylum systems of the EU, laying bare the rifts between the Member States. The crisis that developed as a result was a complex one, in that it required compassion towards the displaced persons, protection of the borders and some degree of political cohesion within the EU at the same time. The crisis revealed the vulnerable side of the projection the EU's political authority was seeking to enshrine, making difficult issues of burden-sharing and the principle of national prerogatives the dominant factors of the EU's politics. The inability to marshal and implement a coherent and effective response also intensified the reframing of the migratory flows as a threat to cultural and economic integration as well as national security, thus justifying further securitization. In this way, this

[105]Angelika C. Dankert, Europe under Pressure: The Development of the European Union under the Influence of the Arab Spring, the Refugee Crisis and the Global Threat of Terrorism (Baden-Baden: Tectum Wissenschaftsverlag, 2017): 1-4.

chapter will outline the significance of the Arab Spring and the refugee crisis as events those initiated the change of the EU migration policies and changes of approaches. The chapter also seeks to explain how such crises have affected not only the EU's internal policies but also the EU's foreign relations, in this case with the North African and Middle Eastern countries. The next subchapters deal with the socio-political history and the main events of the Arab Spring, the rise of the refugee crisis, and the EU in their context.[106]

6.1. Rise and Overall Effects of the Arab Spring

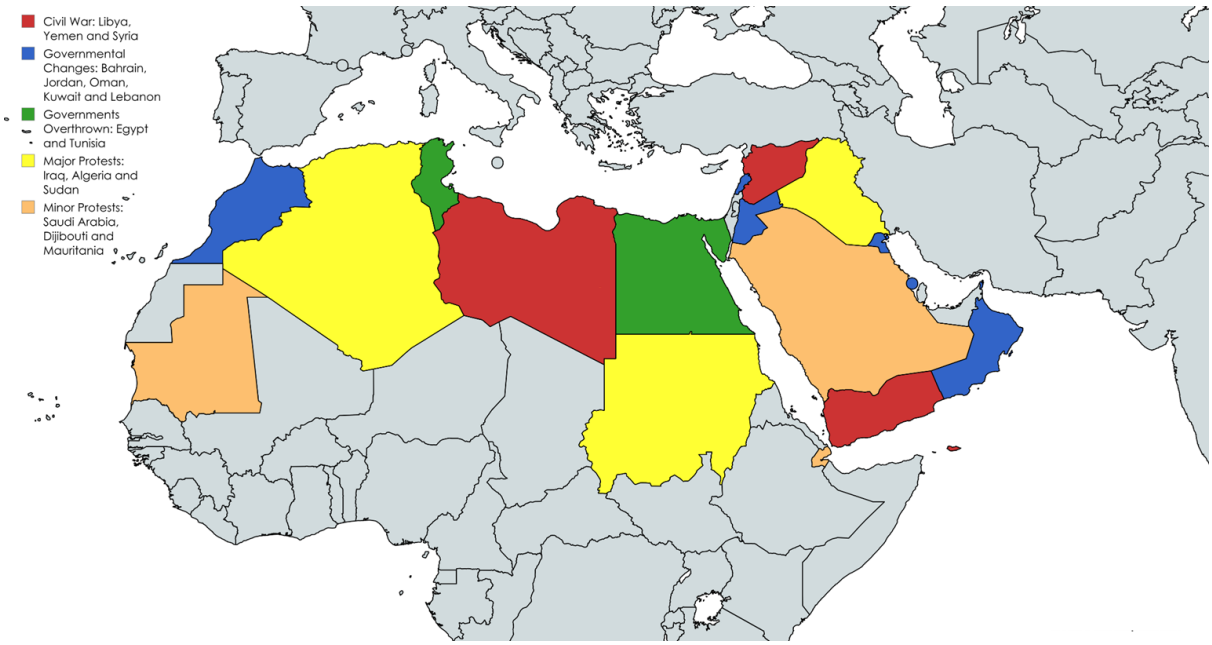
The unprecedented aftereffects of the public self-immolation of Mohammed Bouazizi against the corruption he was facing on December 17th, 2010, in Tunisia sparked a immense uproar all across the Arab World.[107] Bouazizi, a young street merchant, infamously committed self-immolation as a way of expressing his frustration towards injustice, police oppression, and the lack of economic change around him. That single act of desperation, however, found echo after echo in the hearts of the Arab masses, revealing deep-rooted problems present in their society, and sparking a series of revolutions against brutal dictatorships. What started as a small issue rose up in the form of a revolution, an across the region revolution referred to as the Arab Spring which altered the existing political order in the region. In Tunisia, after the death of Bouazizi, people took to the streets in protests which ultimately forcefully removed President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, who had dominated Tunisia for more than twenty years. The abrupt but effective ending of the leadership of Ben Ali instilled optimism regarding changes in the political culture of the Arab world in the countries like Egypt, Libya, Syria, Yemen, and Bahrain where the citizens were ready to revolt against the oppressive rule. The justification for these revolts was multi-faceted, consisting of decades of authoritarian rule, high levels of jobless youth, inequality, and the very high capability of social media in mobilizing people against oppression. The influence of social media like Facebook and Twitter was integral in the forging of the Arab spring, allowing for the dissemination of messages concerning protests as they were happening, as well as stream the events to the audience all over the world. Generally, the consequences of the Arab Spring were significant, but also highly heterogeneous within the region. Some

[106]Pero Maldini and Marta Takahashi, "Refugee Crisis and the European Union: Do the Failed Migration and Asylum Policies Indicate a Political and Structural Crisis of European Integration?" *Communication Management Review* 2, no. 2 (2017): 63-68.

[107]Thessa Lageman, "Remembering Mohamed Bouazizi: The Man Who Sparked the Arab Spring," Al Jazeera, December 22, 2020. Accessed November 17, 2024. https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2020/12/17/remembering-mohamed-bouazizi-his-death-triggered-the-arab.

countries, such as Tunisia, proved that in some cases the movement resulted in a weak but rather a democratic transition. In contrast, some countries such as Libya and Syria ended with state-ascribed violent civil wars and a complete breakdown of the state apparatus. The weakening of these states led to the emergence of a political space that was often filled by extremist elements such groups.[108][109]

Furthermore, these changes of governments, uproars and civil unrest resulted in various crises through several countries which will be mentioned during this chapter. The reason to mention these changes and the connected countries will further explain the Arab Spring's extensive shock over the world and especially over the EU overall. The map below shows the countries affected by the Arab Spring and what happened to them afterwards as a result. Civil wars, unrest, major/minor protests, governmental changes and governments that were overthrown even more than once were all reasons for the continued crises that affect the world in our times.



Map 1: *Author's own compilation based on several general news and their report sites such as CNN and BBC since 2011.*

There are several countries plunged into various governmental changes (for some more than once), civil wars, major protests and minor protests. Tunisia holds a special place for the events because it stands as the origin point for the Arab Spring. The map above highlights

[108]Lisa Anderson, "Demystifying the Arab Spring: Parsing the Differences between Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya," *Foreign Affairs* 90, no. 3 (2011): 2-7.
[109]Marc Lynch, *The Arab Uprising: The Unfinished Revolutions of the New Middle East* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2013): 1-5.

certain events though categorical manner. Certain and various impacts of the Arab Spring across the Middle East and North Africa, reflecting the diversity of outcomes:

Civil Wars (Red): Countries like Libya, Yemen, and Syria descended into prolonged conflicts, leading to significant humanitarian crises, state collapse, and the emergence of extremist groups. These conflicts generated mass displacement, influencing regional and global migration patterns.

Government Overthrows (Green): Egypt and Tunisia experienced regime changes, with longstanding leaders ousted. Tunisia transitioned toward democracy, while Egypt returned to authoritarian rule, underscoring the challenges of political reform.

Protests and Reforms (Yellow, Blue, Orange): While some nations, such as Bahrain and Jordan, implemented reforms to quell dissent, others (e.g., Algeria, Morocco and Sudan) faced sustained unrest. Minor protests in countries like Saudi Arabia signified limited but notable resistance in more stable regimes.

This map fundamentally explains the regional fragmentations caused by the Arab Spring and the varied levels of political instability, civil wars and related events which essentially helped shape the EU foreign policy, migration challenges, and the securitization of immigration on a broader level. The multiple outcomes of these crises and events underlines the difficult task of addressing governance, economic inequality, and human rights in diverse socio-political contexts.

In details like it was mentioned before, Tunisia stands as an origin point and a catalyst of events for the Arab Spring which caused the regional political changes. Tunisia's Jasmine Revolution was stirred up by the self-immolation of Mohammed Bouazizi. In summary, catalysed by that event, the initial protests were held in December 2010 in central Tunisia. A protest movement that the media nicknamed the "*Jasmine Revolution*" swiftly swept the nation. The Tunisian government made political and economic concessions in an effort to quell the turmoil, but it also used violence against protesters in the streets. But soon after, the nation's security forces were overrun by protestors, forcing President Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali to resign and leave the country on January 14, 2011. Tunisians elected representatives to a council charged with creating a new constitution in a democratic election held in October 2011. December 2011 saw the inauguration of a democratically elected president and prime minister, and January 2014 saw the adoption of a new constitution. to another democratically elected administration. As a result, the first nation to see a peaceful

transition of power from one democratically elected government to another during the Arab Spring demonstrations was Tunisia, which took place in October and November 2019.[110]

In essence, understanding Tunisia's pivotal role and direct effects in the Arab Spring forms the foundation for comprehending the ripples that the uprisings and political consequences caused throughout the region. As the origin of the Jasmine Revolution, Tunisia proved that deeply entrenched autocracies could be challenged by the mobilization of mass participation-a movement that would bring both regional unrest and localized democratization. Going up to its peaceful transition toward democracy in 2019, it contrastingly relates to turmoil in other countries and thus forms a single unique case for how political transformation influences migratory behaviour and the perception of stability-both core issues of the securitization of the EU's immigration discourse.

Later on, as a result of the events transpiring within Tunisia, the 2011 Egyptian Revolution came to be. An event that will forever be memorable in the history of the Arab world, witnessed the end of the 30 year-long rule of the Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak at the end. The protests began on January 25, hence the name, when there were mass protests called for through social media against police brutality, corruption, economic inequality and repression. Millions of Egyptians came to Tahrir Square and other cities to call for a change in regime; they crossed the boundaries of social, religious and class lines. What followed, a failed attempt by the government at repression, was more than 800 dead and thousands wounded, but the protests went on.[111] After 18 days of protests on February 11, Mubarak stepped down and power was handed to the military. Rather than giving way to hopes for a real transition toward democratic rule within the country, Egypt experienced upheaval and violence under military rule until elections were held. The fracturing of the opposition between secular and Islamist factions complicated that transition, discontent turned to violence and in 2013 the rise to power of Abdel Fattah el-Sisi (minister of defence of the time) by way of yet another military intervention. The revolution offered a glimpse into the

[110]The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Arab Spring | History, Revolution, Causes, Effects, & Facts," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, October 7, 2024. Accessed November 19, 2024. https://www.britannica.com/event/Arab-Spring

[111]The Associated Press and Haaretz Service. "Government Fact-Finding Mission Shows 846 Killed in Egypt Uprising." *Haaretz*, April 20, 2011. Accessed November 19, 2024. https://www.haaretz.com/2011-04-20/ty-article/government-fact-finding-mission-shows-846-killed-in-egypt-uprising/0000017f-f886-d460-afff-fbe624e20000

struggle for democracy in the Arab world and remains an important chapter in Egypt's modern history.[112]

Which at the end a dream for a democratic regime left and replaced by another military coup. Since this coup and harsh regime has been taking place, many people were running away from Egypt to seek freedom and safe haven which resulted in yet another mass migration towards Europe. More Arab countries continued to fall into crises and brutal changes which at the end pushed even more people out of their countries. Furthermore, affected and encouraged by the events that transpired in Tunisia and Egypt many other countries such as Yemen, Libya and Syria started to show changes and protests.

Another example of change happened in Yemen, the revolution emerged caused by the Arab Spring against their government's systemic corruption, economic inequality, and decades of neo patrimonial rule under President Ali Abdullah Saleh. Initially, protests were united under the marginal groups such as the youth of the new generation, marginalized groups like the Houthis, and southern secessionists who were all demanding justice, political reform, and an end to autocratic governance in their country. However, all these protestors and the groups opposing the government's regime in their country started to lose their initial momentum and as a result they faced severe challenges and hardships at the end. The government went down hard and violent on them. Moreover, interventions from other countries such as the Gulf Cooperation Council's (GCC) initiatives made Yemen's road to democratic rule extremely difficult as a result. The GCC-brokered transition of government saw President Saleh step down in exchange for immunity, thus undermining the revolutionary objectives which retained the elements of the old regime under Vice-President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi. The settlement did not provide any opportunity to resolve deep-seated grievances of different factions and the result was political fragmentation in general, the rise of the Houthis, and protracted civil war in 2014 followed and continues to swallow Yemen still to this day. The Yemeni revolution started as aspirational and promising, yet it descended into regression and more challenges, representing a complex interplay of domestic struggles and external pressures at the end.[113]

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[112]Andrey Korotayev and Julia Zinkina, "Egypt's 2011 Revolution: A Demographic Structural Analysis," in *Handbook of Revolutions in the 21st Century: The New Waves of Revolutions, and the Causes and Effects of Disruptive Political Change*, ed. Jack A. Goldstone, Leonid Grinin, and Andrey Korotayev (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2022): 680-683.

[113]Brian M. Perkins, "Yemen: Between Revolution and Regression," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 40, no. 4 (2017): 315–317.

The uprising that happened in Bahrain had also resulted from the revolutions and political changes that were happening in the region. When Bahrain's Arab Spring revolution first broke out in February 2011, it revealed the country's long-standing socioeconomic and sectarian disparities. Protesters, who were mostly Shia, called for increased representation, political change, and an end to discrimination based on religion and economic status. Anti-government activists and protesters were mobilised and brought together by social media (which holds a significant point in the revolution of Bahrain), which helped them forge a shared identity and spread their complaints around the globe and they tried to take nonviolent actions at first to gain even further support as well.[114] However, the government very quickly mobilised the Sunni support and gathered the military participation through the Peninsula Shield Force of the GCC by framing the movement as a sectarian revolt with several connections to Iran. Although the demonstrations were put down by the state's harsh repression, it widened social rifts. To combat the supposed Shia threat, pro-government forces highlighted their Khaleeji (Gulf) ethnicity, while anti-government organisations presented themselves as patriots fighting oppression. Eventually, the dividing sectarian tensions and strife escalated and resulted in both sides embracing the identity of Bahrain for themselves which divided the nation even further. In the end, the uprising and revolution failed to achieve any noteworthy progress for the country and further polarized the country. In the end, Bahrain still has a long way to go for peace and stability.[115]

Thereafter Arab Spring came to Libya which escalated into a full-on armed conflict against the regime of Muammar Gaddafi around mid-February of 2011. Many of the opposers of Gaddafi came under the same umbrella after the revolutions and political changes within Tunisia and Egypt. The corruption, unequal divide of the wealth, political oppressions and tribal disputes were the main reasons for the initial protests against the decades long Gaddafi regime which at the end turned into an armed conflict very quickly. The opposition group against the Gaddafi regime was the National Transitional Council, initially this opposition was losing ground against the regime, however they received strategic military and logistical support from NATO and regional allies, intensifying the war further and turned the odds around. In the end, Gaddafi regime fell with Gaddafi's dead in October 2011, but the civilian

[114]Thomas Richard Davies, "The Failure of Strategic Nonviolent Action in Bahrain, Egypt, Libya and Syria: 'Political Ju-Jitsu' in Reverse," *Global Change, Peace & Security* 26, no. 3 (2014): 300-307.
[115]Magdalena Karolak, "Social Media and the Arab Spring in Bahrain: From Mobilization to Confrontation," in *The Arab Spring, Civil Society, and Innovative Activism*, ed. Cenap Çakmak (New York: Palgrave Macmillan US, 2016): 97-98.

loss was too immense and the situation of the country was left in chaos as a result. Many of its people were dislocated and forced to flee their country. The revolution ended with Gaddafi's death but it left Libya divided in its instability. Furthermore, ongoing challenges also left its mark on the Arab Spring's trajectory in the region.[116]

Now comes the revolution movements and the following civil war in Syria. The country of Syria and the events transpired within holds a very specific place for this thesis' focus because of the Syrian civil war's repercussions. Syrian protests and demonstrations began calling for the resignation of President Bashar al-Assad around the beginning of 2011 in the southern parts of Syria. The Syrian Revolution also known as the Syrian Revolution of Dignity started as a mass movement against the government which immediately responded with violence from the Syrian government which lasted more than one year with the relevant effects of the Arab Spring.[117] During these violent responses from the government protests and certain small groups started to merge and create their own opposition group within the country to counter the Assad government which made the revolution more volatile. As the clashes were growing in the country around June 2012, the UN officially declared Syria fell to civil war state which made the conflict more than it seemed both for Syria and the world.[118] Furthermore, the conflict in general as a result caused Syria's GDP per capita shrink strongly between the years of 2011 and 2013, with a partial recovery before the COVID-19 pandemic overall. The civil war also resulted in widespread human displacement (important to note that these numbers of displacement are highly important for the focus of this thesis), with 13 million people needing humanitarian protection and 5.7 million displaced Syrian nationals fleeing the country in a rush towards mostly western countries. The human development index fell with increased infant mortality, decreased life expectancy, and widespread institutional collapse. Moreover, the war in Syria massively damaged its governance framework. The quality of its institutions worsened on all indicators of civil liberties, political stability, rule of law, and control of corruption. It institutionalized systemic violence and corruption, massively undermining the regulating institutions and people's confidence in them. While the GDP shock seems to have been temporary, the humanitarian and

[116]Elvin Aghayev, "Analysis and Background of the 'Arab Spring' in Libya," *European Researcher* 1–2 (2013): 196.
[117]Natasha Hall, "With the Fall of Assad, Can Syria Rise?" *Survival* 67, no. 1 (February–March 2025): 753.
[118]BBC News. "Syria in Civil War, Says UN Official Herve Ladsous." *BBC News*, June 12, 2012. Accessed November 21, 2024. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-18417952

institutional shocks are apparently permanent, leaving Syria deeply divided and pointing to the lasting impact of civil war.[119]

Syrian Civil War as a result has massive impacts regarding one of the biggest displacements of people and causing the tipping point for the refugee crisis. The EU in return suffered immensely since these displaced persons including persons seeking international protection who are escaping from the country and the Assad regime's brutal responses rushed towards the safer countries of the west at the end. Humanitarian aftereffects of the Syrian revolution still persist throughout the country and this further affects the EU since continued displacement and cross-border movement from Syria towards the West continues.

There are also other countries which were affected by the Arab Spring such as Algeria, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Bahrain, Sudan, Saudi Arabia and Jordan. These countries faced relatively minor protests, policy adjustments or governmental changes. In broader perspective these example countries during the events also contributed to the displacement of the people who were not happy with the general situation of the region. The Arab Spring as a sensational event swept through all these countries but did not exactly leave an ever-lasting change in their stature in comparison to the other example countries such as Egypt or Libya during this chapter of the thesis. However, it does not mean that these changes did not affect the refugee crisis' overall effects on the world at the end. During the next chapter the study will focus on the more important aspects of this thesis, the refugee crisis.

6.2. The 2015 European Refugee Crisis: Overview

One of the Arab Spring's most severe impacts on the world was the displacement of millions of people from their home countries. Millions of people started to run away from their countries to seek shelter, safety, opportunities and protection, especially to more stable countries such as Europe as a result. During this chapter the thesis will try to explain and overview the general outcomes of this crisis on EU while observing the ever-growing numbers of forced displacement, applications for international protection and broader migration flows which as a result had a notable impact on the EU policies in general, especially during 2015 while these numbers reached record numbers.

Since 2011 displaced people number steadily grew due to the outcomes of the Arab Spring and other regional conflicts. As a result, the number of forced migrants coming towards the

[119]Aleksandar Kešeljević and Rok Spruk, "Estimating the Effects of Syrian Civil War," *Empirical Economics* 66, no. 2 (2024): 672-673.

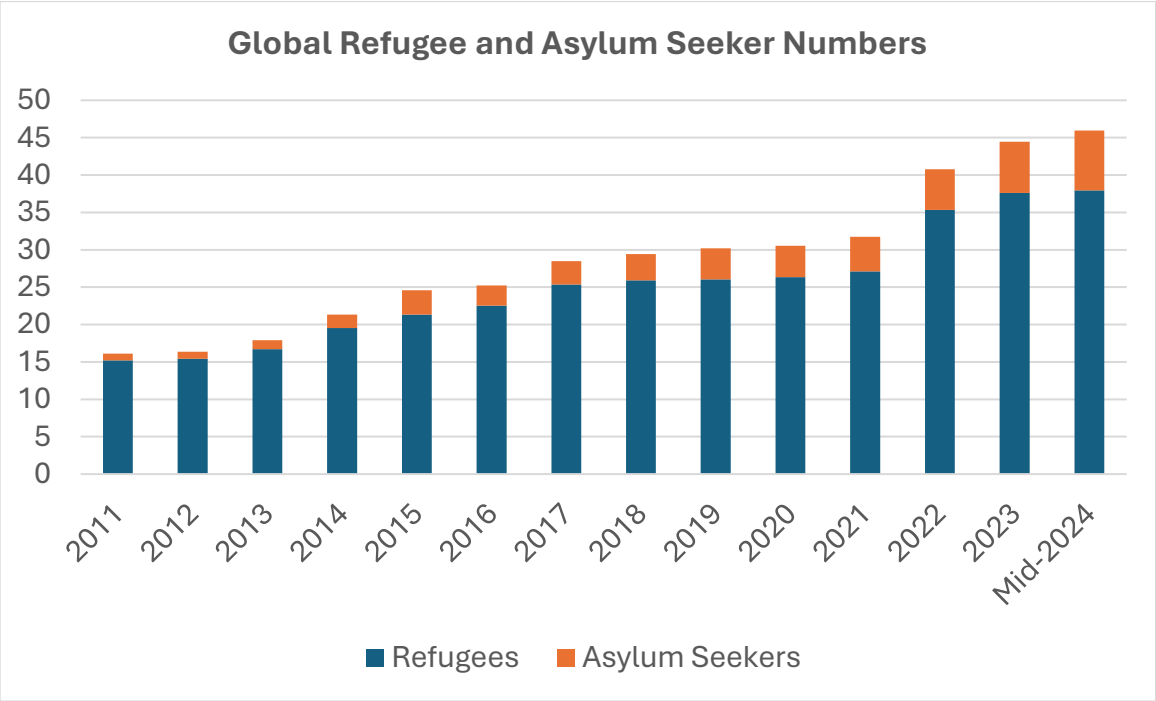
borders of the EU had also been growing exponentially. This crisis emerged as an immense humanitarian crisis eventually shifting the socio-political balance of the world at the end. The devastation brought by the ongoing conflicts caused by the socio-political changes of the Arab Spring and the wars in the regions like Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq and Africa in general pushed people out of their homes. Centrally the Syrian Civil War was quite central, which displaced millions of people due to violence, persecution, and economic collapse. Besides the war, the destabilization of Iraq and Afghanistan, coupled with the rise of extremist groups such as ISIS, contributed to large-scale migrations. These crises have forced them to seek safety abroad, across dangerous borders and seas, reaching Europe and other regions for refuge.[120]

Furthermore, the number of displaced people reached great amounts statistically on a global scale. As of 2024 the forced displaced people number reached to 117.3 million due to violence, conflicts and human rights violations.[121]The number of displaced people globally in 2011 was 42.5 million either as refugees which was the 15.2 million of it in total and the rest 26.4 million was internally displaced with asylum seekers (895.000) in general according to the UNHCR reports.[122] However, during this chapter the main focus will be mostly given to the refugees that run out of their countries to reflect better on the aspects regarding the relevant EU policies in the coming chapters as well. It can be observed below the number of refugees and asylum seekers globally since 2011:

[120]Leo Lucassen, "Peeling an Onion: The 'Refugee Crisis' from a Historical Perspective," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 41, no. 3 (2018): 396.

[121] Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), "Global Displacement Figures 2024," *NRC*, December 20, 2024. Accessed November 21, 2024. https://www.nrc.no/global-figures/

[122] "Global Trends Report: 800,000 New Refugees in 2011, Highest This Century." n.d. UNHCR. Accessed November 22, 2024. https://www.unhcr.org/news/news/global-trends-report-800000-new-refugees-2011-highest-century.

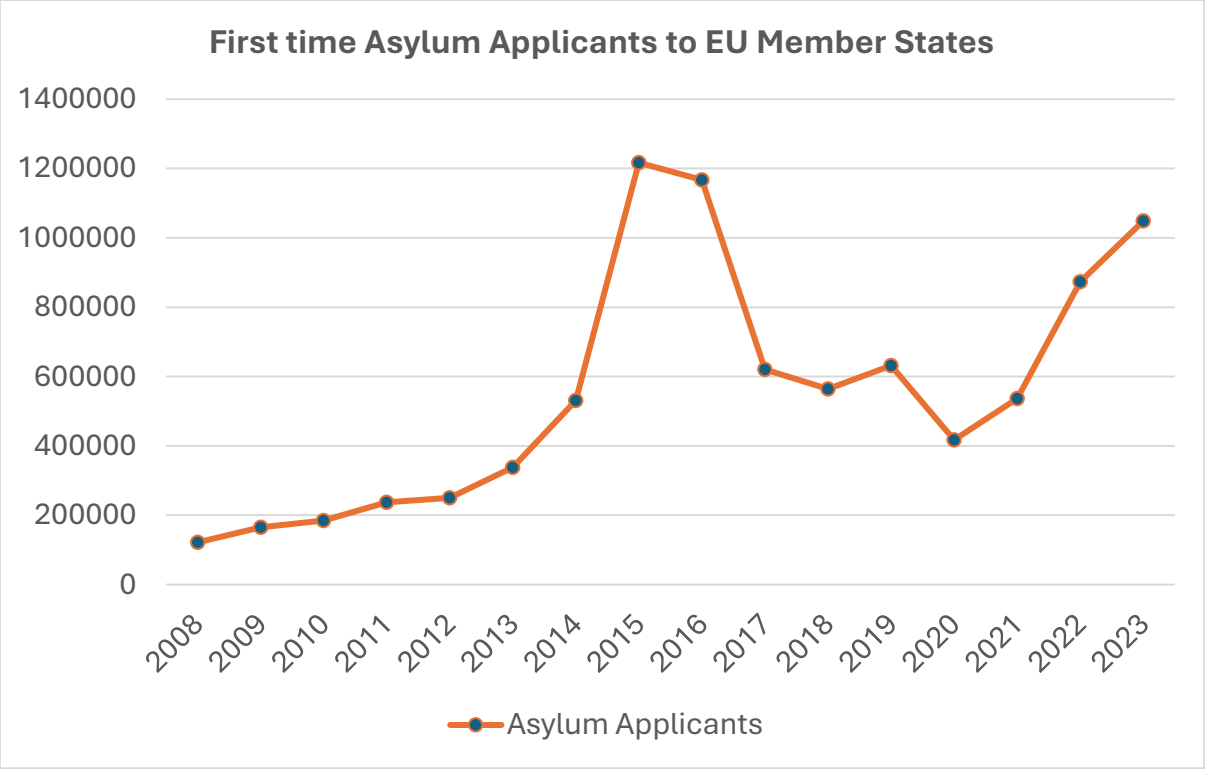


Graph 2: *Author's own compilation based on the UNHCR Mid-Year Trends Report of 2024, Source: https://www.unhcr.org/mid-year-trends*

This graphic illustrates the rising global crisis of forced displacement of people since 2011. Numbers reached from approximately 15 million in 2011 to over 45 million by mid-2024. Due to the events caused by the Arab Spring, Syrian Civil War or similar situations since 2011 global displacement increased sharply and triggered mass movements of refugees around the world towards safer places such as Europe in general. Due to the continuous Syrian crisis and other crises in places like Iraq, Afghanistan, and portions of Africa, the overall number increased to around 25 million by the year 2015.

After 2017, the exceptionally high number of persons seeking international protection and the corresponding increase in asylum applications continued to increase, passing 30 million by the year 2019 due to sustained conflicts, instability in countries such as Yemen. Furthermore, by the year 2023, the numbers reached another record of more than 45 million people overall while underscoring the consistent rise in asylum seekers, pointing towards another important point which is the administrative and humanitarian challenges faced by host nations. Fundamentally, this graphic was trying to draw the general outline of the global issue of displaced people which this study will dissect since sharp increase in displacement culminated in 2015 when Europe experienced a significant surge in mixed arrivals, particularly from Syria, triggering the European refugee crisis.

Moreover, there are several reasons why this crisis was considered as the 2015 European Refugee Crisis. One of the clear and more direct reasons is the immense number of asylum seekers coming to the borders of Europe in general. In 2015 more than 1.2 million people registered for asylum seeking to EU Member States, of which Syrian, Afghan and Iraqi citizens were at the top statistically.[123] In relation, the below graphic is the general outline of the yearly asylum seeker applications to the EU Member States since 2008 based on the Eurostat database:



Graph 3: *Author's own compilation based on the Eurostat database on Asylum Applications, Source: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Asylum_applications_-_monthly_statistics*

Based on these numbers, a notable surge in application for asylum seeking in 2015 for EU Member States, however it should be noted that this surge in numbers had been growing since 2011 and was part of a larger trend of displaced people caused by Arab Spring, Syrian Civil War and conflicts in certain parts of Africa as well. As it can be observed from the graphic above from 2008 to 2014 there had been a steady growth in numbers of application from around 180000 applicants to more than 450000 however from 2015 the immense spike

[123] Eurostat. 2016. "Record Number of over 1.2 Million First Time Asylum Seekers Registered in 2015."Accessed November 23, 2024. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/2995521/7203832/3-04032016-AP-EN.pdf/790eba01-381c-4163-bcd2-a54959b99ed6.

of numbers further illustrates as one of the reasons why this crisis had been dubbed as the 2015 European refugee crisis in general.

This ongoing trend also has been strengthened by the immense number of migrants and forced-displacement movements towards Europe. These arrivals were the main results of the Syrian Civil War, Libyan Civil War and other several conflicts in the region. Also, this event was also named as a "*crisis*" by several European governments to describe anarchy, chaos or disruption in relation to the unapproved influx of a significant number of refugees. This use has been contested by critical migration academics who have addressed its ingrained aspects of control and governance.[124] This event was also called as "*Europe's refugee crisis*" by some news outlets as well which further strengthened the opinions concerning the events transpired in the year 2015.[125]Also, some news feeds also invested in referring to these people as either migrants or refugees which in relation contributed to the labelling this event as refugee crisis in 2015.[126] At the end all these examples supplied even more contextual support to define this situation as a crisis.

On another point why this event was called a Refugee Crisis of 2015 was the immense amounts of media coverage on the deaths of persons travelling along the migration routes, including persons seeking international protection that were happening in the Mediterranean and the Aegean Seas. One of the most prominent events that was covered by the international media was the image of the 3 years old Kurdish toddler Alan Kurdi laying dead because of drowning on a Turkish beach next to the Turkish paramilitary officer Mehmet Çıplak. Alan and his family were Syrian refugees who were trying to reach Europe through the sea by first reaching Greece.[127] This media coverage became a sensation throughout the world and gained interest globally in 2015 amid the crisis. Alan as a result became a symbol like Kim Phuc shown running with her back burnt by napalm during the Vietnam War which

[124]Maissaa Almustafa, "Reframing Refugee Crisis: A 'European Crisis of Migration' or a 'Crisis of Protection'?" *Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space* 40, no. 5 (2022): 1066.
[125]P. D. Shinkman, "Security Concerns Surround Europe's Refugee Crisis," *U.S. News & World Report*, September 17, 2015, Accessed November 23, 2024. https://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2015/09/17/security-concerns-surround-europes-refugee-crisis
[126] Financial Times. "Refugees or Migrants – What's in a Word?" *Financial Times*. Accessed November 23, 2024. https://www.ft.com/content/3adb9a6f-bf99-3f6f-b891-e2d7e6ea07d9
[127]Fantz, Ashley, and Catherine E. Shoichet. "Drowned Syrian Boy's Dad: Everything Is Gone." CNN. Accessed November 23, 2024. https://edition.cnn.com/2015/09/03/europe/migration-crisis-aylan-kurdi-turkey-canada/

strengthened the focus of the refugee crisis as a result in 2015 since he was a refugee who was trying to run away to safety.[128]

Moreover, there are also the implications of the chosen terms to name this event during 2015. In relation, the term "*refugee crisis*" does more than just describe an unusual circumstance. It has been ingrained in a rhetoric that views Europe as a besieged continent. As victims and dangerous invaders who threaten our safety, economic security, cultural identity, language, and values, refugees and other migrants are ambivalently and occasionally interchangeably portrayed in this discourse. People are shown as arriving by floods, tsunamis, swarms, plagues, streams, and flows through the use of metaphors. Which in general as a structured narrative to be used by political actors or governments which will be relevant for this study in the coming chapters relating to the securitization process.[129]

Another relevant factor on how these events became a crisis for EU and Europe is that the way and the routes of the flow of immigrants coming towards specific EU Member States. Due to the extraordinary numbers of these new arrivals, Europe as a whole had to respond adequately because the situation was too big for any one Member State to handle alone. Because these are preferred final destinations for migrants, frontline states like Greece and Italy were disproportionately responsible for receiving new arrivals, transit countries like Hungary and Croatia suddenly faced extreme pressure at their borders, and wealthier EU nations like Germany and Sweden had to deal with the massive influx of refugees. How the EU, individual nations, and other stakeholders should handle and manage this issue is a key subject that comes up here. All these problems combined created different fronts within the EU while some suggested an open gate policy while others shut their borders to deal with these unprecedented numbers of people rushing towards them which at the end built an internal EU crisis.[130]

Furthermore, the migration routes these third-country nationals travelling towards the EU, including persons seeking international protection, are using mostly targeting and going through the countries like Greece, Italy and Hungary towards their final destinations. There are several main migrant routes to Europe from the conflict zones in the Middle East and

[128] Virginie Guiraudon, "The 2015 Refugee Crisis Was Not a Turning Point: Explaining Policy Inertia in EU Border Control," *European Political Science* 17, no. 1 (2018): 152.
[129]Neske Baerwaldt. "The European refugee crisis: Crisis for whom?." *Border Criminologies Blog* (2018): 1-4.
[130] Linda Peters, Peter-Jan Engelen, and Danny Cassimon, "Explaining Refugee Flows: Understanding the 2015 European Refugee Crisis through a Real Options Lens," *PLOS ONE* 18, no. 4 (2023): 1-2.

North Africa. However, this study will primarily focus on the main migrant routes such as the Eastern Mediterranean, Central Mediterranean and Western Mediterranean Migrant Routes. These routes can be observed through the map below:

Map 2: *Author's own compilation based on the UNICEF's report on main migrant routes, Source: World Refugee Day: The biggest migration routes in the world. Unicef.ch. https://www.unicef.ch/en/current/blog/2024-06-19/world-refugee-day-biggest-migration-routes-world*

These migrant routes are one of the main choices for how all these third-country nationals and people seeking international protection are reaching Europe overall. These routes fundamentally represent the significant flow of the migrants through sea and land from Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan, as well as regions in Africa, into the EU. The red lines represent the borders that enacted walls and fences against the coming flow of displaced persons by certain EU Member States which will further emphasize the internal conflicts and issues within the EU in the coming chapters.

First of these routes is the Eastern Mediterranean Route. This route is mainly used by migrants to enter Europe through Türkiye both on land and sea.[131] Most of the time this route was used by the Syrian nationals other than Iraqis and Afghans which were running away from the civil war and conflicts in general. There were significant spikes of numbers between the years of 2010 and 2014 however, in 2015 the numbers peaked and triggered a crisis. During the time of the death of Alan Kurdi also made the crisis into a refugee crisis in the

[131] Frontex. "Migratory Routes." Accessed November 24, 2024. https://www.frontex.europa.eu/what-we-do/monitoring-and-risk-analysis/migratory-routes/migratory-routes/

eyes of the media in this route. Moreover, the number of fatalities also peaked from 50,834 in 2014 to the number of 885,386 in 2015 which was almost 18 times increase overall. Due to the EU-Turkey deal in March 2016, which allowed for the returning of migrants who do not seek for asylum or whose asylum claim is denied, irregular migration along the route has significantly decreased since 2015. The number of people arriving in Europe through the Eastern Mediterranean Route fell to 182,227 by 2016, and this reduction persisted until 2018, bringing the number back to what it was before 2015.[132]

Another important migration route is the Central Mediterranean Route. High rates of irregular migration, serious humanitarian issues, and serious human rights concerns make the Central Mediterranean Route one of the world's deadliest migrant routes. As they set out on dangerous travels across the Mediterranean Sea, sometimes assisted by smugglers and dangerous vessels, persons travelling along these routes, including those seeking international protection face grave hazards, such as trafficking, abuse, and death. Conflict, economic instability, and climate change in the countries of origin are some of the factors that drive migration, and despite its own precarious security, Libya is an important transit location. The route emphasises the urgent need for comprehensive and coordinated regional responses to address its fundamental causes and safeguard vulnerable communities, even as international efforts, including as rescue operations and policy initiatives, continue to focus on reducing the human toll.[133]

Last route in this chapter is the Western Mediterranean Route. This route for the migrants and refugees is also an extremely dangerous way to reach Europe. This migrant route mainly refers to the irregular migrants' unauthorised entry into Spain, including land travel to the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla in Northern Africa as well as maritime travel over the Mediterranean Sea to mainland Spain.[134] Western Mediterranean Route also experienced fluctuating pressure levels of arrivals through the years. These arrivals through this route mostly originated from Algeria and Morocco as their departure points. The ones who dominate this route are mainly Algerians and Moroccans also accompanied migrants from

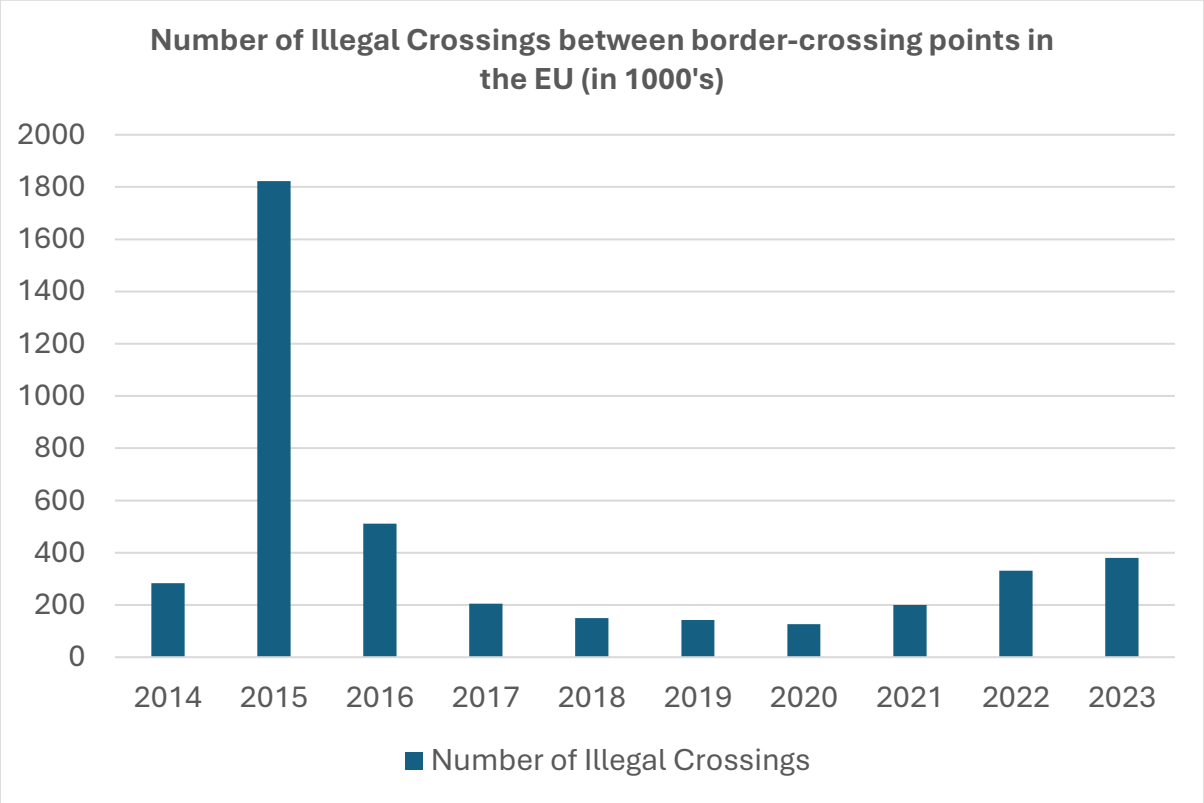
[132]Erhabor Idemudia and Klaus Boehnke, "Travelling Routes to Europe," in *Psychosocial Experiences of African Migrants in Six European Countries: A Mixed Method Study*, ed. Erhabor Idemudia and Klaus Boehnke (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2020): 41-42.

[133]UNHCR Joint Annual Overview for 2023, Migrant and Refugee Movements through the Central Mediterranean Sea in 2023.

[134] Council of the European Union. "EU Action to Manage Irregular Arrivals in Spain." *Consilium*, 2024. Accessed November 25, 2024. https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/eu-migration-policy/western-routes/#mediterranean

North and Sub-Saharan Africa. Moreover, the year 2018 saw a record high of almost 56,000 detections of irregular migration, driven by a rise in sub-Saharan migrants and departures from Morocco. Migration has been erratic in recent years, with substantial increases in Syrian and certain Sub-Saharan African nationals in 2022 and declines in migration ascribed to COVID-19 limitations and changes in transit routes.[135]

Furthermore, down below are the illegal crossings at EU borders since 2014 to 2023 to show the statistical differences throughout the years to indicate another point on how this event of flow of general migrants became a crisis. Numbers can be observed below through the graphic:



Graph 4: *Author's own compilation based on the Statista Data on the Number of illegal crossings at EU borders 2009-2023, Source: https://www.statista.com/statistics/454775/number-of-illegal-entries-between-bcps-to-the-eu/*

These numbers further indicate that the record number spike in 2015 pushed the event to a point of crisis which mainstreams the event as a crisis in general. This graph above fundamentally illustrates the tremendous increase in illegal border crossings into the EU in 2015, with over 1.8 million-the highest level driven by what is commonly referred to as the

[135]Frontex. *Western Mediterranean Situation in 2022*. Accessed November 25, 2024. https://www.frontex.europa.eu/assets/Migratory_routes/2024_website_update/ANNEX_Western-Mediterranean_up-to-2022.pdf

European Refugee Crisis, triggered by conflicts in Syria, Afghanistan, and other regions. This unexpected flow of arrivals and asylum applications basically overwhelmed the existing asylum systems and reshaped migration policy debates across European countries and the EU. After this peak year, there is however a sharp decline which is between the years of 2016 and 2020, that can be largely attributed to the EU-Turkey deal, in the coming chapter this thesis will also try address this deal, enhanced border controls, and agreements with transit countries like Libya, aimed at reducing irregular migration. Added to this, the COVID-19 pandemic played a role in the restriction of movement across borders. However, from 2022 onwards, illegal crossings have been increasing and reflect new pressures linked to geopolitical continuing conflicts, economic instability in areas of origin, and displacement linked to climate change. Such a resurgence suggests the possible change in migration routes and strategies to avoid more controlled regions, such as the growing use of the Central and Western Mediterranean Migrant Routes. Going forward, illegal crossings will increase if global crises continue; therefore, this requires increased cooperation by EU Member States, investment in asylum system capacity in general.

In conclusion, all these given migrant routes continue to contribute to the pressure on the EU's refugee crisis at hand while causing conflict among Member States. This multi complex crisis combined with the considerable amounts of continued migration and asylum-related arrivals from different cultures further stirs the issues currently while actors and certain groups benefit from it. Coming chapters of this thesis will try to examine on the EU's changing immigration policies and how they evolved through the securitization process caused by these events overall.

7. Evolution of the EU Migration Policies: From Integration to Securitization

Migration has always been a prominent subject and scholarly concern for centuries regarding security, safety, health, economy and society especially in the 21st Century.[136] Putting a direct perspective to the phenomenon of immigration is rather challenging however its imminent effects echoes through nations and cultures since civilisations first faced it.[137] Further results of these effects of immigration could also mean greater changes for these

[136] Guild, *Security and Migration*, 1-2.

[137] Patrick Manning and Tiffany Trimmer, *Migration in World History*, 3rd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2020): 1-4.

nations. These changes could be crises, political change, social strife or even economic struggles.

In connection, migration had always been a serious defining feature of the EU while influencing its socio-political structure, economic developments and its legal systems. At the same time migration and its effects keeps on challenging the EU's policies and evolving them in an everchanging reality.[138] Over some time, the overflow of migration had been testing the EU's ability to balance its founding values of openness and solidarity with the need to control borders efficiently and guaranteeing the security of its internal/external stability. The arrival of still more people searching for refuge or better life has frequently emphasized the conflict between the Union's commitment to human rights and the operational need for order at its borders. The brought-up debates following the refugee crisis in 2015 led to significant transformations in the EU's migration policy and its general governance.[139] The EU's overall migration strategy in summary, will go on to externalisation, strengthening third countries' border management capacity, preventing irregular migration and focusing on returning operations.[140]

Throughout the next subchapters of this topic the attention will be given to the EU's migration policy changes especially after the 2015 Refugee Crisis, the externalization of border management, and the securitization of immigration as central elements of contemporary policy frameworks in general. Overall observations and the study of these points would contribute to this thesis' assumptions on the securitization of immigration on the EU level.

7.1. Foundations of the EU Migration and Asylum Governance

This subchapter was organised accordingly to reflect legal and thematic relevance of this thesis' topic rather than strict chronological order of principles and policies. Beginning with the principal international and contemporary EU legal frameworks before addressing the earlier instruments that contributed to their development to further their influences and reflections on the wider EU as we are in now. The author regards exploring and presenting

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[138] Heinz Fassmann, "European Migration: Historical Overview and Statistical Problems," in *Statistics and Reality: Concepts and Measurements of Migration in Europe*, ed. Heinz Fassmann, Ursula Reeger, and Wiebke Sievers (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2009): 40-44.

[139] Massimo Livi-Bacci, *A Short History of Migration*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2018): 1-12.

[140] Vara, Juan Santos, Paula García Andrade, and Tamás Molnár. "The Externalisation of EU Migration Policies in Light of EU Constitutional Principles and Values: Reconciling the Irreconcilable? An Introduction to the Special Section." *European Papers-A Journal on Law and Integration* 2023, no. 2 (2023): 901-904.

this subject through this organisational rationale to ensure more consistent transitions between the relevant legal instruments.

EU migration policy bases its premises and principles on the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. This is further in agreement with Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and specifies the rights of refugees as well as the obligations of the states to protect them. The EU migration and asylum framework operates through three legally distinct tiers: constitutional foundations provided by the Treaty on the Functioning of the European union (TFEU) and the Charter of Fundamental Rights; harmonising secondary legislation, notably the Dublin III Regulation; and intergovernmental agreements that historically contributed to the development of European migration and border governance, particularly the Schengen Agreement which shaped border-control and free-movement arrangements and the Dublin Convention on the other hand established rules for determining the Member State responsible for examining an asylum application.[141][142][143] In this context, such provision requires states to guarantee rights of refugees while providing similar legal provisions and an asylum system to all foreign nationals and thus expresses non-discrimination and equal treatment values.[144]

Moreover, the EU's migration governance is derived from the cooperation, harmonisation and collective responsibility sharing principles between the Member States while ensuring security and order. The Schengen Agreement and the Dublin Convention laid down a basic framework of which Member States were to function by setting rules for border controls, asylum applications, and free movement within the Union for managing migration.[145] [146] These whole policies embodied within these given frameworks reflected the EU's direct commitment to openness and solidarity but rather clearly revealed the tensions involved in

[141] *Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union* | EUR-Lex: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=LEGISSUM:4301854

[142] CHARTER OF FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION (2000/C 364/01)

[143] Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, especially Arts 77–80, OJ C 202, 7.6.2016; Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, OJ C 326, 26.10.2012, pp. 391-407; Regulation (EU) No 604/2013 (Dublin III Regulation), OJ L 180, 29.6.2013, pp. 31-59; Schengen Agreement, OJ L 239, 22.9.2000, pp. 13-18; Dublin Convention, OJ C 254, 19.8.1997, pp. 1-12.

[144] Consolidated version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union Part Three - Union Policies and Internal Actions Title V - Area of Freedom, Security and Justice Chapter 2 - Policies on Border Checks, Asylum and Immigration Article 78 (ex Articles 63, points 1 and 2, and 64(2) TEC) OJ C 202, 7.6.2016, p. 76–77

[145] The Schengen acquis - Agreement between the Governments of the States of the Benelux Economic Union, the Federal Republic of Germany and the French Republic on the gradual abolition of checks at their common borders OJ L 239, 22.9.2000, p. 13–18.

[146] Convention determining the State responsible for examining applications for asylum lodged in one of the Member States of the European Communities - Dublin Convention OJ C 254, 19.8.1997, p. 1–12.

addressing the diverging migratory pressures hardly felt in some Member States, but also experienced severely in others. These early structures also have evolved over time into more centralized and security-oriented approaches which is basically defining the current reality of the EU migration governance and preparing it for its inevitable process of securitization at the end.[147]

Over the time these principles were formalized and expanded under the Treaty of Amsterdam (1999) which laid the foundation of an intergovernmental cooperation on the EU level between the Member States, this treaty stands as a significant move towards harmonisation and collective governance overall. This treaty is a very good example of the most important point in EU migration and asylum governance, as it underlined the integration of immigration policy within the larger framework of the EU's Area of Freedom, Security, and Justice (AFSJ).[148] The specified articles which were added under the Title IV of the Treaty Establishing the European Community put in place certain provisions regarding external immigration, free movement of persons, asylum and control of the EU borders. The provisions were intended to provide a degree of mutual accommodation as regards the immigration provision while aiming at improving the state's interest with the objectives of the EU. This has also given rise to a similar top-down architecture which was, however, policy in nature such as the opening up of the Schengen Agreement and the Dublin Regulation which signified that the EU has shifted towards the consolidated control of the migration concerns. The treaty also reaffirms the necessity of solidarity among the EU's Member States so as to emphasize burden sharing mechanisms for migration and asylum responsibilities, but it also sets the ground for future development, such as the Common European Asylum System (CEAS). That also reflected the continuing confrontation between national sovereignty and collective governance within the EU, which was and continues to be a factor shaping the Union's policies concerning migration.[149]

Moreover, following Treaty of Amsterdam (1999), the Tampere European Council of 1999 initiated the first phase of the CEAS overall which set the goal on developing a common European approach to asylum and migration issues. Later on, the Hague Programme which

[147] Marie De Somer, *Dublin and Schengen: A Tale of Two Cities*, European Policy Centre Discussion Paper, (2018): 3-7.
[148] Consolidated version of the Treaty on European Union - TITLE I: Common Provisions - Article 3 (ex Article 2 TEU) Official Journal 115 , 09/05/2008 P. 0017 – 0017.
[149] Treaty of Amsterdam amending the Treaty on European Union, the Treaties establishing the European Communities and certain related acts OJ C 340, 10.11.1997, p. 1–144.

was adopted in 2004 essentially provided a framework for the second phase of the EU asylum, migration and border policy with a focus on legislative harmonization, cooperation, solidarity and a common procedure of providing asylum and an equal status for those receiving international protection. Following these, the Stockholm Programme of 2009 which was set between 2010 and 2014 continued this process in the new Lisbon Treaty framework and reconfirmed the goal of developing the CEAS on the basis of common procedures and a common status of persons provided with international protection as well as solidarity among the Member States of the EU.[150][151]

Furthermore, The CEAS plays an important role in bringing the Member States together on the migration and asylum policies in the EU.[152] In detail, this system was to synchronize the asylum procedures among the Member States and to treat asylum applicants equally by the EU that CEAS was founded. It comprises five legislative instruments that provide minimum standards for fair and efficient asylum procedures, including dignified reception conditions, and highly fortified international protection. The Asylum Procedures Directive is a facilitating instrument for fast and fair decisions on applications and gives particular attention to the young and torture victims.[153] The Reception Conditions Directive guarantees rights to accommodation, health care, and education according to the standard of dignified living for an asylum seeker.[154] The Qualification Directive shall stipulate the criteria under which international protection has to be afforded and the integration measures applicable to beneficiaries.[155] In addition, the Dublin Regulation shall determine the Member State responsible for the examination of an application for international protection so that the questions of burden-sharing are also dealt with.[156] On the other side of the coin, the

[150] The Hague Programme: Strengthening Freedom, Security and Justice in the European Union (2005/C 53/01), OJ C 53, 3.3.2005, p. 1-14.
[151] The Stockholm Programme - An Open and Secure Europe Serving and Protecting Citizens (2010/C 115/01), OJ C 115, 4.5.2010, p. 1-38.
[152] Tim Hatton, "European Asylum Policy before and after the Migration Crisis," IZA World of Labor, 2020.
[153] Directive 2013/32/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 on common procedures for granting and withdrawing international protection (recast) OJ L 180, 29.6.2013, p. 60–95.
[154] Directive 2013/33/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection (recast) OJ L 180, 29.6.2013, p. 96–116.
[155] Directive 2011/95/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on standards for the qualification of third-country nationals or stateless persons as beneficiaries of international protection, for a uniform status for refugees or for persons eligible for subsidiary protection, and for the content of the protection granted (recast) OJ L 337, 20.12.2011, p. 9-26.
[156] Regulation (EU) No 604/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 establishing the criteria and mechanisms for determining the Member State responsible for examining an application for international protection lodged in one of the Member States by a third-country national or a stateless person (recast).

EURODAC Regulation supports the possibility of fingerprint data sharing in order to identify applicants and for crime prevention.[157] So as a summary, CEAS started more than a decade ago with the Tampere Programme (1999-2005), which laid a sound basis for a harmonized approach towards asylum.[158]

In a more detailed explanation, the Dublin Regulation is an essential building block of the EU migration and asylum governance; it reflects early attempts to establish a common system for processing asylum claims. It defines which Member State is to be responsible for examining an asylum application. It does this on the basis of links of kinship, the status of a visa or the place of first entry of the asylum seeker. The Dublin III Regulation (2013) extended these principles, by introducing procedural safeguards such as those for minors as well as time-limits for transfers; thus, it sought to homogenize practice and fairness. However, at in general waves of operations that cast asunder all these benefits the certain through challenges and tests it was made clear at times of distress, such as the 2015 incident of refugees rushing into Europe by simply bringing into sharp focus the unbalanced nature of the system, as it placed undue burdens on the shoulders of frontline states and renewed calls for reform in the direction of the EU's principles of solidarity. These events will be observed more in the coming subchapters through an understanding of the theoretical assumption of the securitization process which reflects the EU's new policies and transformation of their old regulations in general.[159]

Furthermore, there is the organisation of the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) which fundamentally contributes to the functioning and improving of the CEAA with operations and technical assurances to the Member States relating to the assessments of applications. This organisation foundationally operates in the area of international

[157] Regulation (EU) No 603/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 on the establishment of 'Eurodac' for the comparison of fingerprints for the effective application of Regulation (EU) No 604/2013 establishing the criteria and mechanisms for determining the Member State responsible for examining an application for international protection lodged in one of the Member States by a third-country national or a stateless person and on requests for the comparison with Eurodac data by Member States' law enforcement authorities and Europol for law enforcement purposes, and amending Regulation (EU) No 1077/2011 establishing a European Agency for the operational management of large-scale IT systems in the area of freedom, security and justice (recast) OJ L 180, 29.6.2013, p. 1–30.

[158] European Commission, *Common European Asylum System*, *European Commission – Migration and Home Affairs*, 2024, Accessed December 28, 2024, https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/common-european-asylum-system_en

[159] European Commission, *Country Responsible for Asylum Application (Dublin Regulation)*, *European Commission – Migration and Home Affairs*, 2020, Accessed December 28, 2024, https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/common-european-asylum-system/country-responsible-asylum-application-dublin-regulation_en

protection, the EUAA serves as a resource for Member States, offering operational, legal, technical, advisory, and practical support in a variety of ways. The national asylum or reception authorities are ultimately solely in charge of their protocols and processes, and the Agency does not take their place. The ultimate goal of the EUAA's work is to bring all EU+ Member States' asylum policies into compliance with EU obligations, so that an individual's application in any of the EU+ Member States will always have the same outcome. In the same way, regardless of which Member State an applicant applies to, they will always experience a similar process under similar conditions and be granted the same rights.[160] The EUAA also advocates certain principles and values foundationally related to support to the Member States and stakeholders, accountability to persons requiring protection aligned with EU principles, and competence in sharing the impress of the CEAS. The main focus of responsiveness is on changing and evolving challenges in asylum and reception services in general, while resilience concerns adapting without losing sight of human rights. This also leads to certain efficiency in the use of resources for sustainable asylum governance. It generally integrates well with the EU's larger securitization of migration by administering humane and structured savvy with a sure resource economy within the very difficult global migration landscape.[161]

Furthermore, the active role of the EUAA will be to construct robust forecasting methodologies that serve and link with other policy support measures geared towards the immigration and asylum governance of the EU.[162] The Agency's heavy reliance on data-driven techniques-information about, say, big data analysis and scenarios modelling fortifies the ability of the Union to predict a certain number of trends and possible responses to the changing migration patterns rather than managing practical policy effects. The EUAA has to facilitate standardization across Member States and further the implementations of the CEAS to ensure a common asylum management culture. This aligns well with the securitization of migration within their pre-emptive policy frameworks-that is, the systems

[160]European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA), *European Union: Agency for Asylum (EUAA) | Refworld*, Refworld, 2022, Accessed December 28, 2024, https://www.refworld.org/document-sources/european-union-agency-asylum-euaa

[161] Regulation (EU) 2021/2303 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 December 2021 on the European Union Agency for Asylum and repealing Regulation (EU) No 439/2010 PE/61/2021/REV/1 OJ L 468, 30.12.2021, p. 1–54.

[162]Melachrinos, C., M. Carammia, and T. Wilkin. An Innovative Framework for Analysing Asylum-Related Migration. European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA), n.d. Accessed December 28, 2024. https://euaa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/publications/2023-05/An_innovative_framework_analysing_asylum-related_migration.pdf

are already capable of responding to possible crises. In addition, it supports the Member States with technical assistance and interoperability at national and EU levels.[163] These aspects strengthen the securitized framing of migration, positioning the EUAA in a significant role as one of the actors managing migration in the light of security while relaxing tensions with humanitarian obligations. The effort by the agency to influence forecasting together with operational preparedness is reflecting the EU's broader tendency to use technological and administrative means to deal with issues of contemporary migration governance.[164] Eventually, by enabling all these security oriented perceptions within these policies and institutional changes basically replacing minority protection resulting in minority and migration exclusion on the institutional levels.[165]

In summary, all the principles, foundations and humanitarian roots given through the EU's values lays the framework of the Union's migration and asylum policies. However, it is evident that these principles and values are evolving through more securitized aspects which the coming chapters will list through certain chronological changes especially after the 2015's refugee crisis or the road towards that crisis since the 2011 Arab Spring and the political changes around the globe overall. It is essential however to keep in mind that the securitization process over these changes of the EU's migration policies are by nature not transparent and this thesis uses these chronological changes to reflect on the securitization theory's foundations to state its realisation.

7.2. Impact of the Arab Spring on the EU

Arab Spring's effects on the globe cannot be overstated especially on the events relating to the overflow of large-scale displacement, migration and asylum-related movements. The results of the Arab Spring caused millions of people to be displaced and many of them flowed towards the borders of the EU which caused tremendous ripple effects. These effects could be classified within the concepts of security, safety, economy and society overall. During this chapter the focus will be given to the observations and comments on the impact of the Arab Spring on the EU in general.

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[163] European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA). *EUAA Asylum and Reception Operational Response Catalogue.* 2025. Accessed December 29, 2024. https://euaa.europa.eu/euaa-asylum-and-reception-operational-response-catalogue

[164]Teddy A. Wilkin and Constantinos Melachrinos, "Forecasting Asylum: The Perspective of the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA)," in *From Uncertainty to Policy: A Guide to Migration Scenarios*, ed. Nikolaos Zahariadis (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2024): 109-114.

[165] Pákozdi, Csaba, and Bálint Ódor. "The Legal Bases for the Activities of the European Union concerning National Minorities." In 5th Warsaw Seminar on Human Rights: Warsaw, 29 September–1 October 2011, 16.

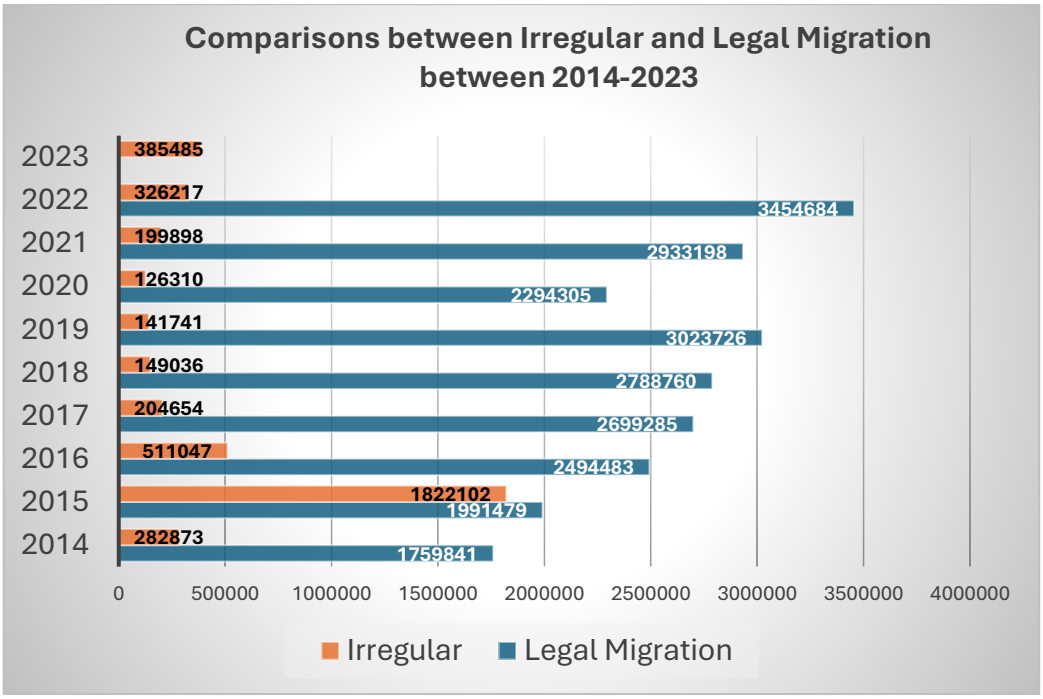
Essentially, the effects of the Arab Spring prompted impacts on the EU translation brought the fore weaknesses in its migration, security and foreign policies. Indeed, political turbulence in North Africa and the Middle East led to several mass displacements of mixed movements involving third-country nationals travelling through regular and irregular channels, including persons seeking international protection who are from Syria, Libya and Tunisia, hence increased irregular migration flows to Europe which had direct impacts on multi-levels. Such developments took a toll on resources and proved different abilities of the respective Member States of the EU to manage asylum seekers. Economically, the crisis at hand also required investments in border management and humanitarian aid. At the same time socially integrating these coming migrants proved problematic for cohesion in the respective EU societies.[166] Security concerns further aggravated since political unrest in adjacent regions all the more aroused fears of exporting extremism and terrorism into Europe as certain essential institutions warns EU such as FRONTEX.[167] This environment hastened the securitized migration policy shift for the EU and was manifested in more sophisticated surveillance systems and stricter border controls. The EU response will also be about uncertainty in terms of the tension it presents against the solid human rights and solidarity foundations of its solidarity. Tension between pragmatic considerations in migration management and security can also be recognized in this context. Such impacts would henceforth determine a more integrated, more technologically advanced profile of EU policies toward migration governance. Based on such impacts the dynamics of EU went into certain transformations and legislative developments over the years.[168]

First concerning impact of the Arab Spring was the social impact which millions of people from different cultures entered the EU borders starting to settle. Below is a direct comparison between irregular and legal migrants that came to EU between the years of 2014 and 2023, through this comparison the magnitude of the impact of the Arab Spring could be visualised which during this chapter the comments regarding this impact reflected through this graphic will be given to connect the securitization and Arab Spring effects on the EU;

[166]Mohammed T. Bani Salameh, "Migration from the Arab Spring Countries to Europe: Causes and Consequences," in *Smart Technologies and Innovation for a Sustainable Future: Proceedings of the 1st American University in the Emirates International Research Conference—Dubai, UAE 2017*, ed. Mohamed A. Ebrahim (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2019): 245.

[167] FRONTEX Annual Risk Analysis Report 2024/2025.

[168] Bartha, Ildikó. "Expanding Privileges: Recent CJEU Case-Law in Times of Crisis." Közjavak. A DE Közszolgáltatási kutatócsoport blogja (2024): 1-2.



Graph 5: *Author's own compilation based on European Commission's Statistics on migration to Europe. Source: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/interactive-publications/migration-2024*

Based on this graphic the number of people who have entered into the EU is in the millions and of course it should be remembered that these are the official numbers. The regular and irregular migrations towards the EU from 2014 until 2023, which in many more ways than one underlined sociopolitical effect from the Arab Spring, are illustrated in the figure. It shows how irregular migration escalated dramatically in the year 2015, peaking beyond 500,000 persons, right when the instability in the Middle East and North Africa basically worsened as given by the numbers. Irregular migration as it always trails legal migration very closely, but the irregular fluctuations of these numbers tell the story of border management and asylum governance is under pressure in the EU overall. The image makes it clear how the post-Arab Spring created additional stresses on movement and informed new securitization and asylum policies within the EU.

Furthermore, the crisis following the Arab Spring, as refugee issues caused sociopolitical repercussions in the EU, transformed its internal dynamics and brought forth tensions in the relationships among Member States. The reaction towards this crisis also indicates the enemization (it can be referenced as a threat building as well) of refugees, explaining how they are construed as posing threats to security and, hence, blasting their identity through the rhetorical strategies of populism and anti-immigration. This also resonates within the graph given before in this chapter which compares the flows of irregular migration and legal

migration between the years 2014 and 2023. Of course, it also generated a similar argument that would be oddly repeated in different places across the EU. The politicisation of migration has thus equally led to the emergence of even more radical rights and entitlements within the EU itself. Divisions in the EU have been deepened, therefore, without any over-stretching solidarity within the union. It has also strained social cohesion because settled debates on integration and resources allocated to host countries already burden them, further worsened by increasing prioritisation of security as opposed to humanitarianism in EU migration policies. The intertwined sociopolitical effects and migration trends indicate how the effects of the Arab Spring and the crisis following it still persists which as well at the end boosts the securitization process overall.[169]

Moreover, the sociopolitical landscape of the EU was drastically transformed by the Arab Spring, exposing its migration and security systems to vulnerabilities that were further compounded by new governance mechanisms as a whole to start with. Because as early as 2007, warnings from intelligence pointed to the potential for such disturbances, including intensified flows of migration and added threats to security, yet this did not prepare the EU at all, due to messy frameworks of fragmented institutions and reactive making of policies. The results therein showed that these waves of mixed migration and forced-displacement movements definitely aggravated the internal issues and complexions among Member States, thus putting solidarity against the light of national sovereignty. The evident challenges were expected to reflect certain changes in EU policies which would have reemphasized security through enhanced border management, intelligence sharing and the strengthening of agencies such as FRONTEX itself.[170] Also, there had been several divisions through the social impact of the crises listed above which these divisions eventually showed antagonism between solidarity and sovereignty within the EU's rhetoric foundation as some nations did not agree on a fair burden-sharing mechanism. The increased inflow that has happened was also a direct catalyst to further debates regarding integration, cultural compatibility, and resource allocation, creating sociopolitical ruptures in the Union. The Arab Spring turned the EU's dependence on crisis-driven responses naked; migration governance increasingly became that of a security issue, mirroring more general

[169]Sergio Salvatore, Terri Mannarini, Evrinomi Avdi, Fiorella Battaglia, Marco Cremaschi, Viviana Fini, Guglielmo Forges Davanzati, et al., "Globalization, Demand of Sense and Enemization of the Other: A Psychocultural Analysis of European Societies' Sociopolitical Crisis," *Culture & Psychology* 25, no. 3 (2019): 347-350, 355-361.

[170]Neill Nugent, *The Government and Politics of the European Union*, 8th ed. (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2017): 360.

sociopolitical frays and recalibrated approaches to regional strategies to strike a balance between human and security imperatives.[171]

As in summary, the Arab Spring has profoundly transformed the EU's social context by sharpening the contours of immigration pressures and attitudes toward migrants from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA).[172] This development also paved the way for an increase in Islamophobia and anti-immigrant sentiments in parts of Europe due to the underlying economic uncertainties and cultural anxieties creeping into the continent. Research analyses presented the public as not often overwhelmingly concerned regarding illegal immigration but more along the lines of presenting such claims in countries with higher immigrant populations formed by immigrants, for example, Italy and Spain while the Northern European countries provided rather ambiguous perspectives. That public tension revealed the solution to bringing about certain EU-across Member States policy consensus around social integration of migrants, addressing fears borne out of increased immigration, which in return marked the fundamental space between immigration and public sentiment that would impact the EU's response to Arab Spring.[173]

Essentially as in another aspect of this event and its result, the Arab Spring and the resulting refugee crisis restructured the economic landscape of the EU with both immediate obstacles and long-lasting repercussions. The events in MENA led to mass migrations and blindfolded the EU Member States with financial burdens vis-a-vis the management of asylum systems, secure borders, and humanitarian assistance. At the same time, these heightened costs have been borne mainly by southern-most Mediterranean countries and aggravated existing development-hitting weaknesses due to the economic crisis of 2008.[174]

As a start, the fiscal immediate burden, however, emerged from increased public expenditure on rescue operations and border management and on some basic services made for asylum seekers. It was not equitable, with some countries like Germany and Sweden, whose international total applications were highest, having to shoulder substantial costs in the short-term amounting to as much as 0.9% of GDP. Initially, well-aligned theoretical models

[171]Rubén Arcos and José-Miguel Palacios, "The Impact of Intelligence on Decision-Making: The EU and the Arab Spring," *Intelligence and National Security* 33, no. 5 (2018): 742-745.
[172]European External Action Service (EEAS). *Middle East and North Africa (MENA).* Accessed December 29, 2024. https://www.eeas.europa.eu/node/410125_fr
[173]Marzena Araźna, "The Arab Spring and Its Influence on European Union Policy," *Security and Defence Quarterly* 3, no. 2 (2014): 86-87.
[174] Trauner, Florian. "Asylum policy: the EU's 'crises' and the looming policy regime failure." Journal of European Integration 38, no. 3 (2016): 312-314.

indicated that full labour market integration of refugees would add modestly, by 0.2%, to GDP in 2017 under optimistic scenarios of significant contributions from high-skilled labour. However, there were still many challenges on this, such as slow labour market integration due to the lower skill levels of many refugees, delays due to bureaucratic obligations, and public opposition in some member states. Successful integration in the long run was extremely significant in exploiting the economic potential of refugees as the migrant labour force would fill labour shortages in aging EU economies. However, by 2016, the spectre of failed integration was already looming large over much prime-fiscal pressure and social stress.[175]

Reflecting on the economic effects of these crises certainly has a substantial consequence especially within the eyes of the people. The main reasons for that are the fear of others and the possibility of losing the monetary power of the population's country overall. The immigration boom that arose as a consequence of political instability in the Middle East and North Africa substantially increased labour supply in the EU, with a large proportion of the new jobs created in recent years being occupied by nationals from outside the EU. While labour shortages remained general, especially in construction, health, and IT sectors, the conditions have seen some challenges concerning the mismatch of skills and over-qualification. Simultaneously, refugees imposed almost immediate fiscal pressure on host countries as governments mobilized resources for humanitarian support, housing, health care, and integration programs. Short-term spending pressures on public finances were quite severe in countries like Germany, Poland, and Sweden, but successful integration of the migrants into the labour market was regarded as a long-term condition for fiscal sustainability and economic growth.[176] But such a demographic perspective was highlighted as consideration by the EU's declining fertility rate and aging population migration which helped boost modestly into the working-age population and a potential increase in output. In fact, migration increases the direct costs to local economies unequally, as the Member States that have received higher inflow of migrants have specific reports of overcrowding in public services, housing supply shortages and strained local infrastructure that causes long-term issues in the society as a result. However, there are also several positive contributions of

[175]European Commission. An Economic Take on the Refugee Crisis: A Macroeconomic Assessment for the EU. Institutional Paper 033. European Economy, July 2016. Accessed December 30, 2024. https://economy-finance.ec.europa.eu/document/download/cabef351-db62-4cf2-81d0-56ae6a08559d_en?filename=ip033_en.pdf

[176]Rosemarie Rogers, "The Politics of Migration in the Contemporary World," International Migration 30, no. 1 (1992): 41-46.

migration in making the system's innovation and productivity works through diversity in culture and skill, which will create a potential for long-term economic benefits if effective integration policies address barriers such as language or educational gaps but the realisation of these positive benefits could always be overshadowed by the threat narrative because it is always easy to blame a section of the population then to show a solution to a problem.[177]

Furthermore, another hard impact of the Arab Spring had been on the security of the Union in general, especially concerning terrorism and rising crime rates in Member States committed by the refugees and TCNs who ran away from the repercussions of the Arab Spring. It was no earlier than 2011 that the Arab Spring uprisings erupted, giving rise to a refugee crisis. Such upheaval has equally affected the security architecture of the EU. Much desired now is migration securitization and the establishment of cooperative schemes with Mediterranean partners. Border vulnerabilities were exposed, resulting in a higher degree of investment in surveillance technologies, increased maritime patrols, and operation FRONTEX-type activities. Member States of the EU have also put bilateral treaties signed with states like Turkey, Morocco, and Jordan into use by supplementing funds to the two other pillars: curbing migration flow and improving regional stability. Besides managing migration flows, most of the bilateral agreements link these with much wider security concerns, such as counterterrorism and anti-smuggling measures. Migration diplomacy has turned into an avenue of integration where states like Jordan and Türkiye see potential of economic and political concessions accrued from taking on transit functions. The crisis has by virtue of these events also brought to fore disparities in levels of cooperation, for instance, with Algeria proving quite apprehensive to join such EU framework on security. The overall EU response to the crisis involves an interaction of balancing short-term approaches to immediate security and long-term resilience building in partner states in addition to navigating through complex interdependencies between migration control and humanitarian obligations while clashing with security concerns.[178]

As in another approach through external means when the EU's crisis when faced with the Arab Spring's results revealed its weakness and susceptibility to having instabilities in its

[177]Francesca Caselli, Huidan Lin, Frederik G. Toscani, and Jiaxiong Yao, *Migration into the EU: Stocktaking of Recent Developments and Macroeconomic Implications*, IMF Departmental Paper No. 2024/006 (Washington, DC: International Monetary Fund, 2024): 7-11.

[178]Peter Seeberg and Jan Claudius Völkel, "Introduction: Arab Responses to EU Foreign and Security Policy Incentives: Perspectives on Migration Diplomacy and Institutionalized Flexibility in the Arab Mediterranean Turned Upside Down," *Mediterranean Politics* 27, no. 2 (2022): 139-147.

neighbouring areas as weak and fragmented Member States gave way to terrorism, illicit trafficking and uncontrolled migration through their borders. Indeed, the fall of certain state authorities have manifested in countries such as Libya and Syria, where armed militia groups and hybrid actors rose and complicated border control and conflict management. The last has enhanced border security, radicalization counter measures and addressing trafficking networks as part of its response to the crisis.[179] However, these have often been undermined or limited by a general lack of coordination among Member States and institutional bureaucratic issues in general to begin with. Most importantly, the crisis testifies to the EU's reliance on actual and transit states such as Türkiye in opposing and creating more interdependence and vulnerability in terms of couches for controlling migration flows and regional security. Another record shows that it's segmented, resulting in acute threats but also proving that the EU has a tank of capacity with which to carry out cohesiveness in foreign and security policy. Divergence of priorities on the part of the Member States of the EU and the difficulty of negotiating with non-state actors further reduce the chances for the EU to effectively address root causes of insecurity. Such developments bring forth the need for use of more coherent security strategies adaptive to rising challenges that blend internal and external policy measures against the certain effects.[180]

When all these effects and impacts combined the Arab Spring and the resulting crises gave the EU enough challenges to alter their overall policies. Of course, the given events of impacts and reactions by the Union and the Member States are just general reactions and the coming chapter will examine in greater details on how the policies and institutions had been transformed in the shape of securitization of immigration through the process with related functions to present a more transparent context on the EU level.

7.3. A Way of Securitization: EU's Migration and Asylum Policies since 2015

Securitization of the EU level started with after the explained impacts of the Arab Spring and the resulting Refugee Crisis, especially after 2015 with many policies changing and many institutions transforming relatively towards a more security-oriented way towards migration in general.[181] Since the overall flow of the migration towards the EU borders were

[179]Ibrahim Irdem and Yavor Raychev, "Syrian Mass Migration in the 2015 EU Refugee Crisis," *Insight Turkey* 23, no. 2 (2021): 236, 243.
[180]Agnès Levallois, *Fragmentation and EU Foreign and Security Policy*, JOINT Research Paper No. 3 (Brussels: EU Horizon 2020 JOINT Project, 2021): 15-19.
[181] Stępka, *Identifying Security Logics in the EU Policy Discourse*, 2.

shaping the dynamics of the Union's policies both internally and externally, it became clear that the Member States also started to divide on how to tackle the issues on many levels.[182]Since, EU acts collectively on the issues concerning many aspects such as; security, trade, economics, foreign policy, diplomacy, development, humanitarian aid, peace, security and crisis management with norm setting, threats looming from or over migration combines all of these together like a mechanism at the end.[183]

Overall, the framing of the irregular migration as a national security threat has placed defence and security at the core of EU's migration strategy and policies through the crisis at hand. Although sometimes securitization of migratory policies, in recent years this has been increasingly accentuated. Securitization and externalization mark the direction migration management is taking in the southern neighbourhood, particularly in terms of making North Africa into a buffer zone. An illustration of this approach is the EU's proposition to create regional disembarkation platforms and buffer zones in certain southern and other Mediterranean countries as well.[184] At the end determining the effects and the ways of this process taken hold within the EU's strategy towards migrants sit at the heart of this thesis while connecting them through the securitization process with its components.

Later on, during this chapter this study will observe the timelines of the EU's migration and asylum policy especially after 2015 since it's been the spiking point of the Refugee Crisis. Furthermore, connecting how these changes over the timeline of policies and institutional transformation relates to the securitization process and its components while making relevant comments to determine the effects as well. Focusing on documentations, policies and cases related to the securitization since 2015 also ensures a transparent observation to the claims of the securitization process on the EU level. The table below lists the general and most relevant changes on the migration policies reflected through the framework of securitization process. It can be observed below:

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[182] Brookings Institution. *"Understanding Europe's Turn on Migration."* Accessed January 2, 2025. https://www.brookings.edu/articles/understanding-europes-turn-on-migration/

[183] Csatlós, Erzsébet, Internationalisation and Globalisation of Public Administration, Fundamenta Fontium Iuris Publici (Szeged: Iurisperitus Kiadó, 2026): 142.

[184] Tasnim Abderrahim, *The Securitisation of the EU's Migration Policies: What Consequences for Southern Mediterranean Countries and Their Relations with the EU?* (IEMed / EuroMeSCo, n.d.), Accessed January 2, 2025.https://www.iemed.org/publication/the-securitisation-of-the-eus-migration-policies-what-consequences-for-southern-mediterranean-countries-and-their-relations-with-the-eu/

2015

European Agenda on Migration

Key focus of this policy is to enhance border security, fight against smuggling and exploring the cooperations with third countries.

Role of this policy within securitization is to make migration linked to crimes which at the end building a threat narrative. Theoretically linking the immigration to the threat narrative is an active securitization.

Official objective: Strengthen border management, combat migrant smuggling, improve asylum and legal migration and enhance cooperation with third countries.

2015

Hotspot Approaches

Key focus is the migrant registrations and to make enhanced control in frontline Member States through strengthened surveillance and measures targeting the irregular migrants in general.

Role of this approach is to put the security over the humanitarian needs of the immigrants while turning border states into securitized zones.

Official objective: Support frontline Member States in identifying, registering, fingerprinting and processing arriving migrants (essentially surveillance) while coordinating asylum and return procedures.

2015 and Onwards

Integrated Political Crisis Response (IPCR)

Key focus of this response is to make sure making migration a crisis while pushing events to an immense measures.

Ensuring these aimed measures are justified while keeping their activities as it was designed.

Official objective: Facilitate coordinated EU decision-making, information sharing and crisis management during migration emergencies.

2016

Start of the FRONTEX's Transformation

Key focus of the transformation of this institution is of a great importance within the securitization process of the EU because this organisation is one of the great leaps towards the militarisation of the EU's forces against deemed threats and crises.

Official objective: Strengthen EU external-border management through expanded operational powers, resources and coordination.

2016

EU-Türkiye Deal

This deal between EU and Turkiye fundementally states that the EU is ready to hand out its crises to a third country which is basically externalizing the problem itself while making comprimases. In another instance EU is distancing itself from humanitarian needs and obligations.

Official objective: Reduce irregular crossings, combat smuggling and improve migration cooperation with Türkiye.

2016

EU Global Strategy (EUGS)

Key focus is that the EU simply began linking the migration with its security and defence policy (securitization process) by framing it as a hybrid threat under the CSDP, which reinforced a threat-based view and merged migration policy with the broader security and defence objectives.

Official objective: Integrate migration management into EU foreign and security policy through cooperation, resilience and coordinated external action.

2016

EURODAC Database Expansion

Key focus is to introduce the biometric fingerprint database allowed for increased tracking and surveillance of the migrants across the EU which is basically a profiling system to make immigrants an easier target.

Official objective: Expand EURODAC to improve identification, monitor irregular movements and support asylum and return procedures.

2016 and 2017

New FRONTEX Mandate

Key focuses and results of this mandate showed that this organisation with 10,000 guards basically institutionalized the militarization of borders and external control, symbolizing how emergency security measures became part of the EU's regular governance through bureaucratic structures.

Official objective: Strengthen integrated external-border management through expanded operational powers.

2021-2027

Multiannual Financial Framework

This framework lays the foundations of the EU funding for border management, security technologies and cooperation with third countries financially reinforced securitized migration policies, showing that securitization is built into the EU's budgetary priorities and become a long-term structural approach.

Official objective: Fund asylum, migration management and effective external-border management.

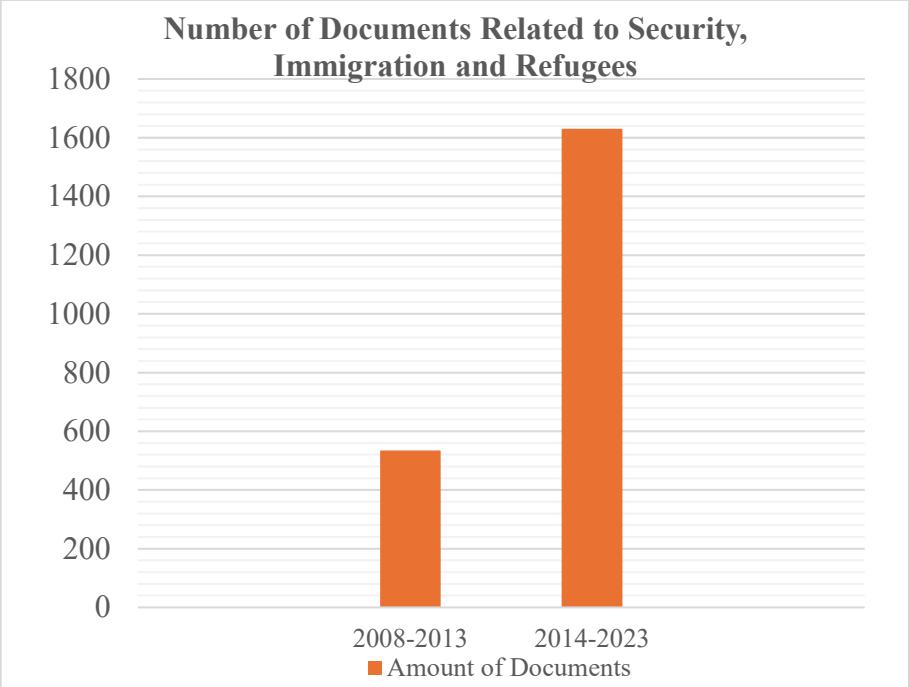
2016-2025	**EU-Türkiye Deal's Facility for Refugees**
€6 billion aid for Türkiye to prevent irregular migration, reassigned migration management to a non-EU country. Further externalization of migration control, reinforcing unequal power dynamics with third countries in general. **Official objective:** Providing a €6 billion for humanitarian assistance, education, healthcare and socio-economic support for refugees and host communities in Türkiye.	
2020	**New Pact on Migration and Asylum**
This pact stregthens the restrictive policies while legitimezing control over migration flow through securitzed rhetoric. Fundementally limiting access while reinforcing the border controls. **Official objective:** Establishing a comprehensive system for border screening, asylum, return, solidarity and legal migration by the EU.	
2015-2020	**Operation Sophia**
This taking attitude by the Eu indicates that the security and humanitarian actions' lines are starting to blur since EU seeks to make humanitarian mission through a security framework. This pact theoretically reflects on the lines between security and humanitarian needs are merging in these crises. **Official objective:** Disrupt the migrant-smuggling networks in the Mediterranean Sea while contributing to rescue operations and training/cooperating the Libyan Coast Guard in general.	
Planned for 2025	**ETIAS & EES Systems**
These two planned systems are aimed to profile and survey people to determine who is a threat or who is not. However, these systems might also be a mechanism of threat building to decide who will be the threat or who won't at the end. **Official objective:** Aim to Improve the external-border management by pre-screening visa-exempt travellers and recording the entry and exit of non-EU nationals.	

Table 2: *Author's own compilation based on the EU's policies and instruments regarding relevant immigration and security since 2015*

EU's migration policies since 2015 highlights key moments and responses towards the challenges presented by the immigration and asylum in general. Reflecting EU's efforts to address both immediate crises and long-term structural issues while spanning years of significant migratory pressures, particularly during the 2015 peak of the refugee crisis. EU's policies regarding immigration and asylum also illustrate various changes towards a more collective security approach while presenting many direct transformations. Fundamentally, the events that this chapter will observe aims to reflect a broader trend toward integrating defence and security measures into migration management, essential securitization on the EU level.

Before detailing the chronological evolution of the EU's policies, actions and its institutional changes it is useful and essential to compare the number of documents that include the terms security, immigration and refugees all together before the refugee crisis and after its onset period to have a better understanding how immigration had been framed as a security threat. By making a comparison of periods of the EU's policy documents through EUR-Lex between certain periods. The author compares them on the basis of inclusion of certain terms

to indicate the spike of documents and policies to point towards that the immigration had been framed as a security threat. This graphic can be observed below:



Graph 6: *Author's own compilation based on the author's own research based on the general EUR-Lex database. Source: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/homepage.html.*

Graphic above compares two periods, 2008-2013 and 2014-2023, by calculating and collecting the number of EUR-Lex policy documents that simultaneously contain the terms security, immigration, and refugees. The figure illustrates that in 2008-2013 period consisted of 535 documents of regulations and policies versus 1630 in the 2014-2023 period. A rise of approximately 205% after the first period which remains substantial even when adjusted for period length (almost 83% higher on an annualized basis). This trend could indicate and interpreted as a discourse of gradual securitization which this co-occurrence of terms provides this thesis a somewhat visible pattern of securitization on the EU level. Through chosen terms within the bulk of documents over the years as a diagnostic and interpreted qualitatively via CDA's theory-driven close reading with securitization theory's approach, this whole figure flags moments where EU institutions collectively act as securitizing actors according to this dissertation.[185]

[185] Paul Baker et al., "A Useful Methodological Synergy? Combining Critical Discourse Analysis and Corpus Linguistics to Examine Discourses of Refugees and Asylum Seekers in the UK Press," *Discourse & Society* 19, no. 3 (2008): 284-286.

In connection, as a start, the European Commission released an Agenda on Migration (May 2015) in the EU to improve security for borders, crack smuggling networks, and strengthen cooperation with external countries to manage migration flows at the source in line with the unprecedented influx of migrants. The subject brought to focus "*hotspots*" for frontline states since the intent was to simplify processing migrants in an efficient way. This was clearly aimed at being surveillance and control oriented. It further promoted the externalization of migration management through partnerships to convert neighbouring regions, especially North Africa, into buffer zones to limit the migratory pressures on Europe. This was the first form for the change in EU migration policy to one in which security interests are programmed more heavily at the core and border control is one marker of balance against humanitarian commitments.[186]

In the context of EU migration governance, when looking at a theoretical approach through the study at hand, the Hotspot approach can be seen as an operative shift towards the securitization of humanitarian space, to mask its containment strategies which is for the migration in general and deterrent techniques. Such spaces contain coercive immobility and systemic alienization under the reasoned offenses of safety-enhancing opportunities for migrants and Member States alike. Safety for these centres seem to guarantee not protection, but the further externalization of asylum responsibilities and the reterritorialization of borders, all coupled with humanitarian naming of exclusionary practices which is basically pushing away the responsibility to an isolated area. Such views on the reconfiguration of EU border management directly witness not only the geopolitical policy changes of the EU but also its response to the stress between humanitarian discourses and securitized migration control, having major implications on the rights and dignity of asylum seekers.[187]

Another action taken after the initial spikes of immigration caused by the Refugee Crisis was the EU Council stepped up to trigger the Integrated Political Crisis Response (IPCR) in October 2015 to deal better with the crisis of migrants and refugees in general with information sharing among Member States of the EU.[188] Furthermore, in November 2015,

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[186] European Commission -Press release Managing migration better in all aspects: A European Agenda on Migration. (2015). Accessed January 11, 2025. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/api/files/document/print/en/ip_15_4956/IP_15_4956_EN.pdf

[187] Katharyne Mitchell and Matthew Sparke, "Hotspot Geopolitics versus Geosocial Solidarity: Contending Constructions of Safe Space for Migrants in Europe," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 38, no. 6 (2020): 1063.

[188] Migratory Crisis: EU Council Presidency Steps Up Information Sharing between Member States by Activating IPCR." Consilium, press release. Accessed January 11, 2025. https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2015/10/30/migratory-crisis-activating-ipcr/

the Council fully activated the IPCR and it is currently staying that way as fully activated.[189] The IPCR is designed to act as a framework that eases an organized and timely response to certain given major crises with political significance or wide-ranging impact within or outside of the EU, as established by Council Decision 2018/1993. The IPCR is slanted to facilitate political decision-making and the triggering of the EU's solidarity clause under Article 222 of the TFEU.[190] Operating through two modes which are the information sharing for monitoring and preparedness, and full activation for implementing response measures.[191] There are also key tools that include roundtables for strategic discussions, the Integrated Situational Awareness and Analysis (ISAA) for creating a comprehensive crisis report, a secure web platform for information exchange, and the 24/7 contact points to remain constantly connected and vigilant to response these crises that include security threats which stands as a hotspot for this study overall.[192] Further observations and the results of this political arrangement system connects directly to the securitization process regarding the threat narrative building.

It should be stressed that based on this thesis' reflection on the securitization process' component of the facilitating condition can be laid upon these systems such as the IPCR. Allowing the creation of a necessary political environment to make the coming immigration flow as a threat for the securitizing actors. Furthermore, the statue of the activation of the IPCR still persists and this event stands as an institutional authority that aligns with the powers of the securitization actors' aimed powers to build a more suitable threat framing while identifying crises that can be beneficial for them as well. Also, audience acceptance is crucial and a system like this could contribute to making the immigration and the refugees to be perceived as a threat in general. Lastly, the rapid decision-making process enabled by this system is a great way to implement the extraordinary measures that are required for the securitization process. In essence, the IPCR is one of the tools that serves and legitimizes the securitization of several crises that took place overall.

[189] European Council / Consilium. The Council's Response to Crises (IPCR). 2018. Accessed January 11, 2025. https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/ipcr-response-to-crises/
[190] Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2018/1993 of 11 December 2018 on the EU Integrated Political Crisis Response Arrangements ST/13422/2018/INIT OJ L 320, 17.12.2018, p. 28–34. Article 1.
[191] Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2018/1993 of 11 December 2018 on the EU Integrated Political Crisis Response Arrangements ST/13422/2018/INIT OJ L 320, 17.12.2018, p. 28–34. Article 2.
[192] Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2018/1993 of 11 December 2018 on the EU Integrated Political Crisis Response Arrangements ST/13422/2018/INIT OJ L 320, 17.12.2018, p. 28–34. Articles 7, 8, 9, 10.

Moreover, at the European Council certain decisions took place to counter the crisis at hand on 26th of June 2015. Based on the EU Commission's agenda on migration and discussions at the Council, EU leaders quickly agreed on several measures covering the certain areas which were the relocation and resettlement, return and readmission and lastly the cooperation with third countries. The provisional agenda during these meetings took several points such as the overall migration and of course covered the security and defence.[193] Before further observing and explaining the migration points of this meeting the focus on the security and defence side is a more pressing interest according to this thesis relating to the securitization of the EU in general. First of all, the EU leaders stressed on the accelerated readmission negotiations with the countries of origin and transit while agreeing to reinforce FRONTEX with additional powers to help in this crisis. These kinds of moments stand as pivotal moments for the transformation of FRONTEX into a full-fledged security and defence mechanism. Furthermore, the Secretary-General of NATO, Mr. Jens Stoltenberg, joined the EU leaders who discussed certain perspectives on the new security environment. Titles and subjects of the leaders, at their initiative, included issues and challenges faced by security in the EU. EU leaders continued to discuss the call for the introduction of a global strategy by the EU on foreign and security policy by June 2016 in the European Council. Their work was to make a stronger and more visible and goal-oriented Common Security and Defence Policy.[194] These discussions contributed to the broader objective of safeguarding the EU's security which in the coming years certainly ensured an environment for a more collective security framework that contributed to the securitization process.

Furthermore, another major turning point towards the securitization practices on EU's policies changed by the Refugee Crisis after 2015 came in the form of agreements between EU and the third countries, especially with the Türkiye. Background preparations for this deal happened around the EU leaders' meeting between 18-19 February 2016 during the European Council. They adopted certain conclusions regarding migration and refugees while confirming their direct intentions of a special meeting between the EU and Türkiye in March 2016. Their other discussion mostly focused on the progress to make a viable action plan between EU and Türkiye to arrange a substantial and sustainable reduction of the number of illegal entries from their side of the border. Also, the European Council emphasized the

[193]European Council, Provisional Agenda, European Council, 25–26 June 2015 (June 2015), https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/23790/provisional-agenda-euco-25062015.pdf
[194]European Council / Consilium. European Council, 25–26 June 2015. 2024. Accessed January 13, 2025. https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/european-council/2015/06/25-26/

importance of external border management, the full implementation of decisions on relocation, returns and readmission and the requirement for hotspots to be fully functional while underscoring the need to gradually restore full compliance with the Schengen Borders Code across all Schengen Area Member States of the EU in general.[195]

In theoretical and practical reflection, The EU-Türkiye Deal is a fine example of the EU's securitization model for migration, especially at the Greek-Turkish borders. The deal intended to deter illegal migration by returning people arriving on the Greek islands to Türkiye while strengthening external border control.[196] However, this policy severely impacts human rights, especially crippling the rights of unaccompanied children with the establishment of hotspots on the Aegean Islands. These camps are overcrowded and poorly resourced, effectively making them containment zones. Whereas the unaccompanied minors, among the most vulnerable migrants, have had their freedom of movement impacted and limited access to basic services. The securitization measures went hand in hand with increasing the powers of the FRONTEX, which ensured that the border security over the protection of these fundamental rights, there on essentially criminalizing these migrants including children and regarding them as security threats that need to be contained. The unaccompanied children have been set up for prolonged detention and are therefore in miserable living conditions as a result. These events fundamentally mark the tension between the aspirations of the EU for security and the human rights duties placed upon it.[197]

Eventually, on March 16th, 2016, the agreed agreement between the EU and Türkiye launched a new perspective for the EU's migration policy in terms of border security and externalization of migration management in the long run. This cooperation was to manage the irregular migration from Türkiye into the EU borders, starting a one-for-one return and resettlement mechanism which all the new irregular migrants arriving on the Greek islands would be returned to Türkiye while for every Syrian returned, another would be resettled from Türkiye to the EU. This planned agreement and action plan was seen as a temporary

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[195] European Council / Consilium. *European Council, 18–19 February 2016*. Accessed January 13, 2025. https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/european-council/2016/02/18-19/

[196] Pauline Perchoc. "EU-Turkey Statement & Action Plan." European Parliament, November 20, 2019. Accessed January 13, 2025. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/legislative-train/theme-towards-a-new-policy-on-migration/file-eu-turkey-statement-action-plan

[197] A. Boraso. "Little Lives on Hold: The Impact of EU Securitisation Policy Tools on Unaccompanied Children's Rights at the Greek-Turkish Border." Centro di Ateneo per i Diritti Umani, December 16, 2020. Accessed January 17, 2024. https://unipd-centrodirittiumani.it/en/topics/little-lives-on-hold-the-impact-of-eu-securitisation-policy-tools-on-unaccompanied-childrens-rights-at-the-greek-turkish-border

and exceptional measure to put a stop to human smuggling and restore public order while upholding international law and asylum procedures. Besides, this agreement and the two-sided interrelation reinforced Türkiye's role in stopping potential new routes for migration as an entrance way to Europe while giving Türkiye more power to affect EU's policies and decisions. With financial assistance from the EU through the Facility for Refugees in Türkiye, which was a €3 billion help package at the beginning, while another €3 billion package was conditioned on if Türkiye is fulfilling its pledges regarding the issues and crises. Other incentives for Türkiye included the speeding up of visa liberalization process for Turkish citizens, upgrading of the Customs Union and simply the revitalization of Türkiye's EU accession process to the EU as a new Member State with openings of new negotiations to come with more opportunities. Consistent with this agreement, the EU also fundamentally developed a securitization paradigm towards migration by offshoring border control to a third country, therefore reinforcing management of the external borders and reducing direct EU responsibility towards asylum seekers. The existence of hotspots in Greece and the presence of Turkish officials in the Islands was also a sign of enhanced security cooperation.[198] Moreover, this agreement basically puts the values of deterrence, security and containment of the EU in general well ahead of any humanitarian considerations regarding migrants who are coming towards Europe, therefore facilitating migratory governance moving to externalization while further anchoring Türkiye's strategic role within EU migration policies.[199]

Additionally, this EU-Türkiye deal at hand was implemented on the EU level in a way that brings all aspects of migration under the securitization process through various border control, political tooling and deterrence measures overall. The irregular migrants' return mechanism from Greece to Türkiye reinforces certain focus of the EU on preventing unauthorized movement and flow by acting out foreign management of borders and thus shifting the responsibility to a third country which even have several political implications in return. Moreover, the presence of several liaison officers and the setting up of closed reception centres impose restrictive measures aiming at limiting the chance of irregular migrants avoiding return proceedings. There was also a further emphasis on cooperating with FRONTEX under the agreement since hundreds of officers were deployed to assist

[198] European Commission, *Press Corner: MEMO 16/1664*, European Commission, Accessed January 17, 2025, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/sk/MEMO_16_1664

[199] Council of the European Union, *EU-Turkey Statement, 18 March 2016*, press release, March 18, 2016, https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/03/18/eu-turkey-statement/pdf/

border enforcement and migrant processing, therefore further integrating migration management into security concerns. Stressing fast-track procedures for asylum, particularly through the application of first country of asylum and safe third country principles, indicates a policy that is to speed up returns in tandem with limiting access to the EU asylum system. Above all, stopping the flow of new land and sea migration routes demonstrates a wider containment strategy, putting migration control in the context of security rather than humanitarian protection. These measures demonstrate how the EU has created a collective security framework to act as a deterrer to the migration rather than integration or accepting them.[200]

Furthermore, theoretically based on this deal's existence between the EU and Türkiye, EU also allows a decentralisation of the collective securitization process by allowing a third party to do so in return for themselves. However, accordingly to this thesis' approach to EU's perception of the immigration since 2015 and its securitization process on the EU level, this attitude of decentralisation is just a facilitating tool to distance themselves from the outreach of the negative side effects of the securitization phenomenon that was mentioned in the past chapters. Contributing to any kind of deterrence and dissociation against the immigration could be a way towards securitization and the EU is well ahead of its process.[201]

The political reality of the deal between the EU and Türkiye also reflects a complex play on the immigration management as well. Like it was mentioned before during this study, securitization changes normal politics and enables extraordinary events to unfold while keeping the legitimacy. Theoretical and political implications also shows how the external actors can play with the dynamics of securitization or actively shape it in the EU migration governance context. In theory, this contradicts the Copenhagen School's component of speech act by showing that the vulnerability revealed by the securitization process can be strategically exploited by an external actor such as Türkiye. Thus, a severe argument can be made in political European discourse between the construction of asylum and migration as a scourge threatening the internal order of the EU regarding terrorism, instability, and the dilution of culture, which then revealed as a serious security gap: country, as a key

[200] European Commission, Fact Sheet: Implementing the EU-Turkey Agreement – Questions and Answers, MEMO 16/1494 (European Commission), https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/api/files/document/print/hr/memo_16_1494/MEMO_16_1494_EN.pdf

[201] Sarah Léonard and Christian Kaunert, "De-centring the Securitisation of Asylum and Migration in the European Union: Securitisation, Vulnerability and the Role of Turkey," *Geopolitics* 27, no. 3 (2022): 732.

gatekeeping state that exploited this weakness by allowing migratory flows to be used as a bargaining chip and effective instrumentalization of asylum seekers to obtain political concessions, financial support, and leverage in negotiations over accession and visa liberalization. This fits the concepts such as refugee rent-seeking and migration diplomacy, where coercion and conditional cooperation become tools of statecraft.[202] In comparison, the EU-Türkiye deal politically marked a shift in the direction of externalizing control over EU borders. It therefore reaffirmed the securitization also became a transactional model in which concern over migratory flows supersedes the humanitarian obligations relative to action taken on those flows. The muted response of the EU also indicates that securitized migration control has transformed political in a sense of pragmatic relativity as well.[203]

Moreover, the mandates and extensive transformation bestowed upon the FRONTEX had already been discussed and observed thoroughly so the current part of this chapter will briefly mention the impact of the organisation on the overall EU and its Member States as a statement in general. FRONTEX has been at the centre of the securitization of migration inside the EU through enhanced border controls, strong surveillance, and support for member states in managing migration activities. As the Borders and Coast Guards Agency of the EU, FRONTEX has enlarged its ability to intervene by deploying personnel and technology for external borders management and surveillance. From the measures set up by the agency for pre-entry screening, biometric data collection through EURODAC, and mandatory border procedures, one may underline the relevance of these in securitizing migration. In addition, it has fast-tracked returns for those with no valid claims, integrating it further into security policies and an aspect of migration control.[204] The collaboration with certain third countries such as Türkiye as it was mentioned before to combat the overflowing entries and prevent the irregular migration routes further externalizes the EU's border management strategy. Through these mechanisms, FRONTEX has not only increased its influence over EU migration policy and its politics, but it has also helped to shape that

[202] Sefa Secen, "Explaining the Politics of Security: Syrian Refugees in Turkey and Lebanon," *Journal of Global Security Studies* 6, no. 3 (2021): 18-20.

[203] Léonard and Kaunert, "De-centring the Securitisation of Asylum and Migration," 745-746.

[204] Regulation (EU) 2024/1358 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 on the establishment of 'Eurodac' for the comparison of biometric data in order to effectively apply Regulations (EU) 2024/1351 and (EU) 2024/1350 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Council Directive 2001/55/EC and to identify illegally staying third-country nationals and stateless persons and on requests for the comparison with Eurodac data by Member States' law enforcement authorities and Europol for law enforcement purposes, amending Regulations (EU) 2018/1240 and (EU) 2019/818 of the European Parliament and of the Council and repealing Regulation (EU) No 603/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council PE/15/2024/REV/1 OJ L, 2024/1358, 22.5.2024. Articles 2, 11 & 12.

securitization approach toward enforcing borders, deterring entry, and containing migration flows. Which at the end this organisation's existence also sent strong waves of change throughout the Member States of the EU taking stronger measures by themselves to deal with the overflowing immigration to their borders at the end.[205]

Another point of the shift towards securitization practices and its process by the EU was the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) or the long-term budget of 2021-2027. This framework fundamentally represents the EU securitizing immigration through continued support levers for migration management and border security. Areas that have been central to the mid-term revision of the MFF are the allocation of further funding for the control of borders. This enforces the EU's commitment to furthering border management, preventing irregular migration, and enhancing returns and readmissions. The focus on strategic investment in security-related technologies also bridges the need for migration policies to reflect security concerns. Besides, this revision for the budget enables external cooperation with third countries in migration management by providing funds for preventing irregular migration at its source through various treaties. Such becomes a hierarchy with the EU's externalization strategy, under which increasing migration control responsibilities are devolved from within the EU to non-EU states around the world. The financial commitment to resilience and crisis management, further, accommodates the related measures to address security challenges which were connected to the migration and in relation intertwines migration governance directly into the security framework. These allocations demonstrate how the EU is putting Securitized approaches first in its long-term financial planning.[206]

Other points of interest relating to the securitization tools consisted inside the EU's migration policies were the introductions of the EES and the ETIAS with their proposed integration to the other Member States' systems through aimed technological designs which were mentioned in the chapters before in this thesis. EES and ETIAS won't be mentioned during this subchapter since it was mentioned before in details however it is necessary to point out that these systems proposed and expected integrations are a forward towards the profiling and threat building over the immigrants and the refugees for the securitization process on the EU level. However, it is wise to underline the use of AI systems for authority decisions

[205] Frontex. "Frontex and the New Pact on Migration and Asylum." Europa.eu / Frontex, 2024. Accessed January 20, 2025. https://www.frontex.europa.eu/media-centre/news/news-release/frontex-and-the-new-pact-on-migration-and-asylum-OAJMo3

[206] Council of the European Union (Consilium). *The EU Long-Term Budget*. 2021. Accessed January 22, 2025. https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/eu-long-term-budget/

for streamlining the migration process raises certain legal and ethical questions on data protection, individual/fundamental rights, and the balance between security and fundamental freedoms of the third country nationals.[207]

Furthermore, the New Pact on Migration and Asylum (2020) represents several key measures through which the EU is increasingly securitizing migration; these include the tightening up of border control, return procedures, and a deal with third countries. All third-country nationals, arriving irregularly at EU borders, have to undergo pre-entry screening for identity, health, and security checks, reinforcing further the migration control as a security priority. The new border procedures will combine asylum and return processes to ensure speedy decisions and immediate deportation of those found ineligible, intended to reduce unauthorized movement within the EU. The Pact also tightens return policies; FRONTEX also plays a key role in facilitating return across borders and in the support of member-states in executing removals. So far as externalization is concerned, it continues, going into deeper alliances with other third countries in the name of stopping the irregular migration, plus creating new routes while improving readmission agreements. The Pact equally broadens the common EU information systems like EURODAC, which will allow authorities to trace and move migrants through the circuit more easily. Thus, these measures starkly show how the EU ties migration within a securitized framework much more than from the humanitarian perspective into deterrence, containment, and enforcement.[208]

As a further summary for the years following 2015, securitization within the EU turned more pronounced upon placing migration more and more increasingly into a threat that demanded defence and crisis management responses. A critical moment was reached, in 2016, when the EU Global Strategy for Foreign and Security Policy (EUGS) made considerable advances on the front of migration control under CSDP of the EU.[209] This instrument aimed at the use of military and security provisions, including border management operations for stopping the illegal migration such as Operation Sophia, evidently signalling further use of hard and direct power in arranging the migration management as a security framework for

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[207]Erzsébet Csatlós, "Prospective Implementation of AI for Enhancing European (In)Security: Challenges in Reasoning of Automated Travel Authorization Decisions," *Computer Law & Security Review* 54 (2024): 2-4, 6-11.

[208]Communication From the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, The European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on a New Pact on Migration and Asylum COM/2020/609 final.

[209]European Union. *Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe — A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy*. Brussels: European Union, 2016. https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/eugs_review_web_0.pdf

further use. The Implementation Plan by the EU on Security and Defence (2016) institutionalized this approach even more, defining migration-related security risks among the top threats and thus requiring closer talks with third countries to secure borders and therefore externalizing this issue at hand.[210] It would have also revealed other trends such as the increasing emphasis on terrorism insecurity and public order, which resulted in changing border control policies and extending outside-state partnerships. As such, migration governance fundamentally shifted from being primarily humanitarian to more focused on containment, deterrence, and security enforcement, thus transforming the EU's migration policy into an externalized, security-driven framework.[211]

Moreover, to reflect over the migration policies taken by the EU with the new Pact on Migration and Asylum, Commissioner for Home Affairs, Ylva Johansson, said: "*Migration has always been and always will be part of our societies. What we are proposing today will build a long-term migration policy that can translate European values into practical management. This set of proposals will mean clear, fair and faster border procedures, so that people do not have to wait in limbo. It means enhanced cooperation with third countries for fast returns, more legal pathways and strong actions to fight human smugglers. Fundamentally it protects the right to seek asylum*". These comments made by the Commissioner Ylva Johansson of the New Pact on Migration and Asylum marks a significant step towards the securitization of migration by the EU, which adopts an increasingly security-based approach toward managing migration according to this thesis' approach on the topic. Though speaking the language of European values and the right to asylum, such means as stronger border procedures, cooperation with third countries on return and fighting human smuggling measures against return or border protection resulting from measures resulting from the CSDP that potentially create a transnational security challenge for the Union. It thus institutionalizes the idea of security at the heart of migration governance, bringing into some critical tension a safeguard for borders and the protection of fundamental rights.[212]

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[210] European Union, *Implementation Plan on Security and Defence* (High Representative / Vice-President, March 2, 2018), https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/implementation_plan_on_security_and_defence_02-03-2018.pdf

[211] Diego Caballero Vélez and Ekaterina Krapivnitskaya, "The EU Migration Policy Securitization Process: From a Domestic to a Foreign Dimension," *Studia z Polityki Publicznej* 7, no. 4 (28) (2020): 105-122.

[212] European Commission, "A Fresh Start on Migration: Building Confidence and Striking a New Balance between Responsibility and Solidarity," *European Commission*, September 23, 2020, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_1706

In reflection of the CSDP's place in the EU's policies regarding the securitization of immigration there are various aspects connecting to the thesis at hand. Basically, the CSDP has emerged as a critical and an important pillar in the EU's strategic framework for addressing transnational challenges and crises, including irregular migration. CSDP was initially created as a mechanism for crisis management and collective security while linking internal and external security issues at hand.[213] On the road, the CSDP eventually evolved to cover non-traditional security threats, especially after the 2015 Refugee Crisis exposed the EU's fragmented response mechanisms and institutional limitations. Despite the presence of strategic documents such as the 2003 European Security Strategy and the 2010 Internal Security Strategy, both of which specifically linked the illegal migration to broader risks like organized crime and societal instability, the implementation of coordinated defence and border control measures remained inconsistent.[214][215] The CSDP's role has eventually had been a two-sided creation, on one hand, it serves as a tool for pointing common threat perceptions and fostering Europeanisation through shared norms and institutional learning; on the other hand, its operationalization has been undermined by Member States' divergent national interests and Türkiye's instrumentalization of migratory flows as a geopolitical bargaining tool. This has led to securitization dynamics wherein migration is framed not merely as a humanitarian or socio-economic issue, but as a matter of collective EU securitization framework.[216] According to this study highlighted under the Article 42 of the Lisbon Treaty in a certain sense which can be linked to the externalisation of border control and enabling military means to address international security issues (linking migration to internationally security problems) lays the legal foundations of the previously mentioned securitization framework in general.[217] Real examples of this can be assumed as the Operation Sophia and EU-Türkiye Deal according to this thesis.

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[213] Communication From the Commission to The European Parliament, The Council, The European Economic and Social Committee and The Committee of the Regions A renewed EU action plan against migrant smuggling (2021-2025) COM/2021/591 final.

[214] European Union. *2003 European Security Strategy*. EUR-Lex. Accessed January 24, 2025. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/EN/legal-content/summary/european-security-strategy.html?fromSummary=25

[215] Communication From the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council the EU Internal Security Strategy in Action: Five steps towards a more secure Europe /* COM/2010/0673 final */

[216]Petros Violakis, "Putting the Common Security and Defense Policy in the Eastern Mediterranean Under Scrutiny: Türkiye's Conflicting Role," *Social Sciences* 12, no. 9 (2023): 1-3, 8-10.

[217]Consolidated version of the Treaty on European Union - Title V: General Provisions on The Union's External Action and Specific Provisions on The Common Foreign and Security Policy - Chapter 2: Specific provisions on the common foreign and security policy - Section 2: Provisions on the common security and defence policy - Article 42 (ex Article 17 TEU) OJ C 115, 9.5.2008, p. 38–39.

As for the Operation Sophia's effects on the migrants and the broader collective securitization process of the EU, it can be assumed that it reinforced the externalization of border management for the EU while offering only limited protection to migrants, thus prioritizing security concerns over humanitarian obligations. In short, this operation had been launched in 2015 under the EU's CSDP, Operation Sophia aimed to disrupt or stop human smuggling and trafficking networks in the Mediterranean.[218] The mission later on evolved to include training the Libyan coastguard and navy and supporting the enforcement of the UN arms embargo off Libya's coast. While it succeeded in certain parts in neutralizing vessels and saving lives at sea, its long-term impact on dismantling smuggling networks was limited which had further effects to prove EU's incapability. Operation Sophia also symbolized a broader EU strategy of externalizing migration control, focusing more on border security than providing access to asylum or safe migration pathways. This operation officially ended on 31st of March 2020.[219]After this operation was ceased to operate, the Operation Irini (EUNAVFOR MED IRINI) was launched as a successor operation in 31st of March 2020 under the umbrella of the CSDP of the EU.[220] This thesis does not observe and considers this operation as the part of the securitization process of the EU because the primary mandate of this operation is to enforce the United Nations' (UN) arms embargo on Libya. In summary, this operation's core objective is military and arms control, basically does not include migration management and diluting this thesis with overreaching examples would distract the topic at hand.[221]

In conclusion, the given statements and changes on migration policies after the 2015' Refugee Crisis reflects a substantial shift towards a collective securitization process and this process still continues till this day according to this thesis' findings. Prioritizing deterrence, pushing migrants and persons who seek international protection away, externalizing the problem to counter the crises, building partnerships with third countries that are against the EU's core values and transforming certain institutions to "*fight immigration*" so to say are

[218]Council Decision (CFSP) 2015/778 of 18 May 2015 on a European Union military operation in the Southern Central Mediterranean (EUNAVFOR MED) OJ L 122, 19.5.2015, p. 31–35. Legal status of the document No longer in force, Date of end of validity: 30/03/2020; Repealed by 32020D0471.

[219]European Union Parliament / Consilium, *European Union Naval Force – Mediterranean Operation Sophia [Adopted]: Content* (June 2022), https://www.europarl.europa.eu/legislative-train/carriage/eunavfor-med-operation-sophia/report?sid=6001

[220]Council Decision (CFSP) 2020/472 of 31 March 2020 on a European Union military operation in the Mediterranean (EUNAVFOR MED IRINI) ST/6414/2020/INIT OJ L 101, 1.4.2020, p. 4–10

[221] European External Action Service (EEAS). *EUNAVFOR MED IRINI: European Union Naval Force IRINI – Military Operation*. Accessed June 14, 2024. https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eunavfor-med-operation-irini/eunavfor-med-irini-european-union-naval-force-irini-military-operation_und_en

corner stones to a securitization process according to this thesis' perspective as well. Overall, EU's border control is fundamentally framed as managing a liquid border management through filtering and selectively detaining who they deem illegal.[222] In connection, facilitating the certain conditions such as allowing FRONTEX to be full-fledged military organisation with intensively rising budgeting, mechanising the profiling of third country nationals through the EES or planning to shift extreme amounts of money to counter immigration flow or specifically the migrants/refugees themselves towards the borders could always be perceived as a narrative building to shape the framework for more security needs therefore making it securitized at the end.

8. FRONTEX: From Border Guard to Securitization Tool: Analysing, Transformation, Budget Shifts and Immigration Control in the EU

The expansion of FRONTEX, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, plays a pivotal role in the securitization of immigration at the EU level, transforming migration management from a humanitarian issue into a security-centred framework. Initially established in 2004 to combat organized crime and manage borders, FRONTEX has progressively evolved into a powerful tool for the enforcement of stricter immigration controls. Its growing mandate, especially since 2015, reflects a shift toward treating migration as a potential threat, aligning with broader securitization trends within the EU. This chapter explores how FRONTEX's enhanced authority, particularly through its joint return operations (e.g. Greece or in Italy) and border externalization efforts, has intensified the criminalization of migrants, while also raising critical concerns about the erosion of human rights oversight. By examining the agency's operations, budget increases, and its increasingly militarized approach, this chapter situates FRONTEX within the larger context of EU immigration policy, illustrating how it has become a cornerstone in the securitization of migration.

After the Arab Spring caused the so-called Refugee Crisis building walls had been a rising trend in Europe, especially after 2015. While talking about building walls there are various types of them such as physical, virtual and mental walls. This research will focus on the FRONTEX which touches these three aspects while pointing out this agency is a part of a securitization process utilized by the EU to securitize their borders against the coming third-country nationals who are subjected to the relevant border-control systems. Focus will be

[222] Bigo, Didier. "The (in) securitization practices of the three universes of EU border control: Military/Navy–border guards/police–database analysts." Security dialogue 45, no. 3 (2014): 213-216.

given to the budgetary transformation, legal backgrounds and how the FRONTEX moulded into a securitizing tool while observing its allocation of budget through sections of priorities as well to pinpoint the direct data.

Studying the exponential increase of the budget that is periodically given to the FRONTEX exposes the deliberate securitization process of the borders on several aspects. The EU utilizes this agency as a foundation to militarize and securitize its borders against the flow of immigration. This research connects the Securitization Theory of the Copenhagen School and the FRONTEX by suggesting this agency is an essential part of the process by the EU. Since this securitization process is too complex to directly prove by its theoretical nature, study at hand will use the primary sources such as budget and its allocations while commenting their usage towards the immigrations and refugees.

The evolving security concerns and political stability changes towards the coming over-flow of the immigration changed many aspects of the EU's approach to migration. One of these prominent approaches had been the reshaping of the FRONTEX, its capacities and mission. Fortifying FRONTEX on the levels of budget, vision and extent to strengthen the borders of the EU especially on the sea against the immigrants reflects the prominent signs of the securitization process all together. In connection to this, FRONTEX's knowledge of borders creates and exaggerates the apparent threats and crises that associated with migration flows and cross-border mobility represent, securitizing movement in both overt and covert ways. By utilising these discursive practices, FRONTEX is able to legitimise increased border restrictions in reaction to irregular migration, normalise securitization, and reinforce its own function in anticipating and averting potential dangers and crises at the externalised border.[223]

Furthermore, to enhance these functions to the highest, the EU continues to utilise budget increases over operational and institutional levels to ensure the necessary facilitating conditions stays on target. This study connects the budget distributions over operational levels in detail while connecting them to the larger securitization of the external borders against the coming immigrants. Understanding the larger implications through the numbers and statistical distribution of the funds will shed a light to the subtle securitization process. Fundamentally, grasping the extent and the intended aims of these budgetary distributions

[223]Eline Waerp, *The Age of Frontex: Banal Securitization and Its Normalization in European External (ized) Border Control* (PhD diss., Malmö University, 2024): 41-42.

and increases to secure their borders will provide a transparent framework for securitization on the EU level through FRONTEX.

Moreover, the actions of FRONTEX elicit links to past security risks (such as armed conflict or criminal activity) and demonstrate unique mechanisms, implying that a drastic situation is developing. These activities have revealed securitizing behaviours in various social settings, including the use of force to control borders, the administration and monitoring of migrant flows and the statistical classification of people.[224]

Measuring the effects regarding the fluctuations over the budget of FRONTEX indicates an uncertain future for the EU and its Member States. When the immigration growth exceeds the expected levels, it is almost certain that the humanitarian strategies will change to a more securitized adjustment. The budget of this organisation and the allocation of its operations within the given numbers can only indicate a militarized and securitized approach by the EU in general. This institution is a clear sign that the securitization practices are taking root within the immigration policies of the EU for a long time.

This study observes the securitization through intended outcomes over the budget allocations and the increases with the comparisons of the immigration numbers mostly since 2015 to understand the needs of these additional monetary supports. FRONTEX has had a significant impact on how migrants are framed and treated, even if it seems to have been somewhat effective in standardising border operations within the EU. Particular attention is paid to the securitisation of migration in one area of study. In fact, because of their links to terrorism and criminality, migrants are now viewed as dangerous people. FRONTEX's tactics are seen as securitizing operations even if it may not have been the initiator of this migratory securitisation.[225] In relation to this, this research continues to relate the border management operations of the FRONTEX and its allocation of resources within its responsibilities towards the coming migrants and people who are seeking international protection.

Furthermore, these impacts and allocations will surface the intended process of securitization although it can't be always transparent on the surface. Numbers, statistics and the comparisons of data through theoretical commentary will point towards a clear intent to

[224] Jori Pascal Kalkman, "Frontex: A Literature Review," *International Migration* 59, no. 1 (2021): 6-7.
[225] Ibid, 1-2.

securitize the immigration through FRONTEX and to see it clearly it needs to be studied through the numbers.

8.1. Theoretical Framework: Securitization Theory of the Copenhagen School and its relationship with the FRONTEX

Securitization Theory of the Copenhagen School sits at the centre of this study since FRONTEX and EU utilizes a process to securitize the immigration. Term *Securitization* comes from the Copenhagen School and Barry Buzan in origin. The securitization of immigration inside the EU takes the form of a dynamic interaction between the application of policies and methods that address these emerging security issues and political considerations. This thesis attempts to analyse the ways in which immigration has been framed as a security concern, justifying drastic measures that change the EU's stance on migration, using the prism of the Copenhagen School's Securitization Theory. This theoretical approach sheds light on the mechanisms through which certain narratives that depict and indicate migrants as possible dangers to cultural identity, public safety, and social stability acquire traction and impact public opinion and policy making throughout the Union. According to the Copenhagen School's Securitization Theory, state actors regularly use securitization to turn ordinary political concerns into "*security*" issues in international relations and national politics.[226]

Moreover, the Copenhagen School's theoretical framework, which essentially defines securitization as the discursive construction of a problem as an impending danger by the securitizing actors through speech acts, is typically used to address the topic of the securitisation of migration. In security studies, this is the theoretical viewpoint that is most frequently cited. Copenhagen School proponents contend that extraordinary steps regarding a problem that are illegal in usual circumstances are justified when the issue is regarded to pose an existential threat.[227] However, in this study the approach to this study will be based on data of numbers over budget increases and what they are indicating through their chosen usage.

The approach to FRONTEX's context of securitization can be assumed over the analysis of their operational activities and to do these assumptions it should be understood that the securitization is a process of extremes. For example, as practices and operational activities

[226] Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, 25-30.
[227] Giray Sadık and Ceren Kaya, "The Role of Surveillance Technologies in the Securitization of EU Migration Policies and Border Management," *Uluslararası İlişkiler Dergisi* 17, no. 68 (2020): 147.

used in times of acute crisis have come to shape periods of sudden crisis and reduced room for alternative understandings of migrant arrivals and their periodic rises, the interaction has solidified the externalization and securitization of European borders.[228] Consequently and evidently FRONTEX's increased focus on surveillance, border control, return policies/operations and the implementation of deterrent measures which often prioritize security over humanitarian considerations and this study will try to make this more evident in the next chapter of this study.

In connection to this, according to the theoretical framework, the escalation of the phenomena that is considered a security danger may justify the use of ever more severe methods. Thus, the militarisation and aggressive actions were warranted due to the exacerbation of the present migratory issue.[229] Which in relation affected the intended outcome of the operational cost and budgetary divisions' decisions through certain means. These means are the securitization practices shaped as the operational monetary needs for various intentions to strengthen the European borders against the flow of immigrants in general.

8.2. Transformation of the FRONTEX into a Securitizing Tool

On October 26, 2004, Council Regulation EC 2007/2004 established FRONTEX, whose main objective is to coordinate active collaboration between EU Member States in order to strengthen and assist security at the EU's external frontiers.[230] In a way, this organisation was founded to serve as a border control effort with the assistance of EU member states. However, in the wake of the Arab Spring and the 2015 refugee crisis, FRONTEX underwent a transformation into a full border control agency by implementing security measures against incoming refugees.[231]

Behaviour of FRONTEX towards immigration will be detailed in the coming chapter through budget analyses, statistical approach and dissecting the numbers on data for operational allocations in general. But before it should be examined in greater detail on how

[228]Nina Perkowski, Maurice Stierl, and Andrew Burridge, "The Evolution of EUropean Border Governance through Crisis: Frontex and the Interplay of Protracted and Acute Crisis Narratives," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 41, no. 1 (2023): 111-114, 120-123.

[229] Foteini Asderaki and Eleftheria Markozani, "Migration Crisis, from Securitization to Militarization: Challenges for EU and the Member States," *ICIB Proceedings* (2016): 287-302.

[230] Regulation (EU) 2019/1896 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 November 2019 on the European Border and Coast Guard and repealing Regulations (EU) No 1052/2013 and (EU) 2016/1624 PE/33/2019/REV/1 OJ L 295, 14.11.2019, p. 1–131. Article 1.

[231]Michela Ceccorulli and Sonia Lucarelli, "Migration and the EU Global Strategy: Narratives and Dilemmas," The International Spectator 52, no. 3 (2017): 89.

FRONTEX had been securitized. Before and during the early months of the migrant crisis, FRONTEX was an independent regulatory body with limited authority granted to facilitate the coordinated management of the EU shared border. As such, the organisation was primarily accountable for discharging its duties and was highly dependent on the *goodwill* of the Member States to fulfil their mandates, especially with regard to manpower and resources. But the Refugee Crisis was the catalyst that brought about all of these changes to the FRONTEX's state.[232]

The legal basis for FRONTEX's authority was established to enable the EU to adopt necessary measures and legislation to combat irregular immigration at its borders. This includes the gradual introduction of an integrated external border management system. Additionally, these legal powers cover various policies related to third-country nationals within the EU, such as ensuring unrestricted movement across internal borders, regardless of nationality, conducting personal checks, and effectively monitoring the external border crossings, as outlined in the Article 77 of the TFEU.[233]

In order to combat the prospect of an immigration crisis, the EU Commission proposed in December 2015 to establish the European Border and Coast Guard Agency.[234] The proposal was swiftly accepted by the Council and the Parliament at the start of 2016. The ratification of a new regulation in November 2019 added to FRONTEX's first comprehensive reform with the goal of greatly improving the agency's future operation over its previous structure.[235] Which transformed it into a comprehensive border and coast guard for the EU in order to stop the impending wave of immigration brought on by the refugee crisis.

The legal basis for FRONTEX's authority was established to enable the EU to adopt necessary measures and legislation to combat irregular immigration at its borders. This

[232]Vittoria Meissner, "The European Border and Coast Guard Agency Frontex After the Migration Crisis: Towards a 'Superagency'?" in *The Role of EU Agencies in the Eurozone and Migration Crisis: Impact and Future Challenges*, ed. [editor's name(s)] (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2020): 156.

[233] Consolidated version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union Part Three – Union Policies and Internal Actions Title V – Area of Freedom, Security and Justice Chapter 2 – Policies on Border Checks, Asylum and Immigration Article 77 (ex Article 62 TEC) OJ C 202, 7.6.2016, p. 75–76

[234] Regulation (EU) 2016/1624 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 September 2016 on the European Border and Coast Guard and amending Regulation (EU) 2016/399 of the European Parliament and of the Council and repealing Regulation (EC) No. 863/2007 of the European Parliament and of the Council, Council Regulation (EC) No. 2007/2004 and Council Decision 2005/267/EC [2016], OJ L251/1, p. 1–76. No longer in force, Date of end of validity: 31/12/2020; Repealed by 32019R1896. 14.09.2016. Article 6.

[235] Regulation (EU) 2019/1896 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 November 2019 on the European Border and Coast Guard and repealing Regulations (EU) No. 1052/2013 and (EU) 2016/1624 [2019], L 295/1, p. 1–131. 13.11.2019. Article 2.

includes the gradual introduction of an integrated external border management system. Additionally, these legal powers cover various policies related to third-country nationals within the EU, such as ensuring unrestricted movement across internal borders, regardless of nationality, conducting personal checks, and effectively monitoring external border crossings, as outlined in Article 77 of the TFEU.[236]

This change also includes an additional legal toolkit to strengthen Frontex's ability to deter the uncontrollable incoming migration flow on a broader front. This study views the EU's legislative authority over FRONTEX as a tool (a securitizing step made possible by enabling conditions) as it declares, "*The Union shall develop a common immigration policy aimed at ensuring, at all stages, the efficient management of migration flows, fair treatment of third-country nationals residing legally in Member States, and the prevention of, and enhanced measures to combat, illegal immigration and trafficking in human beings*."[237] The relevance of this research highlights the feasibility of the securitizing process even more since the stated rationale and competencies may be utilised to enact the securitization over the arriving immigrants through the speech act while supplying the requisite legitimacy inside the FRONTEX.

Thus, in recent years, FRONTEX has moved closer to the end of the security continuum, which is characterised by survival, existential threats, and militarisation. As a result, the securitization of migration by the EU has gotten out of control.[238] Human rights breaches, turning a blind eye to those in need, and taking excessive measures with an organised security process against these refugees were just the beginning. This article will go on to discuss and attempt to reflect the existence of the securitisation process through examples, statistics, and ideas through the evolving dynamics of the EU's foreign and security policy in detail.

Furthermore, there are also additional steps taken to make FRONTEX more security oriented. Basically, the EU had to decide between protecting the rule of law and human rights and, on the other hand, a growing internal need to manage migration to protect its

[236] Consolidated version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union Part Three – Union Policies and Internal Actions Title V – Area of Freedom, Security and Justice Chapter 2 – Policies on Border Checks, Asylum and Immigration Article 77 (ex Article 62 TEC) OJ C 202, 7.6.2016, p. 75–76.
[237] Consolidated version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union Part Three – Union Policies and Internal Actions Title V – Area of Freedom, Security And Justice Chapter 2 – Policies on Border Checks, Asylum and Immigration Article 79 (ex Article 63, points 3 and 4, TEC) OJ C 202, 7.6.2016, p. 77–78.
[238] Léonard and Kaunert, "Frontex and Its Evolving Security Practices,".

stability from external threats.[239] These decisions force the EU to implement a range of strategies for both external and internal security measures. The EU is pursuing three distinct strategies. To begin with, it is forging new ties with other countries in order to defend European borders and make it easier for irregularly staying TCNs to return home. Secondly, it progressively establishes a link between EU internal security and missions that are executed in compliance with the CSDP (Common Security and Defence Policy). Thirdly, the EU employs FRONTEX and Europol in the region around Europe to extend border security and crisis management tools to non-EU nations.[240]

Moreover, FRONTEX was able to finally capitalise on the numerous requests from various Member States for humanitarian assistance related to the migrant problem. Rather than having the legitimacy of its role as a risk management agency tasked with anticipating and averting potential migration crises called into question, the agency has integrated humanitarian discourse into its official communications, using it as justification for a steady expansion of its role, prerogatives, and resources at the expense of alternative actors in policies surrounding migration. Every one of these events and adjustments was incorporated into the EU securitisation process. However, these efforts result in a contradictory humanitarian deed that characterises the expansion and evolution of the EU's evolving security goals and policies more widely.[241]

In sense of further securitization provided on and by the FRONTEX, author of this thesis conducted an interview with *Delàs Center for Peace Studies* (Centre Delàs d'Estudis per la Pau) whom they release periodically reports on FRONTEX and also work with them on relevant topics to get answer on how FRONTEX had been transformed to securitize immigration. The interview highlights how the expansion of FRONTEX's mandate since 2015 has contributed to the securitization of EU immigration policies, particularly through its increasing autonomy in managing return operations and imposing a standardized model of border management on Member States.

In response to the first question, *"How has the expansion of FRONTEX's mandate since 2015 contributed to the securitization of immigration policies, and what are the specific*

[239] Based on Report of the Frontex Management Board Working Group on Fundamental Rights and Legal Operational Aspects of Operations in the Aegean Sea.
[240] Annegret Bendiek and Raphael Bossong, *Shifting Boundaries of the EU's Foreign and Security Policy: A Challenge to the Rule of Law*, SWP Research Paper No. 12/2019 (Berlin: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, 2019): 5-8.
[241] Based on FRONTEX Fundamental Right Officer Annual Report 2022.

impacts on border management?", the interview highlights how the agency's expanded role has significantly contributed to the securitization of EU immigration policies. Since 2015, and particularly after the 2019 reforms, FRONTEX has gained increasing autonomy in managing return operations, including the ability to initiate them independently. This expansion reflects a broader shift in its role from merely supporting member states to actively shaping border management practices, imposing a standardized, security-first model on EU member states. Originally tasked with fighting organized crime, FRONTEX has increasingly focused on migration, treating it as a security threat and thereby criminalizing migrants. The interviewee points out that FRONTEX's assessments of states' vulnerabilities to migration crises, including recommendations on resources and infrastructure, further entrench this securitized approach. This shift aligns with a broader narrative that frames migration as a potential crime issue, leading to policies that emphasize enforcement and control over humanitarian concerns. The interviewee expresses concerns about the growing influence of FRONTEX, emphasizing how the agency's security-driven approach could sideline more balanced, rights-based policies in favour of heightened border enforcement.

In response to the second question, "*Do you think the mandate of the human rights office has been limited by the EU to keep FRONTEX more securitized?*", the interviewee expressed concerns over the disparity between FRONTEX's growing budget and the minimal funding allocated to its human rights office. Although it is unclear if this was an intentional strategy by the EU, the stark difference in budget allocation is evident. For example, FRONTEX's operational activities, particularly return operations, have seen exponential budget growth from €80,000 in 2005 to €69 million by 2020. In contrast, the human rights office received just €1 million, or 0.31% of the overall budget, shrinking to 0.27% by 2022. The interviewee highlights that the human rights office faces severe limitations due to its low budget, impacting its ability to monitor and prevent human rights abuses effectively. They noted that despite a stabilization in migration numbers, Frontex's budget continues to increase due to its expanded role in border externalization, where migrants are halted in third countries, and a rise in return operations. While the number of returns increased from 15,000 in 2019 to over 24,000 in 2022, the interviewee pointed out that these figures still do not justify FRONTEX's disproportionately high budget. This trend reflects a broader pattern of militarization and securitization in Europe, where operational activities remain heavily funded, even as migration numbers stabilize. The interviewee also raised concerns about the legality of some return operations, particularly in cases where migrants are sent back to

countries with poor human rights records, emphasizing the dangers of this growing securitization trend. Overall, they questioned the necessity of such high expenditures, suggesting that FRONTEX's bloated budget reflects the prioritization of security over humanitarian considerations.

In the end, through its adopted legislation, expanded mandates and general acts, the EU can be shown to be moving the dynamics for a more securitised future with relation to the security policy courses of action and transformations at the point of this study.

8.3. Budget Dynamics and Migration Trends: Unpacking the Securitization of FRONTEX

Explaining *the Threat* itself through the FRONTEX over the themes of securitization can be challenging since the process of securitization can't always be visible, transparent or mixed with various other theories and policies. Regarding the explanation of *the Threat*, the securitizing actor or actors will highlight a specific issue of interest as a danger or worry to the public or the nation's security.[242] During this research the chosen threat example is *the Refugee Crisis* itself and this crisis is caused by the mixed migration flows, including third-country nationals and persons seeking international protection coming towards the EU itself, especially in 2015. Since these groups of peoples could be an issue of crime however pushing them towards the national security issue is highly complicated and demands a process with facilitating components. First of all, the statistical numbers are used to reflect the fear over the people of the EU by the securitizing actors, which will also be analysed later on.

In connection to this, another facilitating component involves political/security discourse. For example, politicians and policymakers may use the data on first-time asylum applicants to argue that the EU's capacity to integrate and support newcomers is being overwhelmed. They might cite statistics showing spikes in asylum applications, like those seen in 2015, to argue for stricter immigration controls and enhanced border security measures. Statistics on first-time asylum applicants are particularly potent in this discourse.

Later on, a direct example can be given from Ylva Johansson, Commissioner for Home Affairs regarding FRONTEX, she stated that, "*FRONTEX, the largest EU agency, fulfils a critically important task. Its mission is to help Member States protect the common European external borders, to support returns and to uphold fundamental rights in doing so*".[243]

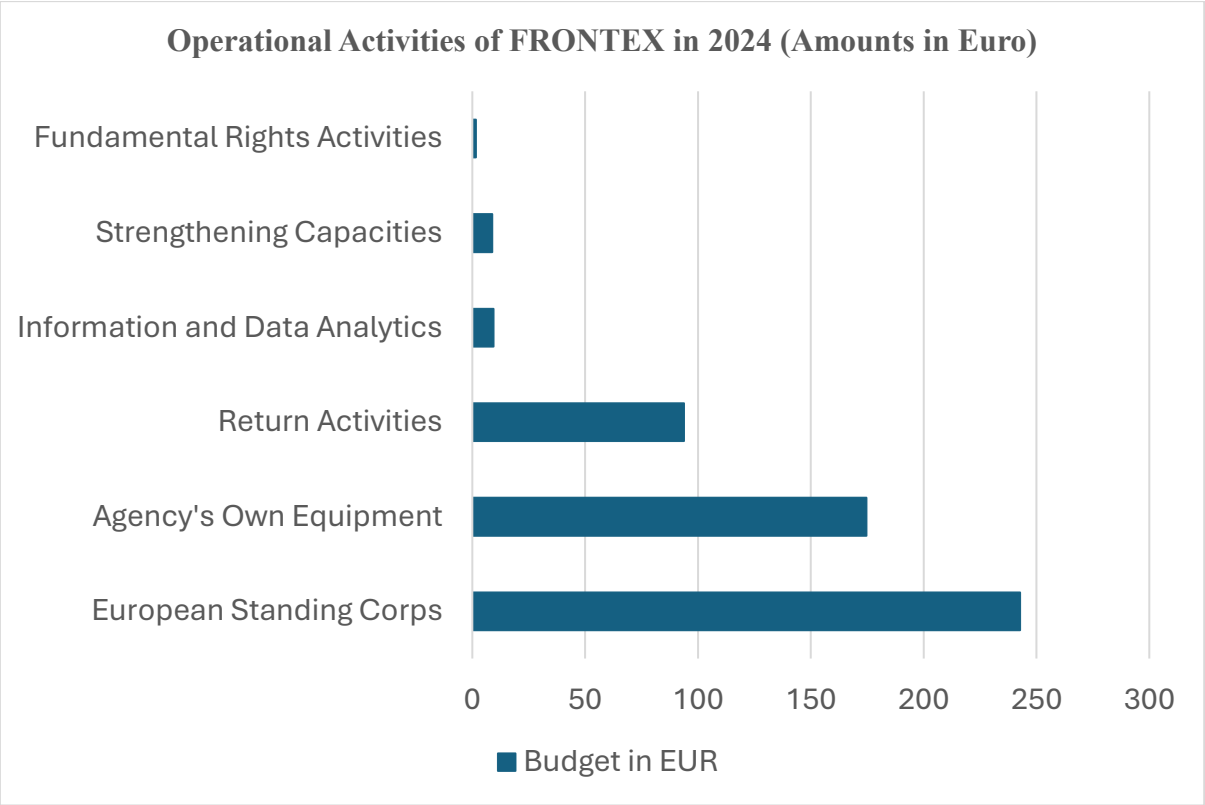
[242]Balzacq, "The Three Faces of Securitization," 182.

[243]European Commission, "Evaluation of Frontex Regulations," *European Commission – Press Corner*, 2024, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_24_613

Fundamentally, Ylva Johansson's description of FRONTEX as fulfilling a "critically important task" in helping Member States protect borders and support returns directly contributes to the securitization of immigration through the mechanism of a speech act. By publicly emphasizing the critical nature of FRONTEX's role in border protection, her statement acts as a performative utterance that constructs and reinforces the narrative that immigration is a security issue. This official articulation by a key EU official not only legitimizes the security-oriented mission of FRONTEX but also frames the agency's activities as essential responses to perceived security threats, thus embedding securitization deeply within EU policy discourse.

Therefore, it can be also observed within the FRONTEX's recent budget reports. In the 2024 FRONTEX budget allocations it can be seen that the securitization takes a hold in the institution because fundamentally a securitization process as a side effect disrupts the fundamental rights of the people. In a related sense, the connection between security and migration became increasingly prominent. In this context, security gained greater significance, while human rights became progressively restricted. Sovereignty relies heavily on migration control, often creating a tension, if not a conflict, between, for example, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and a state's sovereign authority to regulate its borders.[244] From this statement it can be commented the securitization creates a paradigm between security and fundamental rights and through the FRONTEX's recent budget allocation this becomes evident;

[244]Enela Topulli, "Securitization of Migration and Human Rights in Europe," *European Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies* 2, no. 1 (2016): 88-90.



Graph 7: *Author's own compilation based on the FRONTEX 2024 Budget Report.*

In this chart the given importance of the fundamental rights activities as in budgetary priorities takes its places in the lowest layer. The EU's approach to border management, especially in the context of immigration while examining the agency's 2024 budget breakdown, a striking observation emerges; fundamental rights activities receive the smallest allocation of funds, in stark contrast to other operational areas such as strengthening capacity, information and data analytics, return activities, the European Standing Corps, and the agency's own equipment. This discrepancy is a clear manifestation of the securitization of immigration within the EU.

To look at these details on a direct approach reflects the ethical perspective of the securitization theory. Fundamentally, these comments link in key arguments related to securitization theory, the ethical implications of budgetary choices, and the specific operational focuses of FRONTEX that reflect a broader securitized approach to migration in the EU.

Firstly, the fundamental rights activities those aimed at ensuring the protection of human rights, monitoring FRONTEX operations for compliance with EU and international law and safeguarding the dignity of migrants which are clearly underfunded relative to other operational priorities. By contrast, activities related to border fortification, data surveillance,

and returns (which are the basic core elements of a securitized immigration framework) are allocated far more substantial resources. This imbalance in resource distribution reflects a significant shift in EU migration policy. Rather than viewing migration as a humanitarian or social issue, the EU, through FRONTEX, appears to conceptualize migration primarily as a security concern. The underlying logic of securitization posits that immigration presents inherent risks to the stability, safety, and order of the EU, necessitating a focus on border control, surveillance, and the swift removal of irregular migrants. In this framework, migrants are often seen not as individuals in need of protection but as potential threats to be managed or deterred.

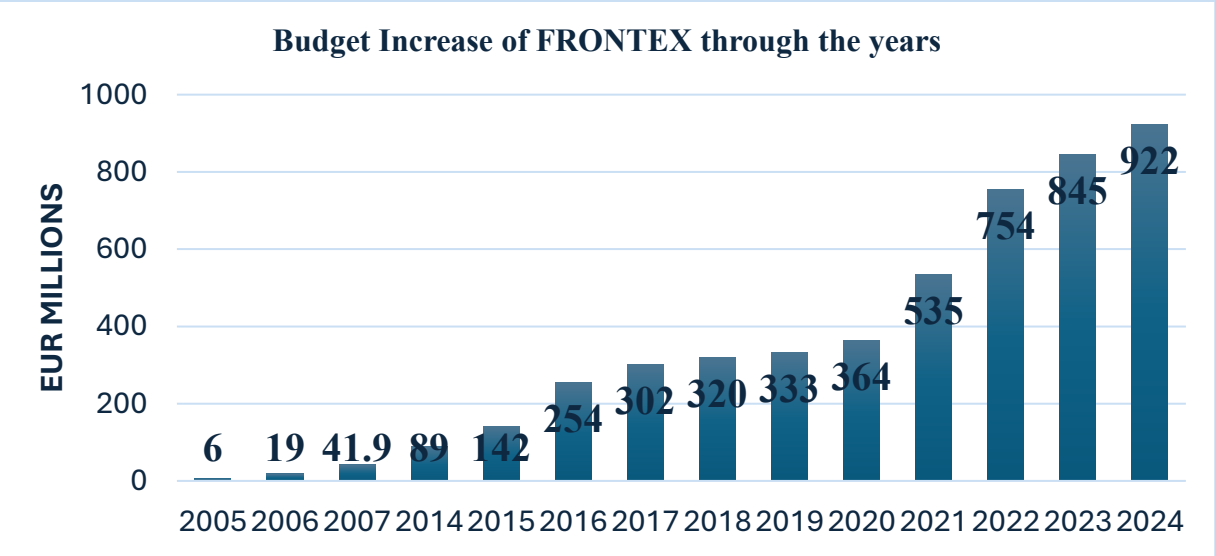
Secondly, the large portion of the budget dedicated to the European Standing Corps, a permanent border guard force, as well as FRONTEX's own agency equipment, speaks to the militarization of EU borders. This force, with the capacity to be rapidly deployed to border hotspots, underscores the increased policing and physical control of borders. The deployment of personnel, alongside investments in drones, patrol boats, and surveillance equipment, points to a highly securitized and militarized response to migration, which starkly contrasts with the limited resources allocated to ensuring the protection of fundamental rights.

Thirdly, the apparent undermining of the fundamental rights activities within the organisation. Even the FRONTEX acknowledges that the organisation lacks the necessary means to prevent incidents of fundamental rights mechanism.[245] In connection, the most striking observation comes as the marginal allocation to fundamental rights activities. This area of the budget, essential for monitoring the human rights implications of FRONTEX operations, ensuring compliance with EU law, and protecting the rights of migrants and asylum seekers, receives the least funding. This can be interpreted as a reflection of the subordinate status of human rights concerns within the agency's overall mission. While FRONTEX operates within a legal framework that obliges it to respect and uphold human rights, the limited financial commitment to this area suggests that it is not viewed as a primary operational priority. From a securitization perspective, this disproportionate budget allocation implies that rights-based considerations are secondary to the enforcement of border security. It raises serious concerns about the potential for rights violations, especially

[245] Frontex. "Management Board Conclusions: Serious Incident Mechanism and Fundamental Rights." *Frontex Media Centre / Management Board Updates*, 2025. Accessed July 4, 2024. https://www.frontex.europa.eu/media-centre/news/management-board-updates/management-board-conclusions-serious-incident-mechanism-and-fundamental-rights-kWJ3fS

in contexts such as forced returns or the use of force at borders, where the agency's increased operational capacity may lead to excessive measures that undermine the dignity and rights of migrants and people who are seeking international protection. Furthermore, the marginalization of fundamental rights within the budget may signal to member states and other actors involved in EU border management that security trumps humanitarian obligations, perpetuating a cycle where migration is handled more as a crisis to be contained than a phenomenon requiring thoughtful, rights-based governance.

Moreover, now there should be a wider approach to the FRONTEX's budgets throughout the years to understand the general trend of securitization process while comparing it with the coming irregular immigrant numbers towards European borders.



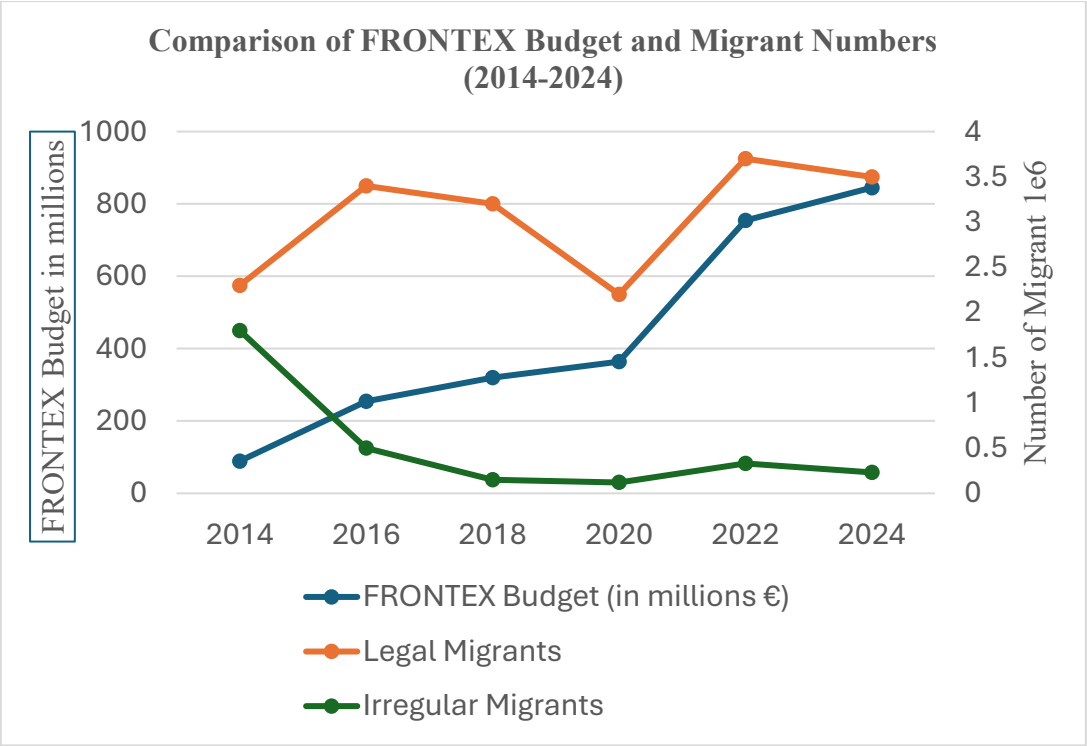
Graph 8: *Author's own compilation based on the FRONTEX Budget reports through the years.*

Through the years FRONTEX's budget increased exponentially. Securitisation is discussed in relation to the evolution of the FRONTEX and its role in controlling the flow of refugees towards the EU's borders. The available research demonstrates FRONTEX's planned and progressive evolution in that regard. Essentially, FRONTEX was initially established and funded as a border management mechanism to improve cooperation amongst EU member states; however, in light of the refugee crisis, particularly after 2015, the organization's operational and behavioural patterns have begun to resemble the securitisation of immigration. Based on the figure above, the spike of budget started around 2014 and made the record jump of budget in 2015 which of course coincides with the refugee crisis' highest point.

In detail, it would be important to highlight the organization's securitisation drive by mentioning any increases or declines in funding and support, particularly after 2015. Chronologically speaking, FRONTEX received financing of EUR 6 million in 2005, EUR 302 million in 2017, and EUR 754 million in 2022 as a result of the consequences of the refugee crisis. Overall, the budget rise is evident from these justifications and time frames; nevertheless, a budget existed before 2015, and the budget's expansion cannot be disregarded following that year. It makes the doubts about the immigration securitisation process much more pertinent. Since its founding, the budget for 2022 has increased by about 750 million euros, and this rise in funding for FRONTEX may be a sign that the EU and its member states are still willing to provide significant assistance for the securitisation process.[246]

It is also wise to compare the legal/irregular immigration years through the years with the organisation's budget on top of itself in comparison. Despite a significant drop in the number of irregular migrants entering the EU after 2015, FRONTEX's budget has not only continued to grow but has done so at an exceptionally rapid pace. This trend fundamentally reveals a deeper dynamic at play within the EU's approach to migration, one that can be analysed through the lens of securitization theory. The year 2015 marked a critical point in the European migration policy. In response to the unprecedented influx of refugees and irregular migrants, primarily from conflict zones in the Middle East and North Africa, the EU significantly ramped up its border control efforts, with FRONTEX at the forefront. As a result, FRONTEX's budget saw a substantial spike, justified by the need to respond to the immediate crisis. However, what is particularly noteworthy is that even as the number of irregular entries began to decline sharply in subsequent years, FRONTEX's budget has continued to grow disproportionately. These comparisons can be visualised below through the years;

[246] FRONTEX's budget through the years of 2005, 2017 and 2022. See also: Ömer Doğukan Uslu, "Securitization of the EU Against the Refugee Crisis: Example Case: FRONTEX and Its Transformation," *Forum: Publicationes Doctorandorum Juridicorum* 12 (2022): 90.



Graph 9: *Author's own compilation based on the collected EU Commission and Eurostat data numbers with the comparison of the FRONTEX's budget through the years.*

The graph clearly illustrates the increasing securitization of immigration at the EU level, with FRONTEX's growing budget serving as a direct indicator of this trend. From 2014 to 2023, despite significant fluctuations in migration numbers, particularly the sharp decline in irregular migration after 2015, the budget allocated to FRONTEX steadily increased, nearly reaching around €800 million in 2023. This rise in funding is not proportionate to the actual migration flows, especially when considering the sharp drop in legal migration in 2023 and the overall stabilization of irregular migration at much lower levels since 2016. The 2015 spike in irregular migration, driven by the European migration crisis, triggered a securitized response, evident in FRONTEX's expanding role and budget.

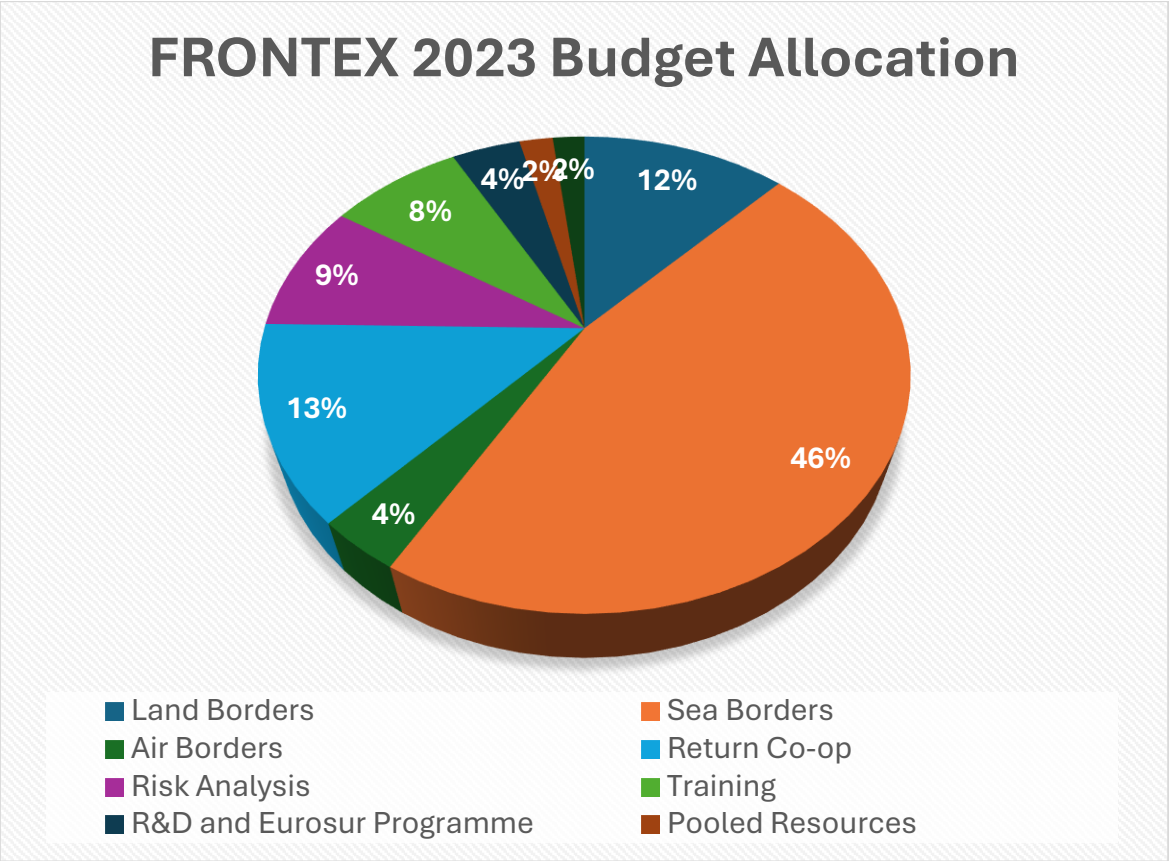
However, even after the crisis subsided and irregular migration was largely brought under control, FRONTEX's budget continued to rise sharply, indicating that immigration, regardless of actual numbers, is still framed as a security threat at the EU level. This supports the notion that immigration has been securitized, as the growing resources directed towards border control and surveillance seem disproportionate to the actual decline in migration numbers. By significantly increasing FRONTEX's budget, the EU is signalling that immigration remains a priority security issue, even though the reality of migration flows suggests otherwise.

This mismatch between budget increases and migration trends underscores how securitization can drive policy and resource allocation, prioritizing security measures and border enforcement over the actual reduction of migration pressures. Consequently, this graph serves as evidence that the EU's immigration strategy is shaped more by the politics of securitization than by migration realities, where the perception of migration as a security threat continues to justify large-scale investments in border control mechanisms. Investing in these large-scale operations and budget allocation towards the immigration when the necessity softens only justifies security without a threat therefore creates an environment for further securitization.

In connection, explaining the institution's self-reinforcing nature of the risks analysis reports makes this worse because FRONTEX has an incentive to inflate risks and crises in order to increase funding, operations and its mission, all of which serve to bolster its position in European externalised border control. FRONTEX's currency has risks, and like capitalism, the more risks it can quantify, the more powerful it gets. It gains authority by making politicians worry about what occurs at the externalised border, rather than by comforting them. FRONTEX presents securitisation as the sole logical solution to irregular migration, just as the state justifies itself as the only political order possible, as a way of saying.[247]

Furthermore, within the budgets' operational allocations there had been consistent changes and extraordinary distribution/selection of priorities as well. To understand the internal works of the FRONTEX and to connect the related dots to the securitization process through the allocation of budget over the operational priorities it is needed to seek the data of FRONTEX below;

[247] Waerp, *The Age of Frontex*, 192.



Graph 10: *Author's own compilation based on the FRONTEX 2023 Budget Allocations.*

The 2023 FRONTEX budget, for example, demonstrates a distinct focus on sea borders, with 46% of the operational funds allocated towards this category, significantly surpassing other areas. This suggests a heightened emphasis on monitoring and securing maritime migration routes, which have been perceived as a critical point of entry for irregular migration into the EU. Additionally, land borders receive 12% of the budget, further emphasizing the securitization of external borders. The budget also highlights notable investments in return cooperation (13%) and risk analysis (9%), underlining the EU's growing reliance on intelligence-driven migration management and the operationalization of returns as a means to deter irregular migration. Comparatively smaller portions of the budget are dedicated to air borders (8%), training (4%), R&D and Eurosur programme (4%), and pooled resources (2%), showing a more targeted and operational approach towards controlling and managing specific aspects of migration, rather than broad capacity building. These priorities reflect the securitization of immigration, focusing on border fortification and proactive risk management over humanitarian or integrative approaches.

Moreover, these allocations strongly indicate a shift towards a securitized approach, where migration is increasingly framed as a security threat requiring militarized and enforcement-

driven responses. The substantial emphasis on sea borders (46% of the budget) reinforces this narrative, as the Mediterranean and Aegean Sea routes have been focal points in both political discourse and media, often depicting irregular migration as a crisis or emergency.[248] This overwhelming budgetary focus on maritime borders signals a strategy of pre-emptive control, fortifying external entry points and leveraging sophisticated surveillance technologies to monitor and intercept migrants long before they reach European soil.

The securitization becomes even more evident when analysing the significant investments in return cooperation (13%) and risk analysis (9%). These allocations reflect the EU's commitment to deterrence in which the return operations are designed to swiftly remove those deemed unauthorized, while risk analysis signifies a growing reliance on predictive tools, such as intelligence-sharing, biometrics, and big data, to classify and manage migrants as potential security risks. This operationalization of migration management, as opposed to a focus on protection or integration, is a key marker of the securitization process.

On top of that, the relatively lower allocations for training (4%), R&D (4%), and pooled resources (2%) further underscore the prioritization of immediate, operational enforcement over long-term capacity-building or humanitarian responses. The focus on bolstering front-line capabilities at sea and land, areas that are often presented as *pressure points* demonstrates how securitization is shaping the EU's overall migration strategy while stating these points to be the greatest methods to use to avoid sudden flows of migration in general.[249] This evolving budgetary framework in relation does not only reflects but perpetuates the narrative of migration as a threat, pushing policies that prioritize control, deterrence, and the militarization of borders over the rights and dignity of migrants. This shift in focus aligns with broader trends in securitization, where migration management is increasingly dominated by risk mitigation strategies typically reserved for security threats, further entrenching the perception of migration as a danger to be neutralized.

In conclusion, all the data from budgetary reports, management board decision and even risk analyses shown in this study indicates that the immigration control had gone stricter and ensured by the FRONTEX throughout the years.

[248] Based on NATO and Human Rights Watch reports from 2014 to 2023.
[249] FRONTEX Risk Analysis 2024-2025.

9. Securitization Digitalized: The Entry/Exit System (EES) and European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS)

There are many new technological developments happening all around the world which contribute to the safety and security of the people. Millions of people have been flooding towards the EU borders in a short amount of time since the Refugee Crisis began. The security of the EU's economy, society and order would inevitably be threatened by massive population overflows coming toward its borders. The EU was under a greater threat from dangers along its borders, which led to changes in its migration policy and the transformation of several organisations and organisations. Additionally, the EU developed a new framework to combat irregular migration as a result of the Refugee Crisis. Even though they are in some ways different types of tools, it will be clear that they fit into the securitisation process as tools according to this research. Examples of these newly developed strategies to combat the immigration overflow that threatens the stability of the Schengen area and the EU in general include the Entry/Exit System (EES) and the European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS). This chapter will examine and debate these modifications to the Schengen area's internal structure, linking them using a conceptualised approach that views them as securitization instruments or reasons.[250]Essentially, the main idea is to understand the EES and ETIAS' possible potential in the future to securitize immigration through transforming border control into automated, data-driven risk assessment and decision making that may eventually weaken the transparency and effectiveness of legal remedies on the EU level.[251]

Furthermore, while observing the EES and ETIAS (as a reference point because they have not been released yet while this thesis was being written) to determine the securitization process. According to this thesis' approach these systems will stand as tools for the securitization process based on their intended uses towards TCNs coming outside of EU and visa-exempt third-country nationals requiring travel authorisation in general. Determining their usage through their systems and the EU's targeting with the already transforming immigration policies stands as a framework for the securitization process. Coming chapters will focus on the internal systems of the EES and ETIAS, how they had been intended to be build, their target audience, the reasons and the discussion on their future impact relating to the securitization of immigration on the EU level.

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[250] See also: Ömer Doğukan Uslu, "The Possible Effects of Entry/Exit System and the ETIAS on the EU and Immigration," (2023): 151.

[251] Csatlós, Erzsébet. "Automation in action: Experience with quick and cost-efficient administrative decisions in Hungary." Balkan Soc. Sci. Rev. 25 (2025): 196.

9.1. Entry/Exit System (EES): A Security Framework?

This system stands as a corner stone for the EU's evolving and transforming border and security management strategies. This system had been developed as a part of the EU's Smart Borders initiative alongside the ETIAS.[252]On December 4th, 2024, the European Commission proposed that the EES should introduce its progressive start. Member States will have six months to implement the EES after the proposal is accepted and the Commission sets a date for the system's launch.[253] EES will, nevertheless, begin its operations on October 12, 2025. The EES will progressively be implemented at the external borders of European nations that use it. As stated on its official website, this indicates that data gathering will be implemented fully by 10 April 2026, with a phased introduction at border crossing locations.[254] Since this security and border management system had not been implemented this chapter will observe its capabilities and expected future impacts related to this thesis' approach on the securitization.

The objectives of this system outlined as enhancing border efficiency by recording and storing entry and exit data of the third-country nationals admitted for a short stay, preventing the irregular immigration by the system's assistance in identifying individuals who overstay their permitted durations or do not meet entry conditions, The EES supports evidence-based policymaking in migration policy by producing statistics and enhancing risk assessments associated with overstays, facilitating investigations by providing accessed relevant data and EES also provides tools to combat identity fraud and the misuse of the travel documents in general as well.[255]

These objectives overall contribute to a digitalized security framework for the direct border management of third country nationals. This system had been a product of response against the over pressure of the flow of immigrants who are coming to the European borders after the refugee crisis especially after 2015. Fundamentally, the EU aims to manage this flow

[252] European Commission. *Smart Borders*. European Commission – Home Affairs. Accessed July 11, 2024. https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/schengen-borders-and-visa/smart-borders_en

[253] Proposal for a *Regulation of The European Parliament and of The Council* on a temporary derogation from certain provisions of Regulation (EU) 2017/2226 and Regulation (EU) 2016/399 as regards a progressive start of operations of the Entry/Exit System COM/2024/567 final.

[254] European Union. EES – European Union. Travel-Europe.europa.eu. Accessed October 2, 2025. https://travel-europe.europa.eu/ees_en

[255] Regulation (EU) 2017/2226 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2017 establishing an Entry/Exit System (EES) to register entry and exit data and refusal of entry data of third-country nationals crossing the external borders of the Member States and determining the conditions for access to the EES for law enforcement purposes, and amending the Convention implementing the Schengen Agreement and Regulations (EC) No 767/2008 and (EU) No 1077/2011 OJ L 327, 9.12.2017, p. 20–82, Article 6.

and pressure to balance security with the facilitation of legitimate travel of the third country nationals. However, these intentions could lead and be a way to facilitate a process of securitization at the end. Profiling, collecting data and constant observations are an important part of creating certain narratives on securitizing immigration if one or more actors intend to brand immigration as a threat.

Moreover, the scope of the EES also relates to the ensuring security and safety surrounding the migration and borders which are electronic registration of entry, exit, and refusal-of-entry data for third-country nationals crossing the EU's external borders. These factors apply to all of the Member States within the Schengen Area basically ensuring the border management is unified. EES targets the individuals and third country nationals who are on short stay (90 to any 180-day visits) and fundamentally aims to prevent the over stayers by calculating their data on authorized durations.[256] With this system's planned contributions, the EU aims to strengthen their border security and migration policies to keep illegal immigration out while supporting their security framework by providing relevant data from the entries overall.

Furthermore, the EES processes data collected from third country nationals and short period visitors through several categories including biometric identifiers such as fingerprints and facial images, as well as travel document details and entry/exit records. In relation, the Visa Information System (VIS), which handles biometric and travel information for visa applicants, is in line with this. By strengthening the securitisation of migration through sophisticated data-sharing procedures, these technologies work together to improve the EU's ability to trace nationals of third countries, stop identity fraud, and identify overstays. In order to ensure compatibility and connection with other systems such as VIS and SIS (Schengen Information System), the European Union Agency for the Operational Management of Large-Scale IT Systems (eu-LISA) plays a crucial and a skeletal role in the deployment and administration of the EES' systems in general. A securitised approach of the EU to migration governance and process are reflected in a more thoroughly way with the eu-LISA's centralisation and integration of various databases, which enable border and law enforcement officials to access vital information in real time. The EU's approach of using

[256] Regulation (EU) 2017/2226 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2017 establishing an Entry/Exit System (EES) to register entry and exit data and refusal of entry data of third-country nationals crossing the external borders of the Member States and determining the conditions for access to the EES for law enforcement purposes, and amending the Convention implementing the Schengen Agreement and Regulations (EC) No 767/2008 and (EU) No 1077/2011 OJ L 327, 9.12.2017, p. 20–82, Article 2.

technology to improve border security while tackling and tracking migration as a security issue is shown by this integrated infrastructure.[257]

Based on this information, regulating the erratic immigrant flow with this way of processed data can conclude that, with regard to securitisation proceedings concerning visa-overstayers, or visa-getters, outside of the FRONTEX area, the visa regime itself may be seen as a securitizing tool or practice. Since the "practice of demanding visas" is neither associated with "*conventional dangers to security*" nor unusual in the field of migration management, it is difficult to categorise it as a securitizing practice using the criteria listed in the methodology section. Securitisation techniques include, in particular, the necessity for biometric passports for Schengen visa-free travellers and the use of biometric data in travel documents.[258] However, to have a connection to this, there needs to be a detailed observation on how this EES system is planned to work in practice. Below schema is how this system is aimed to work upon the entry to the Schengen Area:

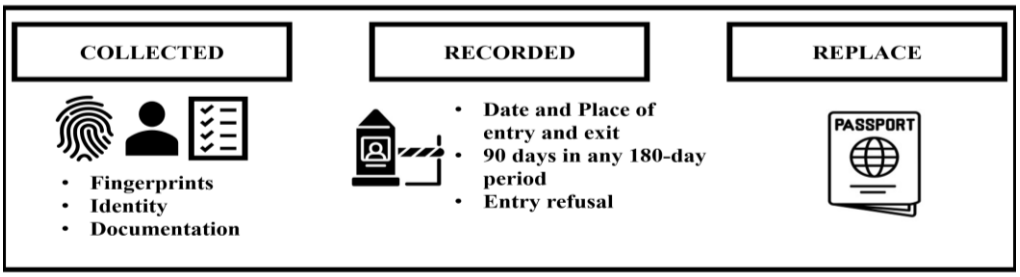

Figure 2: *Author's own compilation based on the conditions set out in the Regulation (EU) 2017/2226 establishing the Entry/Exit System.*

Fundamentally, EES collects and stores data of the third-country nationals upon their crossing to the Schengen borders of the EU. This system saves data on personal information and detail from their travel documents such as names, date of birth, and nationality. Furthermore, biometric data of the subject individuals, such as facial images and fingerprints, are also collected to enhance the identity verification in general and prevent fraud. The records also include each crossing event of these individuals, for example their entry and exit dates, border crossing points, and the duration of stay, refusal-of-entry data which helps to provide the reasons for denial. On the subject of all the collected biometric

[257] Regulation (EU) 2017/2226 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2017 establishing an Entry/Exit System (EES) to register entry and exit data and refusal of entry data of third-country nationals crossing the external borders of the Member States and determining the conditions for access to the EES for law enforcement purposes, and amending the Convention implementing the Schengen Agreement and Regulations (EC) No 767/2008 and (EU) No 1077/2011 OJ L 327, 9.12.2017, p. 20–82, Article 8.
[258] Uslu, "The Possible Effects of Entry/Exit System and the ETIAS," 2.

data of the individuals, a biometric template will be created and stored within the shared Biometric Matching Service (sBMC). These biometric templates will be the mathematical depiction of the biometric information kept in the EES, VIS, and other EU data/information systems. On certain particular events further personal information of the subject individuals might also be collected from other systems such as the VIS and ETIAS as well. Moreover, certain authorities may also access the individuals' personal information who will be using the EES system such as border, visa and immigration authorities who are utilizing EES, Europol may also access information of the individuals for law enforcement purposes and under strict circumstances information of the individuals might also be sent to different countries inside or outside of the EU and organisations such as United Nations (UN), the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) or the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in general which are listed in Annex I of Regulation (EU) 2017/2226. In addition, the data collected can be stored for specific durations based on the individuals' conditions. For example, the records of entries, exits and refusals of entry are stored 3 years in the database, if there was no exit date specified then individuals' data stored for 5 years or the individual's files containing personal data beginning on the date of the individual's last exit or their refusal of entry are the 3 years and 1 day, these are such examples of the data kept within the specified periods.[259]

These specified competencies given to this system towards the third-country nationals creates such a security framework upon profiling, it might put another way of facilitating condition to the securitization narrative. Basic profiling, conditioning a way of entry or full on diverting that individual fully based on digital personal data and sharing it throughout organisations and nations could lead to even more alienization of the people who are coming to EU which at the hands of the securitizing actors this whole system could be another threat building mechanizing at the end.

Moreover, the budget estimations of the EES' operations and systems are to be €440 million + 40 million (for changes to VIS) which equals to the €480,2 million over the 4 years which includes the 3 years development and the 1-year operations of the system.[260] The estimated

[259] European Union, *Data Held by the EES*, *New Requirements to Travel to Europe*, 2023, Accessed August 6, 2024, https://travel-europe.europa.eu/ees/data-held-ees_en#BMS

[260] *Commission Staff Working Document Impact Assessment* Impact Assessment Report on the establishment of an EU Entry Exit System Accompanying the document Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing an Entry/Exit System (EES) to register entry and exit data and refusal of entry data of third country nationals crossing the external borders of the Member States of the European Union and determining the conditions for access to the EES for law enforcement purposes and amending Regulation (EC)

budget of this system on the EU indicates that the Union is determined to strengthen its borders on a every level of aspects. Both on material borders and digital borders overall. Overall, in the coming chapter after the overview of the ETIAS system this thesis at hand will observe and comment on both of the EES and ETIAS' implications on the securitization process of the EU with a though discussion of their effects.

9.2. European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS): A new border?

ETIAS system is currently not operational and this system does not collect no whatsoever data at the moment, however, ETIAS is estimated to start its operations six months after the EES system's activation accordingly to the ETIAS' official website and expected to go online in the last quarter of 2026.[261] Based on the ETIAS' regulation of its subject matter, in order to assess whether the presence of third-country nationals on Member State territory would present a security, illegal immigration, or high epidemic risk, ETIAS seeks to exempt them from the need to have a visa when crossing external borders (also known as the visa requirement). A travel authorisation is introduced for this purpose, together with the requirements and processes for issuing or rejecting one. The ETIAS regulation also specifies the circumstances in which Europol and the designated authorities of Member States may review data kept in the ETIAS Central System in order to prevent, detect, and investigate terrorist offences or other serious criminal offences that fall within their purview.[262]

Based on these matters, ETIAS aims to increase the security, prevent illegal immigration and protect the EU's public health standards by assessing certain risks associated with the individuals' data based on their applications before their arrival at EU borders. It aims to improve border checks, support the objectives of SIS and EES, aid in identifying individuals correctly, and assist in preventing, detecting, and investigating terrorism and serious crimes. ETIAS system also evaluates applicants for epidemic risks and ensures they do not pose

No 767/2008 and Regulation (EU) No 1077/2011 and Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EU) 2016/xxx as regards the use of the Entry/Exit System (EES) SWD/2016/0115 final - 2016/0105 (COD)

[261]European Union, ETIAS, Travel-Europe.europa.eu, Accessed October 2, 2025, https://travel-europe.europa.eu/etias_en

[262] Regulation (EU) 2018/1240 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 September 2018 establishing a European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS) and amending Regulations (EU) No 1077/2011, (EU) No 515/2014, (EU) 2016/399, (EU) 2016/1624 and (EU) 2017/2226 PE/21/2018/REV/1 OJ L 236, 19.9.2018, p. 1–71, Article 1.

threats to the public or the integrity of the Schengen Area. Fundamentally, this system is designated for putting additional security layers against potential security and safety risks.[263]

Furthermore, to describe the system in detail, after 6 months of EES' start approximately 1.4 billion individuals from more than 60 visa-exempt nations must acquire a travel authorisation in order to enter 30 European countries (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland) for a brief stay. Moreover, visa-exempt citizens who are visiting any of these 30 European nations must have an ETIAS travel authorisation. It is connected to a tourist's passport. It remains valid until the passport expires or for a maximum of three years, whichever comes first. Individuals must also get a new ETIAS travel authorisation if they obtain a new passport. Applicants who have a valid ETIAS travel authorisation are permitted to enter these European countries as frequently as they like for brief visits, often lasting no more than 90 days during a 180-day period. It does not, however, ensure certain admission. An assigned border guard will check that the individual match the requirements for admission and request to see their passport and other documents when they arrive. However, it should be noted again that this system is yet to be operational, so all these descriptions are just plans and aims.[264]

As for the scope of the ETIAS, as explained inside its regulation, applies to all relevant categories of third-country nationals who can enter the Schengen Area for short stays without visa requirements-they shall particularly be nationals of the countries listed in Annex II of the Council Regulation (EC) No 539/2001; persons exempt under Article 4(2) of the same regulation; and family members of nationals of the EU or of equivalent third countries without residence card or permit. This regulation has exclusions that are exhaustive, and thus it covers refugees, stateless persons, and persons having diplomatic passports, residence permits, or local border traffic permits. It also includes long-stay visa holders and nationals of microstates such as Andorra and Monaco, as well as specific exercise of mobility rights regarding nationals under specific EU Directives. This regulation adequately has a clear eye

[263] Regulation (EU) 2018/1240 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 September 2018 establishing a European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS) and amending Regulations (EU) No 1077/2011, (EU) No 515/2014, (EU) 2016/399, (EU) 2016/1624 and (EU) 2017/2226 PE/21/2018/REV/1 OJ L 236, 19.9.2018, p. 1–71, Article 4.

[264] *What is ETIAS*, Travel-Europe (European Union), September 14, 2022, https://travel-europe.europa.eu/etias/what-etias_en

on all travellers who do not fall under the visa requirement, maintaining legal exemptions as it touches on the EU approach to migration management and enhancement of security within the Schengen Area. Which demonstrates the sealing of immigration, so to say, by focusing this measure on third-country nationals exempt from visa obligations, pre-screening them before they enter the Schengen Area. Its enhanced control of short-term travellers who would otherwise have evaded traditional visa vetting processes applies only to individuals who do not hold residence permits or long-stay visas. This selective scope reflects a new security framing in which even visa-free migration can be considered a potential security threat by designing regular risks associated with irregular migration and criminal activities as data gathering risk assessment before entry. Basically, every kind of immigration or visit is due to the process of security by the securitizing actors in return.[265]

This system's data collection based on their subject applicants also aimed to be shared and collected through certain other parties and countries as well. ETIAS will consist of three structures and these are, ETIAS Information System, ETIAS Central Unit and lastly the ETIAS National Units which these structures aim to collect and store data of the subject individual. This data is stored and shared through nationwide and EU databases by the aligns ETIAS centralized information system with Europol, Interpol, and the VIS. Its purpose is to analyse potential risks associated with security along with irregular migration of the applicants who have given biometric and personal data into categories such as public health. Then, it utilizes the provision of granting or withholding access to the safe technologies given to the Member States through the allowing access to secure information dedicated to national units and interfaces among them for coordinated decision-making regarding travel authorizations. Lastly, under certain limitations for law enforcement agencies, Europol and similar other organizations could have access to these credit reports for purposes such as enhanced border security and effective/holistic migration management.[266]

In summary, ETIAS is aimed to be a screening and categorizing for the coming individuals such as EES itself at the end. Even screening and profiling the data from the visa exempt

[265] Regulation (EU) 2018/1240 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 September 2018 establishing a European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS) and amending Regulations (EU) No 1077/2011, (EU) No 515/2014, (EU) 2016/399, (EU) 2016/1624 and (EU) 2017/2226 PE/21/2018/REV/1 OJ L 236, 19.9.2018, p. 1–71, Article 2.

[266] Regulation (EU) 2018/1240 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 September 2018 establishing a European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS) and amending Regulations (EU) No 1077/2011, (EU) No 515/2014, (EU) 2016/399, (EU) 2016/1624 and (EU) 2017/2226 PE/21/2018/REV/1 OJ L 236, 19.9.2018, p. 1–71, Articles 5, 6, 7, 8.

third country nationals suggest that the EU consider any kind of migration or entry through its borders a security issue in general to reflect on their broader securitization framework. According to this thesis' approach these systems and these approaches on the security and safety of the EU's borders could be reflected in a securitized framework overall. In the next chapter there will be discussions and expectations based on this securitized approach correlated on EES and ETIAS by the EU.

9.3. Securitization Digitalized: A Discussion

Before this overview, since these systems have not been operational yet so in light of these events this thesis will try to illustrate theoretical assumptions based on these systems intended operational capabilities on the securitization process of the EU. Conceptualizing the security on migration through data processing, screening and profiling could lead to serious issues, human right violations and further widening the gap on solving the crisis at hand.

As a start, the mass dataveillance system, such as EES and ETIAS, is representative of how the EU securitizes its immigration, basically migration is considered a threat that requires prevention measures. The aim of such a system is to centralize and automate the collection, analysis, and use of personal data (including biometrics, travel histories, and information on risk assessment) to monitor and manage migration flows while associating them through control over border control and handling the security through technological framework reflects the EU's policy makers' concerns on handling the migration issue. Therefore, it looks toward constructions of migrant technologies as being border security policy-related, as migration seems always linked to insecurity. The smartening of borders integrates into a coherent regime all technical systems, policy actors, and security actors under one roof, with increasing control on the processes of entry into and exit from the EU. It normalizes surveillance to be understood as essential to migration management in line with securitization theory as addressing the framing of matters as existential threats that justify extraordinary measures. In the future, the trend would point towards a more and more inescapable security logic sinking into migration governance. Because, while it is effective in avoiding irregular migration and making borders more effective, such measures would also tend toward over-reliance on mechanisms and would perpetuate views seeing migrants as suspect. With changing pressures of migration due to global conflict and climate change, this approach may not be able to provide adequate balance between needs for security and

human rights and, as such, might incur further debates on privacy, equity, and the ethical nature of mass dataveillance.[267]

Normalization of the threat narrative over immigration could also be reflected on certain policies and proposals for EES and ETIAS as well. These conceptualizing of immigration as a direct risk to take new initiatives and focus point to transform the EU's border security policies could directly strengthen the securitization process basically by stating, "*both from a migration and from a security point of view, there is a clear necessity to conduct prior checks in order to identify any risks*".[268] This assertion supports the threat narrative that led to the securitisation systems by reiterating the notion that migration is a security concern. Therefore, we may conclude that authorities are doing a routine task that helps to detect and manage risks by conducting and putting these checks into place. Using automated algorithms to identify the incoming individuals as possible danger factors in the end might result in more suggestive threat narratives about them. The securitisation process therefore presumes and implies that conducting background checks may not be a neutral or objective process, but rather one that is integrated into broader institutional and discursive frameworks that impact the way security issues are conceptualised and addressed. All of these recommendations theoretically support these technologies' use as securitization facilitating tools overall.[269]In connection, these forecasted dangers and possible threats reflect on the ethics while using AI on such automated systems to make any decisions as well.[270]On top of that, it is wise to remember that the gradual reliance on automation of administrative on the EU level might bring efficiency but it does not come without its risks since judicial and doctrinal compositions are not fully realised yet.[271] That statement is one of the important points of this chapter as well.

Moreover, the digitalisation of processing in the borders and use of automation to categorize immigrants' and third country nationals' data could also be manipulated to portrait them as

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[267] Julien Jeandesboz, "Smartening Border Security in the European Union: An Associational Inquiry," Security Dialogue 47, no. 4 (2016): 293-294.

[268] Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS) and amending Regulations. (EU) No 515/2014, (EU) 2016/399, (EU) 2016/ 794 and (EU) 2016/1624. 16 September 2016. COM(2016) 731 final. Brussels: European Commission, pp-3.

[269] Uslu, "The Possible Effects of Entry/Exit System and the ETIAS," 5.

[270] Reichel, David, and Tamás Molnár. "Big data, big responsibility–fundamental-rights implications of using artificial intelligence in migration management: A European perspective." *Harnessing Data Innovation for Migration Policy: A Handbook for Practitioners* (2023): 159.

[271] Erzsébet Csatlós, "Tracing an Unfinished Arc: Gaps, Challenges and Digital Transformations in EU Administration," Public Governance, Administration and Finances Law Review 11, no. 1 (2026): 52.

direct threats instead of just risks as well, fundamentally linking their identities with any kind of threat/risks expectations based on data between many systems established by the EU. Related to this, the Common Identity Repository (CIR) is a database system that collects identity data like biometrics and biographic details through systems such as ETIAS, EES, VIS, EURODAC, and ECRIS-TCN. It advances the interoperability of the mentioned databases, permitting the application of these data in identity checks, law enforcement, and the discovery of false identities.[272]

Furthermore, this interoperability constitutes a very significant transformation in the historical horizon of EU data management, violating the traditional principle of purpose limitation in data protection law, which stipulates that data is collected for specific, limited uses. This would tie the point quite closely with the research of this thesis on securitization of immigration. Merging these databases, indeed, re-contextualizes migration and border management as national security concerns infused with counterfeiting identity and assisting in law enforcement investigations. If it endangers one, it also throws light on the contradictions with which security goals are approached in the area of privacy rights since the step toward non-siloing of databases is contrary to fundamental principles in data protection. The very shift also hints at the greater move within the EU of embedding advanced surveillance technologies into migration governance under the guise of putting enhanced security into place.[273]

As an overall observation, a very key element that EES represents here is the massive machinery of the EU's entire securitization strategy in operating within a much larger IT system meant to facilitate and keep eyes on the movements of third-country nationals across external borders. The EES, by systematically recording and storing entries/exits, refusals of entries, and biometric data, aims at achieving better managed borders and participation in the fight against irregular immigration and identity fraud. EES also benefits from interoperability with other EU databases such as VIS, ETIAS and CIR, which provides seamless information flow capable of identifying overstayers, their travel patterns, and security-risk assessments. Interestingly, Article 6 of the EES' regulation allows access to the

[272] Regulation (EU) 2019/817 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2019 on establishing a framework for interoperability between EU information systems in the field of borders and visa and amending Regulations (EC) No 767/2008, (EU) 2016/399, (EU) 2017/2226, (EU) 2018/1240, (EU) 2018/1726 and (EU) 2018/1861 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Council Decisions 2004/512/EC and 2008/633/JHA PE/30/2019/REV/1 OJ L 135, 22/05/2019, p. 27–84, Article 17.

[273] C. Jones, Automated Suspicion: The EU's New Travel Surveillance Initiatives (Statewatch, July 2020).

data kept for the purposes of prevention and investigation of terrorist activities and serious crimes by law enforcement authorities. The implications of this system are indicative of the direction in which the EU is steering toward its technological advances in border control-which complement the overall policy goal towards fortifying internal security-as well as fundamental rights and data protection. The installation of this system also shows how the phenomenon of migration keeps being more and more understood as a security question, merging administrative functions with surveillance capabilities to face up to threats postulated at and beyond EU borders.[274]

The EES Regulation continues to serve as the instrument par excellence by which the EU has securitized immigration into more considerable security frameworks and thus makes migration management one aspect of a much broader security setting. It allows essentially the authorities to monitor and control third-country nationals with much more exceptional precision by collecting biometric and alphanumeric data as provided in Articles 26 and 27. Migration, therefore, translates itself into a possible threat of security. In line with this narrative, interoperability with such systems as VIS (Article 8) and access provisions for law enforcement (Articles 29 and 30) work to add meat to the bone that migration becomes part of counterterrorism and serious crime investigations treatment. Again, the Article 41 calls for the sharing of data with third countries, reflecting yet another facet of the externalization of EU borders by the confiscation of a so-called global solution with respect to perceived risks of migration. Therefore, the EES institutionalizes migration surveillance, laying the groundwork for normalizing mobility as a security issue, all in line with the EU broader trend in the securitization of immigration through technology. This addresses operational aspects, but it also changes the way in which migration governance responds to existential threats.[275]

Moreover, the dual focus that the ETIAS's regulation places on security and efficiency can be spelled out in Article 4, which connects ETIAS to the prevention of illegal immigration,

[274] Regulation (EU) 2017/2226 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2017 establishing an Entry/Exit System (EES) to register entry and exit data and refusal of entry data of third-country nationals crossing the external borders of the Member States and determining the conditions for access to the EES for law enforcement purposes, and amending the Convention implementing the Schengen Agreement and Regulations (EC) No 767/2008 and (EU) No 1077/2011, OJ L 327, 9.12.2017, p. 20–82, Article 6.

[275] Regulation (EU) 2017/2226 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2017 establishing an Entry/Exit System (EES) to register entry and exit data and refusal of entry data of third-country nationals crossing the external borders of the Member States and determining the conditions for access to the EES for law enforcement purposes, and amending the Convention implementing the Schengen Agreement and Regulations (EC) No 767/2008 and (EU) No 1077/2011, OJ L 327, 9.12.2017, p. 20–82, Articles 8, 26, 27, 29, 30, 41.

terrorism and other serious crimes. The automated system, together with manual checks conducted by the ETIAS Central Unit (Article 7) will ensure that even subtle threats capture attention. This approach is in relation with the broader EU development of introducing technology for proper enforcement of immigration conditions as it relates to smooth travel. Interoperability with EES, expended in Articles 11b and 11c, further highlights how ETIAS complements current frameworks involving border controls through updated records being kept on activities of entry and exit. ETIAS centralizes immigration data, thus not only streamlining decision making but also making it normal for immigration to be viewed as an issue regarding security requiring constant monitoring or intervention for an elevated securitization process.[276]

As an interconnection between these systems on the views of the securitization process, digitizing the borders in the EU, so travel becomes a managed, securitized area by the likes of systems like EES and ETIAS. Such high-tech solutions are not mere administrative tools but also mechanisms for surveillance, profiling and enforcement, as they incorporate biometric data and system interoperability through VIS, SIS and EURODAC to allow real-time risk assessments combined with enhanced law enforcement capacity. EES will monitor entry and exit trends for identification of overstayers, while ETIAS will pre-scrutinize individuals before entering EU borders to potential risk identification. Through certain questionnaires and evident based automated decision-making processes, a permissive decision could be made by ETIAS to decide if a person poses a *potential threat to health and security*.[277] Which this whole as an example continues to bring up a critic on if EU making migration a threat to be dealt with through direct automated responses to filter out while blurring the lines of liberty and security. Furthermore, the infrastructure they provide makes possible an immigration framework as a potential hazard to internal security; Didier Bigo's phrase would be this "*governmentality of unease*", as in daily practice plus technology do frame migrants as security threats without any over test securitizing discourses. Meanwhile, the interoperability of such systems strengthens the politics of these systems against organized crime, terror, and irregular migration. The ethical and legal challenges for such mergers make headlines for issues such as data and privacy protection.

[276] Regulation (EU) 2018/1240 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 September 2018 establishing a European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS) and amending Regulations (EU) No 1077/2011, (EU) No 515/2014, (EU) 2016/399, (EU) 2016/1624 and (EU) 2017/2226, PE/21/2018/REV/1 OJ L 236, 19.9.2018, p. 1–71, Articles 4, 7, 11b, 11c.

[277] Erzsébet Csatlós, "Blending Digitalization and Enhanced Security: Exploring the Role of ETIAS in Migration Control and Its Administrative Structure," Hungarian Journal of Legal Studies 65, no. 3 (2025): 332.

Retaining and using both personal and biometric data for several purposes would therefore infringe the principle of limitation of purposes promulgated by the data protection legislation. Such measures indicate a change from normative governance by the EU to realpolitik, using the safety of the EU to outweigh human and democratic rights and values. Such movements reveal the crucial role of surveillance technologies in framing the EU's immigration agenda as one of security and contribute to the broader discourse on security on fundamental rights in migration policy.[278]

In a general summary, there are serious issues might essentially be raised by the EES in relation with the fundamental rights, namely privacy, data protection, and non-discrimination. The system at hand is designed to enable the mass collection, profiling and long-term storage of biometric data, which implicates the possibilities of data breaches, unauthorized access, and their possible misuse. Interoperability with other EU databases might create additional risks of mass surveillance and profiling that abide with minimal safeguards. While projected to strengthen border security and migration control, the EES could have a dual purpose of allowing law enforcement access in crime-prevention objectives, which might raise questions of proportionality and mission creep. The blanket data retention rule, preserving records of travellers even after leaving the EU, stands in direct opposition to well-established legal principles insisting on data being necessarily and strictly limited in scope.[279] Concerns are further heightened by the lack of independent oversight in respect of law enforcement access, together with the use of automated decision-making tools which raises some serious issues of potential discriminatory impact against travellers from certain national or ethnic backgrounds. allowing mechanized prejudice in a theoretical framework which connects to a larger collective securitization movement if one actor deems so. Stronger legal safeguards, with transparent oversight mechanisms, and a better balancing of security objectives with the protection of fundamental rights, are of an urgent need overall.[280]

Devising such mechanisms like EES and ETIAS would always entail profiling and linking of threat to the others, of course by others as it was mentioned before during this thesis, *the us vs them* concepts and building threat narrative on others will always be relevant for such

[278]Sadık and Kaya, "Surveillance Technologies in the Securitization of EU Migration," 154-155.
[279]Cristina Blasi Casagran, "Fundamental Rights Implications of Interconnecting Migration and Policing Databases in the EU," *Human Rights Law Review* 21, no. 2 (2021): 449-453.
[280]Antoni Napieralski, "Collecting Data at EU Smart Borders: Data Protection Challenges of the New Entry/Exit System," Zeitschrift für Kritik | Recht | Gesellschaft 2019, no. 2 (2019): 9.

subjects. Facilitating these conditions of profiling, data building on direct personal information, targeting groups and linking other third parties to be used as information pools to create accusations will be essential to the securitization process. Digitalising these tools will also streamline the process of profiling and building the threat narrative even faster to contribute on the collective securitization of the EU in the future.

In conclusion, understanding how these systems of profiling and data pooling towards the coming third-country nationals is extremely important to comprehend the possible outcomes and gears of the securitization process of the EU on immigration. The overall reasons for that are the making connections between facilitating conditions and the intended outcomes through threat building narratives over immigration like it was mentioned before within the chapter of FRONTEX as an example. Comparing all these systems and institutions and making connections will always be essential within the EU's immigration policy changes especially after 2015 as a landmark to see the exponential changes. In essence, EES and ETIAS are uniquely essential for the EU's attempts to integrate digitalised technologies to booster border management and transform immigration control into a collective securitization framework which in return raises questions over human rights, privacy and security as a whole in the future when they become fully operational.

Since these digital AI automatizations are developing rapidly it is wise to note that they complement but not assure the widespread decision-making processes, solutions and profiling regarding the AI and automated decision making should always be marked with caution.[281] There is also the sociodigital reflection of these systems regarding securitization in the EU as well. In short within the EES and ETIAS' co-constitutions might become a key mechanism in securitization processes as these system's large-scale IT infrastructures, biometric databases and interoperability across migration and policing systems translate imagined digital futures into material instruments of border control which in return emerging from the EU politicians. Fundamentally making these infrastructures enact political visions of who belongs and who threatens the security in general.[282]However, it would be wise to keep in mind that the author suggests approaching EES and ETIAS's roles as cautionary since during the writing of this thesis both of these mechanisms were not completely

[281] Csatlós, Erzsébet. "The Power of Information:(Digital) Authority Procedure in the 21st Century Hungary." *Bulletin of the Transilvania University of Braşov, Series VII: Social Sciences and Law* 16, no. Suppl (2023): 27.

[282]Travis Van Isacker, "The European Union's Entry/Exit System (EES): Infrastructural Journeys of a Sociodigital Future in-the-Making," *Geopolitics* (2025): 9.

implemented and operational. Therefore, EES and ETIAS should not be treated as established securitization tools but should maybe understood as indicative signs (or warnings) of an emerging trajectory within the EU's migration policies, in which these technological systems are increasingly designed to support pre-emptive screening, data-driven risk evaluation, and the externalisation of border control accordingly to this research's presentations. Overall, the practical implications and conclusion might be yet to come but these signs could very well be footsteps towards stricter and securitized policies surrounding immigration.

In the next chapter, the author compares Hungary and Germany's approach to immigration and their adopted securitization processes while explaining their actions' reflection on the broader EU to better present the EU's securitization of immigration on the EU level.

10. Two Visions of Security: Hungary and Germany as Mirrors of the Contemporary EU Approach to Immigration

The securitization of immigration since the beginning of the Refugee Crisis of 2015 became a major topic of concentration and discussion within the EU, reflecting the broader issues of clashing claims/ideals between humanitarian obligations and national security-related topics in general.[283] The author's choice of these two countries mainly came from their representation of political stance over immigration, acceptance of refuges and asylum seekers. Understanding Hungary and Germany's stances and their views of contradicting yet overwhelming securitization approaches pushed author to choose them over other Member States of the EU. The thesis at hand analyses the immigration related securitization dynamics in the EU, particularly with a comparative focus on Hungary and Germany during this chapter, two Member States that have, by and large, taken clearly opposed stances on immigration issues, despite working within the same supranational legal and political framework. The theoretical underpinnings of this analysis rest upon the Copenhagen School's Securitization Theory, which does not treat security as an objective state but as a discursive act by which certain issues are presented as existential threats that justify extraordinary measures.[284] Within this framework, in the case of Hungary, it represents the typical example of securitization which the political elites particularly under Viktor Orbán's

[283]Atahan Demirkol, "An Empirical Analysis of Securitization Discourse in the European Union," *Migration Letters* 19, no. 3 (2022): 273.
[284]Jonna Nyman, "Securitization," in Security Studies, ed. Paul D. Williams and Matt McDonald (Abingdon: Routledge, 2023): 115-116.

Fidesz government have persistently constructed immigration as a national security issue related to terrorism, erosion of culture, economic problems and criminality.[285] In contrast, Germany, under the leadership of Chancellor Angela Merkel, initially emphasized humanitarianism and European solidarity as reactionary measures, even though within Germany securitizing discourses gained momentum after incidents such as those of New Year's Eve in Cologne during 2015–2016.[286]As an introductory note on the subject of this chapter, author's main idea of choosing these example countries and their approach to securitization of immigration reflects on how national level might reflect towards the securitization on the EU level. Since EU tends to give influence and aid to the Member States' national governments an impetus to discover their patriotic policies it was an interest to the author to dive deeper into the subject and connect the topic to the securitization on a national level.[287]

Comparing the basis of the gradual increase and the stability of these two countries' political actions towards immigration will provide concrete results to make the securitization process more evident within the EU. Applying securitization and the usage of immigration as a threat building narrative is complicated in Germany yet it still exists, however in Hungary this thesis will try to take a step to put these two on the opposite sides of the spectrum. This thesis also seeks to understand the core differences on why securitization had been utilized in one more prominently and on the other more laid down or close to none. Through the coming chapter this study will present relevant case studies, examples and events relating to Germany's open-door policies towards the asylum and reception policies regarding persons seeking international protection while comparing them to the Hungarian government's opposing views relating immigration flow towards their borders over the same context. As an addition, during this overall chapter there will be several interviews conducted with the citizens of both countries. The reason for these interviews is to determine how a common and professional citizen from these two different countries reacts to the existing speech acts and the taken political stands towards immigration to get a better grip on to make securitization transparent in general. These interviews had been collected into a table to

[285] Szalai, "Securitizing Migration in Contemporary Hungary," 120.

[286] R. Bosen, "New Year's Eve in Cologne: 5 Years after the Mass Assaults," DW.com, December 31, 2020, Accessed August 23, 2025, https://www.dw.com/en/new-years-eve-in-cologne-5-years-after-the-mass-assaults/a-56073007

[287] Bartha, Ildikó, and Tamás M. Horváth. "State Aid as a Risk in the Policy of Competitive Advantages in the European Union." Studia Iuridica Lublinensia 32, no. 2 (2023): 38-39.

reflect the estimated idea and perception of the general speech acts or the political/social environment of the EU at the moment to reflect on the immigration.

The political and cultural reactions to the securitization process can vary within different countries, especially in an entity that is as interconnected as the EU itself.[288] In retrospect, Hungary and Germany have two contrasting approaches to the securitization of migration within the EU. Hungary uses an overtly securitizing narrative, presenting migration as a threat to national identity, sovereignty and public order which for instance, building border fences, restricting asylum laws, and officially stigmatizing migrants as terrorists and criminals.[289] This fundamentally corroborates the Copenhagen School's securitization theory: through political speeches, elites manage to raise migration into the security realm. Germany, by contrast, especially during the 2015 Refugee Crisis, first chose to treat the matter in humanitarian and legalistic terms, founded on liberal norms and shared EU solidarity.[290] Security has latterly come to influence German policy in integration, surveillance, and border control, so that became more the micro forms of securitization. In this sense, Hungary showed a politicized top-down securitization (macro form); Germany showed a more diffused and institutionalized form forged between normative tensions of liberalism and internal security.[291] These two cases of countries basically demonstrate the effectiveness and form of securitization are not same within the Union, however they pave the way for the audience's reception of securitization. In summary, the decision to choose and compare the countries of Hungary and Germany to reflect on the EU's current state of securitization derived from their operationalized structures within the Schengen. Fundamentally, Hungary sits on the Schengen external border and became a key state on the Balkan Route, making it a "border security" case where securitization is enacted through territorial control and deterrence. However, Germany remains as an internal Schengen destination for the migration flow which at the end securitization shifted to appear as boundaries over memberships, citizenship or relevant bureaucratic burdens.[292]

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[288]Balzacq, "Securitization Theory," 15.

[289]Umut Yukaruç, "The Securitization of Migration in Hungary through Conspiracy Theories," *Akdeniz İİBF Dergisi* 24, no. 2 (2024): 78-81.

[290] Cadena Gomez, *The Securitization of Asylum*, 11-12, 58-63.

[291] Hala Mhafal, When Hungary and Poland Spoke the Language of Securitization Perfectly (Bachelor's thesis, Lund University, 2023): 18.

[292] Zaun, Natascha, and Ariadna Ripoll Servent. "One step forward, two steps back: the ambiguous role of Germany in EU Asylum policies." *Journal of European Integration* 43, no. 2 (2021): 158-160.

10.1. Hungary and Securitization of Immigration

Since the Refugee Crisis and the sharp rise of immigration and refugee flows towards the EU border, Hungarian government implemented certain actions that can be deemed securitizing measures, including the construction of physical barriers, the introduction of strict asylum/migration laws, and the framing of migration as a national security threat.[293] Since the country of Hungary is located at the external borders of the EU Schengen Area and a direct neighbour to Serbia, Hungary once again became a transit country for the coming immigration flow with the expected reactions to asylum and migration overall.[294] During this subchapter there will be a broad description of the timeline of events that, taken together, creates the securitization process towards migrants.

To begin this subject, there must be an overview of Hungary's ruling political party Fidesz and the Prime Minister Viktor Orbán. With the overwhelming victory of the 2010 elections, Viktor Orbán and Fidesz rose to power in Hungary.[295] After the election, Prime Minister Orbán gained substantial powers. Through these powers Prime Minister (PM) Orbán initiated certain policies and amendments to constitutions in an effort to increase his powers. Through the years, PM Orbán continued to hold his seat of power.

Before the Refugee Crisis started to see its peak, on October 4th, 2013, the Hungarian government enacted a certain migration strategy of their own which in a broader sense supported regular migration on all senses. In detail, this strategy stated certain promises and principles such as; promoting open mindedness towards immigrants, supporting all forms of immigration, honouring international and European undertakings while ensuring the protecting towards asylum seekers, supporting the inclusion/integration of legal migrants and individuals granted international protection into society, providing protecting and necessary aid for the stateless people, taking resolute action to eradicate illegal migration and misuse of residency and guarantee that the Hungarian public has access to reliable migration-related information through effective communication strategies designed to reduce prejudice and stereotypes are the main addresses and principles of this strategy.[296] These principles were to ensure the Hungarian public would accept migration and boost

[293] András Szalai and Gabriella Gőbl, Securitizing Migration in Contemporary Hungary, CEU Center for EU Enlargement Studies Working Paper (Budapest: Central European University, 2015): 2-5.
[294] Nagy, Boldizsár. "Hungarian asylum law and policy in 2015–2016: Securitization instead of loyal cooperation." *German Law Journal* 17, no. 6 (2016): 1034.
[295] Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), IPU PARLINE Database: Hungary (Országgyűlés), Elections in 2010, Ipu.org, 2025, Accessed August 25, 2025, http://archive.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/arc/2141_10.htm
[296] Government Decree 1698/2013. (X.4).

integration within the society, essentially an effort to eliminate illegal immigration.[297] However, these promises failed to see any kind of real action and mostly stayed on paper.[298] Because, the Refugee Crisis reached its peak and the Hungarian government turned to other measures to control the overflow while consolidating their power. Through this crisis' rise Hungarian political discourse changed to focus on control and conflict.[299] This shift of focus might indicate a more transparent context for the securitization process for the coming years.

Later on, since the beginning of the Refugee Crisis and the overflow of immigration towards the EU's borders, the xenophobic tendencies within the Hungarian government have been rapidly and steadily increasing.[300] Through using speech acts, policies and explicitly raising walls in the borders, Hungary is utilizing securitization towards immigration while putting EU's values against itself according to this thesis' observations.

As a start, the core debates against immigration flow from Hungary comes as the country sits as a large influx state for irregular border crossings and applications for international protection, which needs to be more secure because failing to defend its borders from dangerous foreigners could result in a decline in both national and European cultural identity.[301] During one of his speeches, PM Orbán was very direct about not being open to receiving migrants, which he said as:

> *"Everyone would be better off if they did not come here. This is important. It would cost less, and there could be no moral objection to our conduct. Instead, we choose not to protect our borders, they come here, and we are then faced with financial burdens many times greater."*[302]

PM Orbán's attitude on this issue set the Hungarian government's approach to solving this crisis which at the end paved the road for many conflicts within the EU. These conflicts even created fractions within the Union to make several Member States to forge their own blocks

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[297] Krisztina Juhász, "Assessing Hungary's Stance on Migration and Asylum in Light of the European and Hungarian Migration Strategies," Politics in Central Europe 13, no. 1 (2017): 38.
[298] Ákos Bocskor, "Anti-Immigration Discourses in Hungary during the 'Crisis' Year: The Orbán Government's 'National Consultation' Campaign of 2015," Sociology 52, no. 3 (2018): 554.
[299] Juhász, "Assessing Hungary's Stance on Migration," 39-41.
[300] Szalai and Gőbl, *Securitizing Migration in Contemporary Hungary*, 2.
[301] Nina Miholjčić, "The Securitization of Migration Issue: Hungarian Case," Jurnalul Practicilor Comunitare Pozitive 17, no. 3 (2017): 60-62.
[302] Viktor Orbán, "Viktor Orbán's Speech at a Meeting of the Heads of Hungary's Diplomatic Missions Abroad," Website of the Hungarian Government, September 7, 2015, Accessed August 27, 2025, http://www.kormany.hu/en/the-prime-minister/the-prime-minister-s-speeches/viktor-orban-s-speech-at-a-meeting-of-the-heads-of-hungary-s-diplomatic-missions-abroad

against immigration, such as Poland, Czechia and of course Hungary.[303] These fractions are the reasons why this thesis studies and compares Hungary and Germany as well over this issue.

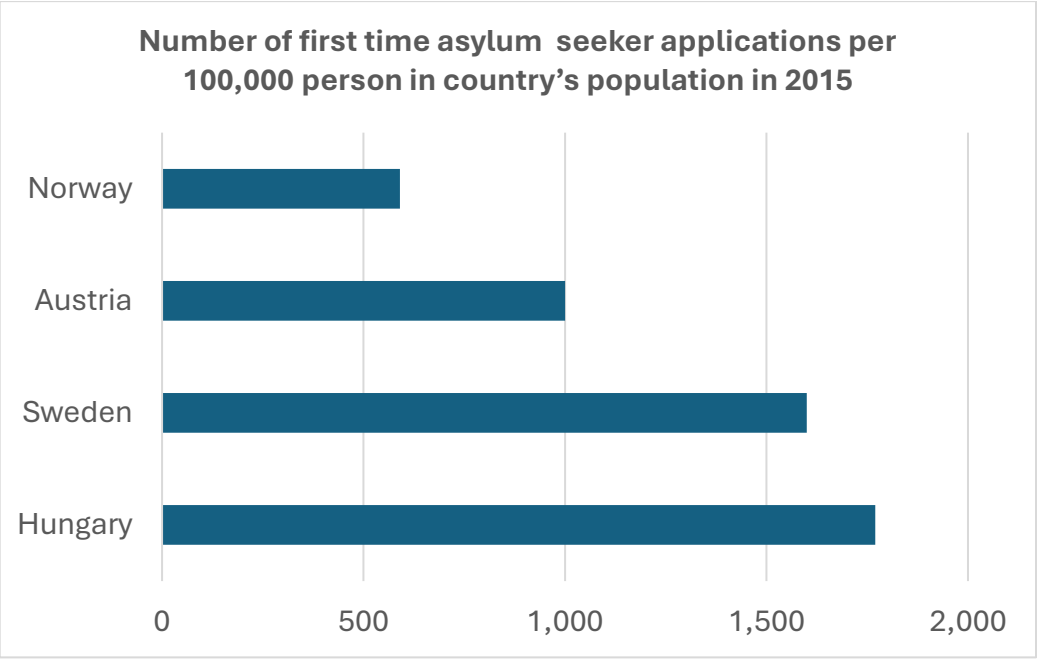
Moreover, the prime origin of these developments within the Hungarian government's anti-immigration rhetoric after the 2015 Refugee Crisis comes from the overwhelming numbers of migrants and people who seeks asylum coming towards the Hungarian borders. Specifically speaking these arrivals were not just regular crossings but mostly irregular crossings. The highest number of these irregular border crossings was recorded at the Hungarian border in 2015, with 411,515 crossings. Hence, Hungary was second only to Greece as one of the EU Member States having one of the greatest numbers of illegal crossings at their borders.[304] Since September-October 2015, the construction of fences along the southern border with Serbia and Croatia has redirected these migrants away from the Western Balkan route. Before the fencing was finished, there was an average number of daily 274 arrivals per day. Yet between June and August 2015, this daily number soared by 447% to reach 1,500. In September and October, arrivals shot above 7,000 every day. By November and December, it had fallen considerably, to just 10 daily arrivals. Coming into 2016, arrivals per day started rising gradually, with a 355% increase from January to February and a further 48% increase from February to March.[305] The establishment of the physical barriers (fences) on the Hungarian border will be explained in detail in the coming pages during this subchapter as well.

However, the numbers of dispersed asylum seekers within the EU in 2015 should also be observed. Because with the EU asylum seekers were not equally dispersed especially for Hungary. The numbers can be observed below:

[303] Mhafal, *When Hungary and Poland Spoke the Language of Securitization Perfectly*, 14.

[304] Bülent Şener and Şeyma Uzun, "Securitization of International Migration in the Context of Economic and Societal Security: An Example of the Hungarian Fidesz and Jobbik Parties," *Khazar Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* 26, no. 4 (2023): 45.

[305] *The European Migration Crisis and Hungary*, IOM Hungary, Accessed August 27, 2025, https://hungary.iom.int/european-migration-crisis-and-hungary



Graph 11: *Author's own compilation based on the Pew Research Centre's studies regarding the Number of Refugees to Europe, Source: https://www.pewresearch.org/global-migration-and-demography/2016/08/02/number-of-refugees-to-europe-surges-to-record-1-3-million-in-2015/*

When looked into these numbers, these statistics gave a certain demographic as well for those who apply to Hungary for asylum seeking in 2015. Basically, the asylum applications from Syrian and Afghan nationals increased significantly in 2015 (64,587 and 46,227 applications, respectively), however Kosovan nationals' applications stayed steady at 24,454. Notably, Pakistani asylum applications rose from 401 in 2014 to 15,157 in 2015, and Iraqi asylum applications jumped from 497 in 2014 to 9,279 in 2015, though not to the same degree as Syrian and Afghan residents' rising petitions.[306]

Based on these numbers and the nationalities, the Hungarian government and the PM Orbán continued to show their disdain regarding them. For instance, PM Orbán has said that in 2016 the coming asylum seekers towards Europe are nothing but "*poison*" and continued to add that his country "*doesn't need a single immigrant*". Furthermore, PM Orbán presented African and Middle Eastern immigrants as a threat with saying, "*every single migrant poses a public security and terror risk*" which this study aims to strengthen the signs of threat narrative building to pose these people as a national security risk.[307]

[306] *Migration in Hungary*, IOM Hungary, Accessed August 27, 2025, https://hungary.iom.int/migration-hungary

[307] Guardian staff reporter, "Hungarian Prime Minister Says Migrants Are 'Poison' and 'Not Needed,'" *The Guardian*, July 27, 2016, August 28, 2025, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jul/26/hungarian-prime-minister-viktor-orban-praises-donald-trump

Moreover, through the CDA method it can be observed that, PM Orbán uses certain words, phrases and metaphors during his speeches and announcements he tries to connect immigration to a broader security concern. During this research 36 of PM Orbán related quotes had been studied to tie immigration and securitization which the most related quotes had been shared during this subchapter to further the observations. He uses the word *threat* on multiple occasions like in the previous paragraph to link immigration to security threats in general to present immigration as a danger. For example, PM Orbán, during his speech at the European Parliament in Strasbourg said that "*The migration crisis has now reached levels not seen since 2015, with illegal migration and security threats potentially leading to the collapse of the Schengen Area*".[308] Another example PM Orbán's use of speech act to connect immigrants and threat comes from his comments during his talks in Brussels, which he says, "*Rather, the continent is under threat of an ever-growing modern exodus*".[309] He also said in 2015 that, "*The influx of refugees into Europe threatens to undermine the continent's Christian roots and governments must control their borders before they can decide how many asylum seekers they can take*" this comment of his fundamentally connects immigrants to another type of threat on another level.[310] The use of the word *threat* and *Christian roots* at the same time presents the immigration as a threat to culture as well.[311] Again, the analysis suggest that, the constant use of the word threat especially next to culture even when it is not directly about Hungary could indicate further possibility of danger coming from immigration.

These framings imply that immigration constituted a long-term cultural threat, going beyond short-term security concerns which at the end indicates a prolonged speech act process. The arguments portrayed migration as an existential cultural crisis and consistently positioned Hungary as a defender of European Christian culture. These speeches, which were deliberately used by government actors (especially PM Orbán), justified extraordinary policy measures by redefining migration as a threat to the nation's values, culture and identity

[308] Zoltán Kovács, "PM Orbán: Migration and Security Threats Could Disintegrate the Schengen Area," *About Hungary*, October 9, 2024, August 28, 2025, https://abouthungary.hu/blog/pm-orban-migration-and-security-threats-could-disintegrate-the-schengen-area

[309] Matthew Karnitschnig, "Orbán Says Migrants Threaten 'Christian' Europe," *POLITICO*, September 3, 2015, August 28, 2025, https://www.politico.eu/article/orban-migrants-threaten-christian-europe-identity-refugees-asylum-crisis/

[310] Reuters Staff, "Refugees Threaten Europe's Christian Roots, Says Hungary's Orbán," *Reuters*, September 3, 2015, August 28, 2025, https://www.reuters.com/article/world/us/refugees-threaten-europes-christian-roots-says-hungarys-orban-idUSKCN0R30J2/

[311] Yukaruç, "Securitization of Migration in Hungary," 80.

rather than a humanitarian issue.[312] Presenting the extraordinary policies to protect the culture and values of Hungary and Europe fundamentally creates a wall between the coming immigrants and the host population essentially creating an *Us vs Them* situation at the end.[313]

Furthermore, to fuel these Us vs. Them narratives, PM Orbán creates a process of continued methods of constant reminders within his speeches and announcements. Through the table below it can be observed that the PM Orbán tries to constantly bring up migration as a threat and pushes a narrative of fear for his country and Europe in general.

Quote 1	Migration poses a **threat**, increases terrorism and increases crime. Mass migration fundamentally changes Europe's cultural make-up. Mass migration destroys national culture.[314]
Quote 2	This danger is not now **threatening** us as wars and natural disasters do… Mass migration is like a slow and steady current of water which washes away the shore… its true nature is the occupation of territory; and their gain in territory is our loss of territory.[315]
Quote 3	A country without borders is like an egg without a shell…the **threat** of migration and the risks it poses are so great that…making Hungary the safest country in Europe" is our primary task.[316]
Quote 4	A new type of **threat**…there is no chance, we will send you back, this continent will not become your new homeland.[317]

[312] Önder Canveren and Fulya Akgül Durakçay, "The Analysis of the Hungarian Government's Discourse towards the Migrant Crisis: A Combination of Securitization and Euroscepticism," Journal of Management & Economics (Yönetim ve Ekonomi) 24, no. 3 (2017): 861.
[313] Maram Mahmoud, *Language and Power in Migration Discourse: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Suella Braverman's Speech* (Bachelor's thesis, Malmö University, 2024): 28.
[314] About Hungary, "Quotes on Quotas: Prime Minister Orbán on the Referendum, Migration, the EU and More," *About Hungary*, September 27, 2016, August 28, 2025, https://abouthungary.hu/speeches-and-remarks/quotes-on-quotas-prime-minister-orban-on-the-referendum-migration-the-eu-and-more
[315] *"Orban's Great Speech – A Must Read for Every European – 15 March 2016 – Rumeli Observer," Rumeli Observer*, October 7, 2016, August 28, 2025, https://www.esiweb.org/rumeliobserver/2016/10/07/orbans-great-speech-a-must-read-for-every-european-15-march-2016/
[316] "Speech by Viktor Orbán at a Swearing-In Ceremony for Border Hunters," Miniszterelnok.hu, 2015, August 28, 2025, https://2015-2022.miniszterelnok.hu/speech-by-viktor-orban-at-a-swearing-in-ceremony-for-border-hunters/
[317] *"Orban's Immigration Manifesto: Sweeping Away Democracy," Ústav mezinárodních vztahů – Expertise to Impact*, Accessed August 28, 2025, https://www.iir.cz/orban-s-anti-immigration-manifesto-sweeping-away-the-hungarian-democracy

Table 3: *Author's own compilation based on speeches and announcements made by PM Orbán.*

These types of statements continued to strengthen certain facilitating conditions for the securitization process within Hungary. However, they will be mentioned in connection with more concrete evidence, policies and actions in the coming paragraphs. Each of these statements qualifies as a strong speech act within the securitization process of immigration in Hungary because these quotes explicitly connect migration to dangers, terror, cultural strife, crime and even crises in general. By portraying immigrants as the reasons to these security concern PM Orbán legitimizes his extraordinary policies and responses.[318] There are also more politically direct speeches such addresses towards the Hungarian Parliament, these speeches directly put migration in the centre and possess it as a fundamental threat to the Hungarian people. For example, in 2015, PM Orbán addressed to Parliament and said:

> *"I am going to tell you what the Hungarian government believes to be the nature of the problem in the context of illegal migration. I must speak of why we are quarrelling with the European Union. I am going to tell you what we have done so far to curb immigration and to protect the borders of Hungary and Europe… The Hungarian people have decided: the country must be protected. Every action the Hungarian government has taken to date, and every measure it will take derives from this overriding duty. In 2015 there are two political trends in Hungary: one which seeks to protect Hungary and the Hungarian people, and seeks to preserve our national culture and European identity; and one which for some reason works to oppose all this."*[319]

Through this speech it can be interpreted that PM Orbán presents the migration as a threat on every level of the society. Looking at the verbs such as problem, protect and culture within the same speech towards immigration fundamentally antagonizes it in its essence.

In continuation, there is also the fear mongering in PM Orbán's speeches that correlates immigration to words relating to imminent catastrophes such as *doomed* or *danger*. For example, PM Orbán made several statements relating immigration to being doomed by

[318] Yusuf Avar, "Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's Speeches on the Migration Crisis: How It Challenges the EU," in *Communication Dynamics in Global Affairs: Navigating Conflict and Diplomacy* (Cluj-Napoca: Universitate Babeș-Bolyai Press, 2024): 66.

[319] *"Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's Address to Parliament before the Start of Daily Business," Government of Hungary*, 2015, Accessed August 29, 2025, https://2015-2019.kormany.hu/en/the-prime-minister/the-prime-minister-s-speeches/prime-minister-viktor-orban-s-address-to-parliament-before-the-start-of-daily-business

saying, "*we are doomed if they entered, and there is no way back.*"[320] Another connection PM Orbán made with immigration and its being a danger was basically him saying that to whole of Europe and not just Germany, "*not to lose their common sense in connection with migration*" and "*Hungary has had its feet on the ground from the very first moment and knew that this is a danger we must protect ourselves from*".[321] Once again using the targeted words such as danger and migration facilitates a secure way to make immigration a danger in the long run. At the end it could be seen as just another way of populism but it certainly is more complicated than that.

Moreover, through these fear mongering speech acts, PM Orbán kept on targeting immigration to sustain a new kind of policy, Euroscepticism. What Euroscepticism fundamentally refers to certain political positions that which basically expresses criticism or scepticism towards the EU in a defiance of the Union's supranationalism.[322] In brief, the Hungarian government and PM Orbán uses speech acts and securitization in correlation with fear mongering on immigration to feed Euroscepticism to boost their powers.[323] In 2024 during one of his speeches, PM Orbán said, "*By 2035, Hungary must be demographically self-sustaining. There can be no question of population decline being compensated by migration. The Western experience is that if there are more guests than hosts, then home is no longer home. This is a risk that must not be taken.*"[324]This kind of no migration attitude basically reflects a government who targets to tolerate no immigration and opposes the values of the EU and ruling of the EU in general.[325]

Furthermore, PM Orbán mostly after 2015's summer, turned his criticisms towards the EU and Brussels while his stance on sovereignty remained a prominent element in his speeches.

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[320]About Hungary, "PM Orbán: Migrants Cannot Be Allowed In," About Hungary, July 16, 2025, Accessed August 29, 2025, https://abouthungary.hu/news-in-brief/pm-orban-migrants-cannot-be-allowed-in

[321] *About Hungary*, "PM Orbán: Hungary Has Been Warning of Migration Dangers since 2015," *About Hungary*, February 14, 2025, Accessed August 29, 2025, https://abouthungary.hu/news-in-brief/pm-orban-hungary-has-been-warning-of-migration-dangers-since-2015

[322] Benjamin Leruth, Nicholas Startin, and Simon Usherwood, "Defining Euroscepticism: From a Broad Concept to a Field of Study," in The Routledge Handbook of Euroscepticism, ed. Benjamin Leruth, Nicholas Startin, and Simon Usherwood (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017): 3-10.

[323] Sofie Kathrine Marhaug, *Euroscepticism and the Migrant Crisis: A Comparative Analysis of Mainstream Parties and Public Opinion in Germany and Hungary* (Bachelor's thesis, Norwegian University of Science and Technology [NTNU], 2021): 18.

[324] "Lecture of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán at the 33rd Bálványos Summer Free University and Student Camp," Orbán Viktor, July 27, 2024, Accessed August 29, 2025, https://miniszterelnok.hu/en/speech-by-prime-minister-viktor-orban-at-the-33rd-balvanyos-summer-free-university-and-student-camp/

[325] Eszter Farkas, "The Contradictions in Hungary's Immigration Policy and Communication," *Migration Policy Centre*, October 16, 2024, Accessed August 29, 2025, https://migrationpolicycentre.eu/the-contradictions-in-hungarys-immigration-policy-and-communication/

As it became more and more Eurosceptic, Hungary's and EU's relations continued to derail on the issue of immigration.[326]Roots of these criticisms not only came from the disagreements relating to the securitizing immigration but also came from supranationalism, economic crises and even Brexit variables associating with rising Eurosceptic trends which connects to the authoritarian personality traits.[327] In connection, PM Orbán also voiced his direct concerns over EU's migration policies which he integrated these concerns into his speech act to further facilitate his powers. In one of his speeches he said, "*Hungary is under enormous pressure…whether or not the EU will succeed in pushing a new EU asylum and migrant system down the throats of the central European countries, including ours. Such a system would authorize to distribute migrants among the other EU countries, including those which have not taken in migrants, do not want to, are opposed to this and do not want any part in it."*[328] During this speech it is evident, like in his speeches observed before in this subchapter, that he aims for a multilevel securitization process and Euroscepticism. On one level, PM Orbán fuels the flames against the EU's migration agenda and targets it as an external threat to Hungary while stating it violates Hungary's national sovereignty and democratic will. On the other level, he is portraying the migrant agenda of the EU not merely as a policy disagreement but as an external threat.

Moreover, these speech acts reflected on certain concrete actions such as open propaganda through billboards all over of Hungary. These kinds of mediatization and visualized framing of immigration contributes to the securitization process on many levels. As shown in various roadside billboards, which will be demonstrated below, continues to reinforce a narrative of *Us vs Them* in Hungary while portraying immigrants as violent people who are after the jobs of Hungarian people.[329] Fundamentally, the government's billboard campaign played a key role within the speech act to further visualize the immigration and Muslims as a source of fear, economic issue and cultural threat by directly displaying security focused narratives.[330]

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[326] Robert Csehi and Edit Zgut, "'We Won't Let Brussels Dictate Us': Eurosceptic Populism in Hungary and Poland," European Politics and Society 22, no. 1 (2021): 8.

[327] András Bíró-Nagy and Áron József Szászi, "The Roots of Euroscepticism: Affective, Behavioural and Cognitive Anti-EU Attitudes in Hungary," *Sociology Compass* 18, no. 4 (2024): 16.

[328] Ian Traynor, "Hungary to Hold Referendum on EU's Refugee Quotas," *The Guardian*, February 24, 2016, Accessed August 29, 2025, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/feb/24/hungary-viktor-orban-will-call-referendum-on-eu-refugee-quotas

[329] Jacobsen Gamble, Building Up Borders: Political Framing and Anti-Immigration Attitudes in Hungary and the United States (undergraduate thesis, University of Lynchburg, 2025): 15.

[330] Edina Lilla Mészáros, "The Politicization, Mediatisation and the Visual Framing of the Refugee Crisis in Hungary," in Muslim Minorities and the Refugee Crisis in Europe, ed. Katarzyna Górak-Sosnowska and Katarzyna Pędziwiatr (Warsaw: University of Warsaw Press, 2019): 250-254.

However, there are certain curiosities about these billboards as well because some of these billboards appears to directed to the immigrants but the language of these displays remained to be in Hungarian language. Some examples can be observed below:

Photo 1: *"If you come to Hungary, do not take the Hungarians' jobs!" in the third district of Budapest on June 8, 2015, (Translated from Hungarian).*[331]

Photo 2: *"If you come to Hungary, you have to keep our laws." next to the Obuda cemetery in Budapest, (Translated from Hungarian).*[332]

By looking at these billboards, it is evident that these displays in reality are not targeting the immigrants but the Hungarian people. This kind of misdirection lays the foundations for a further Us vs Them narrative which makes immigrants more dangerous in the eyes of the population. This constructed narrative is fundamentally enhanced by PM Orbán and the government's selective use of language and imagery designed to appeal to fear, national identity and cultural stability within the nation. Although these messages posted on billboards should, by the laws of communication, aim at informing, in fact, they act to create a public sentiment of fear and urgency towards the coming immigrants. These displays

[331] AFP News, "Hungary's Anti-Immigration Campaign Sparks Controversy," Yahoo News, June 8, 2015, Accessed August 30, 2025, https://sg.news.yahoo.com/hungarys-anti-immigration-campaign-sparks-controversy-174317296.html

[332] Nick Thorpe, "Hungary's Poster War on Immigration," BBC News, June 13, 2015, Accessed August 30, 2025, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-33091597

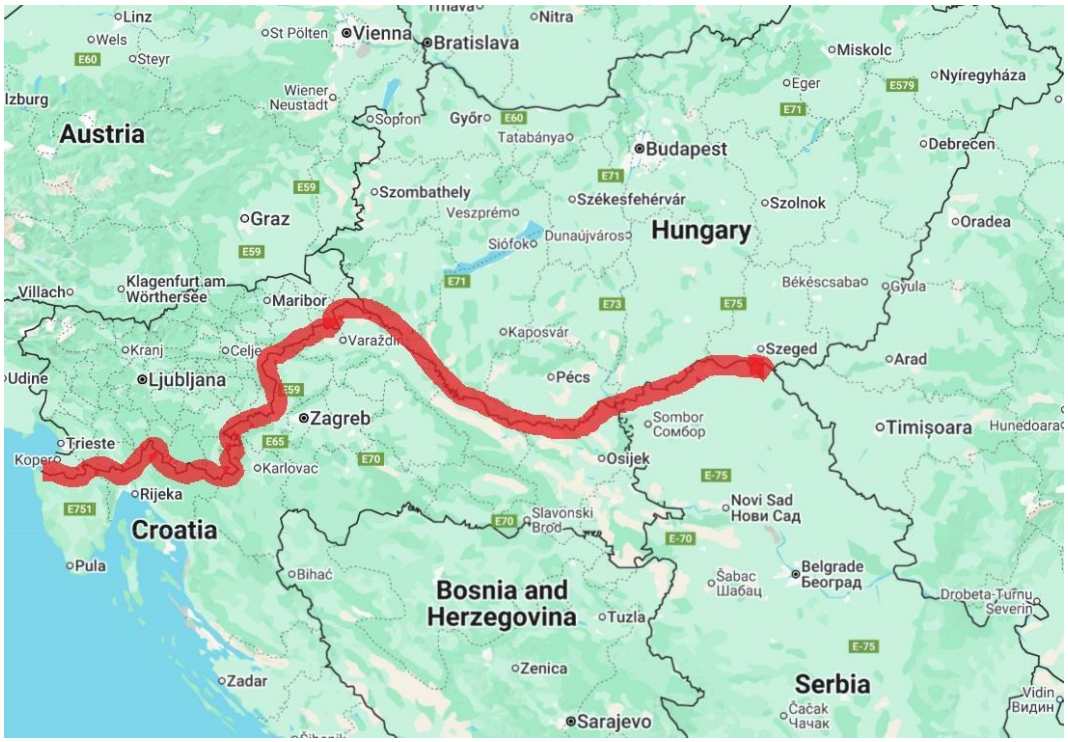
portray migrants as potential threats and basically associate them with crime, instability and terrorism to build a hostile environment where fear is used politically. Such reinforcement of the securitization process melds societal attitudes into that hostile towards immigration which at the end legitimizing certain policies, policy measures and severely shrinking the potential safe space in Hungary.[333] Based on this thesis' approach, this policy and narrative of the speech act is just another strong evidence of a securitization process in Hungary according to the author.

Now continuing on the subject of direct actions, the Hungarian government adopted certain policies to counter the overflow of immigration coming mostly from the Balkans and Türkiye. One of the policies that escalated the situation with Hungary and its borders was the Hungarian Parliament's authorization of a legislation that allowed the military to assist the police in the border against the mass flow of immigrants.[334] This law basically authorized the police and military to use any means necessary to repel the flow of immigrants on the borders, these measures were for example, using of rubber bullets, tear gas and related devices against people.[335] More extreme measures were also taken and came to a point of erecting fences in the borders of Croatia and Serbia to counter the overflow of migrants. The map below can be observed to see where the border fences mark with red starts:

[333] Galgóczi, E. Does Hate Speech Influence People's Attitude?,: 4.

[334] Act CXLII/2015 on the Law on Police and Military.

[335] Az Országgyűlés 36/2015. (IX. 22.) OGY határozata, Üzenet az Európai Unió vezetőinek, Magyar Közlöny, 2015/136, 22 September 2015, 19792–19793, https://www.parlament.hu/irom40/05984/05984.pdf



Map 3: *Author's own compilation based on various sources reporting such as BBC and CNN, made by the author of this thesis.*

In June 2015, cabinet of Hungary approved the construction of a barrier which was 4 meters tall on the border of Serbia in specifics, the 175 km border fence along the Hungary-Serbia section to seal the green border and address the surge in migration was the direct purpose.[336]This construction began in July to early August 2015 and was completed in September 2015.[337] After this Hungarian government declared a state of emergency throughout the border counties caused by a crisis situation based on mass immigration to prepare and construct a temporary security border fence for border control purposes on the external border of Hungary.[338] Moreover, these developments allowed a second fence to be built along its border with Croatia in September 2015.[339]Later on, the Hungarian government announced they would also reinforce their border fence on the border of Serbia to keep on the safety of its borders against irregular border crossings by TCNs, including persons who

[336] Government Resolution 1401/2015. (VI. 17.) on certain measures necessary to address the exceptional immigration pressure (Translated from Hungarian).

[337] "Hungary Completes Serbia Border Fence," BBC News, Accessed September 1, 2025, https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-34250092

[338] Government Resolution No. 1665/2015 (IX. 21.) on further measures necessary to address the crisis caused by mass immigration (Translated from Hungarian).

[339] Deutsche Welle (DW), "Hungary Starts Building Fence on Croatian Border," *DW.com*, September 18, 2015, Accessed September 1, 2025, https://www.dw.com/en/hungary-starts-building-fence-on-croatian-border/a-18721670

might seek international protection.[340]Furthermore, the border of Hungary and Serbia saw another construction of a barrier against the migrant flow and on 28 April 2017, the Hungarian government announced it had completed this barrier.[341]In short, Hungary justified restrictive asylum/border measures by invoking a threat to public policy and internal security.[342]

In addition to setting real barriers, the Hungarian government also set legal barriers against immigration and asylum seekers during this crisis. There were amendments on the Asylum Act, other related rules and the Criminal Code and the Criminal Procedure Act made possible by the Hungarian government. In July 2015, Hungarian Parliament declared Serbia a safe third country for asylum-seekers which became a legal basis for quasi-automatic rejection of most asylum claims in Hungary.[343] Later on, the Hungarian government also introduced a certain legal definition which was called the *state of crisis due to mass migration* with emergency regulatory power.[344]Which is another concrete example of gathering extraordinary powers relating to the securitization process. There are also amendments to the Asylum Act and State Border Act in July 2016 which allowed police to push back any individual who got caught within 8 km of the border who crossed irregularly, without access to asylum procedures.[345]Another important legal change happened in 2018, Hungarian government added a new inadmissibility ground to their Asylum Act that made claims from applicants who transited safe countries essentially rejectable.[346] This decision was criticized by the European Commission for violating a certain EU Directive 2013/32/EU (Asylum Procedures Directive).[347]These are just various examples of how Hungarian governments sets up their walls and bring about extraordinary measures even on legal terms which as it can be observed also clashes with the EU values. Moreover, the Hungarian government

[340]Government Decree 147/2016. (VI. 13.) on the declaration of administrative authority matters related to the implementation of infrastructural developments serving the technical reinforcement of the temporary security border fence built on the border section of Hungary with Serbia as matters of priority, (Translated from Hungarian)

[341] *"Hungary Completes 2nd Border Fence Meant to Stop Migrants," Fox News*, April 28, 2017, Accessed September 1, 2025, https://www.foxnews.com/world/hungary-completes-2nd-border-fence-meant-to-stop-migrants

[342] Friedery, Réka, and Gábor Kecskés. "Fundamental (Human) Rights versus Emergency Measures: Excerpts from the Case-law of the CJEU and ECtHR." AWR BULLETIN 63, no. 2 (2024): 175.

[343] Government Decree 191/2015 (VII. 21.)

[344] Asylum Act - Article 80/A.

[345] Act XCIV of 2016,"On the Amendment of Laws Necessary for Broad Application of the Asylum Procedure Conducted at the Border" (Self-Translated from Hungarian using Google Translate).

[346] Asylum Act - Article 51 (2)(f).

[347] Krisztina Juhász, "Securitization of Migration in Hungary and the Case of Endless State of Crisis Due to Mass Migration," International Journal of Arts Humanities & Social Science 1, no. 4 (2020): 127.

continued to frame immigration as a security threat during the pandemic as well by redefining migrants as national security threats through transferring power from civilian authorities to security forces. For example, binding police recommendations (police proposal is *ius cogens* since 2018 and courts can't diverge from it), classified national-security files and the elimination of meaningful judicial scrutinizes were just some.[348]In relation to classified information, shielding facts behind these classifications turns judicial reviews and trust away from transparency in Hungary when looked through the lenses of securitization.[349]

Another point of barrier is also the digital policing which was the AI-assisted policing as the integrated security service based on cross-data extraction and biometric surveillance, in this regard, it was also observed that in Hungary, the face recognition system is used by default, in the context of a more general understanding of "*integrated law enforcement*" that retrieves data from civil and international databases. This would be a definite entry point into the connection between immigration and the securitization of immigration because such state data capacity/AI power is centred in the realm of security governance (law and order, investigation and defence of the nation) rather than in a more rights-based or policy-driven understanding of its usage.[350]Rising concerns over human rights is also becoming an issue within Hungary which points towards a less flexible and accessible design regarding the digital public administration in the country as well. Such designs might cause paradoxes of digitalization and more the automation of these processes more human flexibility will be lost which might result in external influences of securitization actors' influence to creep in without being detected.[351]

All these active and concrete measures were taken against the threat of immigration and promoted by the Hungarian government and the PM Orbán which granted them the necessary tools and legitimacy to act on to gather even more power at the end. In summary, this crisis of immigration in the EU revealed that for certain parties' and actors' immigration can be exploited in the eyes of the population. PM Orbán's flashy use of speech act laid the foundations for certain facilitating conditions to enable further legitimization of their

[348] Csatlós, Erzsébet. "National Security-Related Expulsion Cases during the Pandemic in Hungary: Secret Revealed?." *Acta Iuris Stetinensis* 43 (2) (2023): 38-39.
[349] Csatlós, Erzsébet. "National Security and its Implication on Expulsion Decisions in Hungary during the Pandemic." (2022): 71-72.
[350] Csatlós, Erzsébet, and Péter Mezei. "The Law of the Algorithmic State in Hungary." *Italian J. Pub. L.* 17 (2025): 636.
[351] Csatlós, Erzsébet. "Opening Gate or Rising Wall? Some Thoughts About the Accessibility and Equality of Digital Public Administration in Hungary." Bulletin of the Transilvania University of Brașov: Series VII: Social Sciences and Law 18 (67), Special Issue (2025): 263

extensive and extreme policies such as putting fences and allowing military to support the police against immigration flow or declaring a state of emergency to add their political powers as it was mentioned before in this chapter.

Another point is that at the EU level, the EU itself had an internal reaction to what Hungary was doing with its overall migration governance. Hungary's reaction to immigration became an object of institutional contestation. In summary, a European Parliament report (The Sargentini Report) written by Judith Sargentini states and invites the Council to act under the Article 7(1) TEU by determining that there is a clear risk of a serious breach by the country of Hungary of the EU's foundational values in Article 2 of TEU (democracy, rule of law, fundamental rights).[352]Furthermore, this report framed Hungary as it was breaching the EU's foundational values while creating a fundamental risk within the Union itself. This report also states that the Hungarian government puts the fundamental rights of migrants and persons who seek international protection at risk while still being bound to Article 2 of TEU which is triggered by xenophobia and hate against migrants in general.[353]This report, according to this thesis, indicates Hungary's anti-Brussels and anti-immigration attitude through intersection of the values upheld by the EU. That's exactly why this thesis argues to point out that this report's existence also makes securitization observable while undermining the normative foundations of EU governance. Furthermore, this report pulled the attention of the Parliament regarding the Hungarian authorities'' actions on several cases such as, corruption and conflicts of interest, the rights of persons belonging to minorities, including Roma and Jews, and protection against hateful statements against such minorities and the fundamental rights of relevant TCNs and persons seeking or benefiting from international protection were such examples.[354]Through the Securitization Theory, this process can be made transparent since Hungary utilizes certain policies towards immigrants, which were discussed until this point during this chapter, this report surfaces as a result of these on the EU level in a sense. However, Sargentini Report also aims for the EU's securitization process which the Parliament moves and frames Hungary's migration policies in a sense

[352] European Parliament resolution of 12 September 2018 on a proposal calling on the Council to determine, pursuant to Article 7(1) of the Treaty on European Union, the existence of a clear risk of a serious breach by Hungary of the values on which the Union is founded (2017/2131(INL)) OJ C 433, 23.12.2019, pp. 66–85.
[353] Köves, Nóra. "Domestic political aspects of migration in Hungary." *Phantom Menace* 243 (2018): 258-259.
[354] European Parliament resolution of 12 September 2018 on a proposal calling on the Council to determine, pursuant to Article 7(1) of the Treaty on European Union, the existence of a clear risk of a serious breach by Hungary of the values on which the Union is founded (2017/2131(INL)) OJ C 433, 23.12.2019, pp. 67-68.

while conceptualizing Hungary is either defending its borders or not.[355]However, there are also continuing opinions stating that the EU is forcing certain countries to follow its migration policies and defining their sovereignty, overall, another version of the securitization process on the EU level to begin with.[356]On the national level, this level of hostility and separation within the nation might cripple the country but maybe one day integrating the nationalities within the country might yield positive results and evolve the nation all together instead of securitization of the society.[357]

In summary, Hungary's change of attitude as the Refugee Crisis worsened evolved into an anti-immigration rhetoric specifically in 2015 even to the point of defying EU regulations.[358] These anti-EU attitudes and aftereffects of all the events that were explained through this chapter also connect to the differentiation between Hungary and Germany's policies and attitudes towards migration as well. However, these differentiations will be expanded and how they affect the broader EU in the coming pages.

10.2. Germany and the Securitization of Immigration

When it comes to immigration, Germany always had a peculiar place within the history of the world. Through the 19th and 20th Century, Germany always went back and forward on territorial expansionism and shifting political/ideological borders. These changes to nationhood and immigration correlated together to evolve into an idea of republic, liberal asylum and immigration policies through the years at the end.[359] Through this subchapter the focus will be given onto Germany and its approach on immigration through the lenses of the securitization to make a more suitable comparison based on this thesis' main research. During this part of the thesis rather than real barriers and active pushing of the people over the border like what Hungarian government attempted, the subtle process of containing the third-country nationals and asylum applicants will be more visible. Selected legal actions,

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[355] Ekholm, Ellinor. "Who knows the interests of Hungary better than the Hungarian people themselves?-A narrative analysis of the Hungarian Government's perspective on the Article 7 (1) TEU procedure against Hungary." (2020), pp. 53-58.

[356] Sata, Robert. "Performing crisis to create your enemy: Europe vs. the EU in Hungarian populist discourse." Frontiers in Political Science 5 (2023): 1, 9.

[357] Pákozdi, Csaba, and Márton Sulyok. "'The Birth of a New Nation'? Mapping Progressive Approaches to the Nation-Concept Based on the Hungarian Fundamental Law." Miskolc Journal of International Law 8, no. 2 (2011): 54-55.

[358] Horváthy, Balázs ; Bartha, Ildikó, Hungary In: Vilaça, José Luís da Cruz; Piçarra, Nuno; Vasconcelos, Rita Leandro; Saavedra, Alberto (eds.) The External Dimension of the EU Policies: Horizontal Issues, Trade and Investment, Immigration and Asylum. : XXVIII FIDE Congress Lisbon/Estoril (23-26 May 2018). Congress Proceedings Vol. 3. Coimbra, Portugal : Almedina Brasil (2018): 546.

[359] Hermann Kurthen, "Germany at the Crossroads: National Identity and the Challenges of Immigration," International Migration Review 29, no. 4 (1995): 1.

policies and the chance of attitude towards asylum applicants, beneficiaries of international protection and other third-country nationals are studied during this part as well.

However, before the focus is given to the Refugee Crisis and its effects on immigration policies of the Germany, it is essential to have a brief background information on Germany and immigration. Over the decades, immigration has indeed played a transformative yet a very important role in German history in the recent decades. Initially it was seen as the guest workers' temporary solution that slowly started to change Germany into a country that is effectively an immigration country however, in reality the political elites refused to acknowledge it. Over the time, migrant labour greatly benefited the German economy. Especially in the post-World War II era reconstruction (migration of Turks and Polish people can be seen as a great example of this reconstruction efforts) and the resolution of many demographic problems.[360] But over the years integration and immigration policies brough tensions up in Germany both socially and politically which also reflected on the broader EU as well.

Furthermore, with the start of the Refugee Crisis in 2015, Germany's policies had been shaped through several perspectives. In the terms of securitization, Germany portrayed institutionalized control and exclusion through knowledge production, bureaucratic classifications and normative framings rather than direct exclusion of immigration like Hungary did. In short, immigrants faced categorization and othering within the administrative and legal structures in Germany that seemed neutral but reinforced structural inequalities and a dominant national identity.[361]

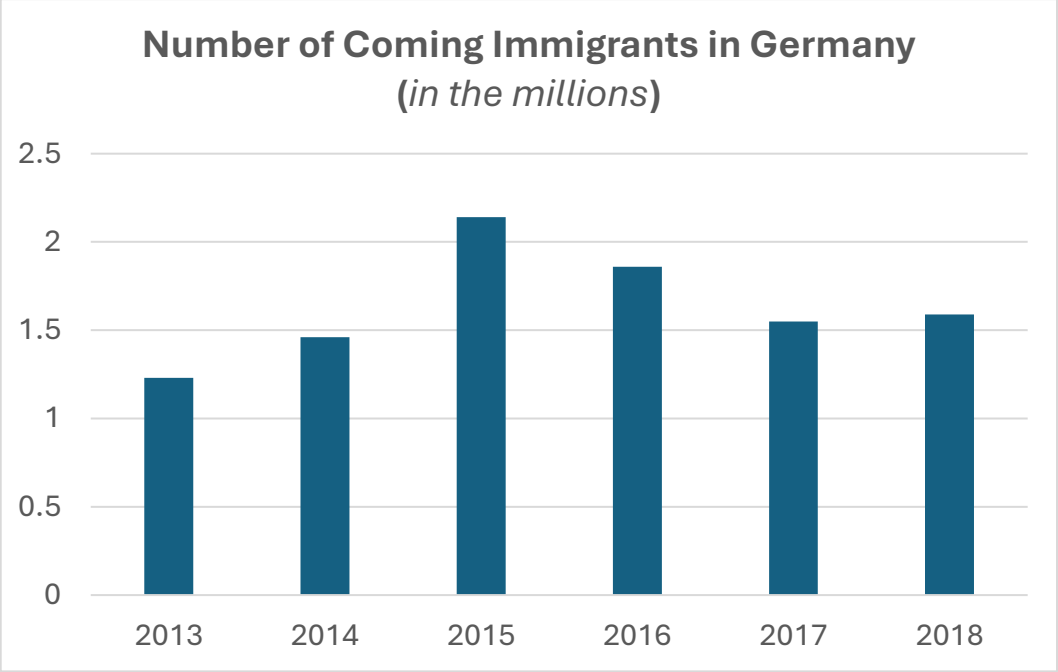
The events leading to that point of securitization originated mostly from the Arab Springs' effects and the outbreak of the Refugee Crisis of 2015. Caused by these crises the number of refugees reached millions back in 2013 and this started to affect the neighbouring countries.[362] From this point many of these refugees who also included Syrian and many other ethnic groups of migrants went through many migration routes to reach to Western

[360] Simon Green, "Germany: A Changing Country of Immigration," *German Politics* 22, no. 3 (2013): 333–334.

[361] Gülşah Özdemir and Bedri Şahin, "The Evaluation of Germany's Immigration Policies in Terms of Securitization," in International Immigration and Security Policies, ed. [Editor's Name if known] (Ankara: [Publisher Name], 2025): 90-91.

[362] "Number of Syrian Refugees Reaches 1 Million Mark," UNHCR, Accessed September 1, 2025, https://www.unhcr.org/news/stories/number-syrian-refugees-reaches-1-million-mark

European countries mainly Germany while passing through Serbia and Hungary.[363] The coming numbers of immigrants who entered Germany from 2013 to 2018 with a peak in 2015 can be observed below:



Graph 12: *Author's own compilation based on the numbers provided by Statista, Statista. (2023). Immigrant numbers in Germany 1991-2018. Source: Statista. https://www.statista.com/statistics/894223/immigrant-numbers-germany/*

The immigrants who entered Germany saw an unprecedented number of rises in 2015 which left Germany in a state of sociopolitical imbalance as well as the EU in general. From that point on policies and action of the German government started to change regarding asylum seekers and the immigrants. The discourse of German securitization process of immigration will be observed with a view of policy changes and the Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel's initiatives. Even a country like Germany who used open doors policies excluded and targeted migration between the lines of security and bureaucracy.

Initially, in 2015 with the rise of the Refugee Crises, Germany officially adopted an open door policy to accept the arriving large numbers of persons seeking international protection, particularly Syrian applicants most commonly connected with the Chancellor Angela Merkel's signature quote "*Wir schaffen das*" (we can manage this).[364] Starting in late August

[363] Maysa Abbas Ayoub, "Understanding Germany's Response to the 2015 Refugee Crisis," Review of Economics and Political Science 8, no. 6 (2023): 579.
[364] Zhongqi Niu, Wenlong Song, Yantong Lu, and Xingyu Bao, "Merkel Government's Refugee Policy: Under Bounded Rationality," Social Sciences 12, no. 3 (2023): 10.

2015, Germany quickly suspended the Dublin Regulation with the discovery of a truck which had 71 suffocated refugees from Syria and Iraq and accepted asylum seekers, who were predominantly from Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan.[365] With Chancellor Merkel's Open Door Policy or in German known as the "*Flüchtlinge Willkommen"* (Welcome to Refugees) had been presented with a combined humanitarian motive of responsibility originated from their past and a leading supportive initiatives such as housing and integration programs made Germany a target country for the third-country nationals who were displaced from their home countries.[366] The German Chancellor Merkel said in support of these policies, "*The right to political asylum has no limits on the number of asylum seekers …as a strong, economically healthy country we have the strength to do what is necessary*" to ensure Germany does its part in this crisis which reflected her commitment on the Open Doors Policy as well.[367] These initial actions and welcome policies were also being accepted by the German people at that time and received broader public support. Chancellor Merkel continued her desecuritization narratives and kept on looking positive towards immigration. She had been an outspoken supporter for the coming migrants and asylum seekers in the EU during her time.[368] She openly suggested and refused to follow a trend of branding immigration as a threat to the nation even further, it can be further observed below that she points towards these themes:

> "*It is important for us not to let ourselves be divided. Not by generation, and also not socially or into the categories of long-time residents and new residents…It is important for us not to follow those with coldness or hatred in their hearts who seek to claim German identity for themselves alone and to exclude others…self-assured and free, compassionate and open-minded."*[369]

Nonetheless, the integration of migrants and asylum seekers started to pose a challenge to the government and within the population, both number and security wise.[370]For example,

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[365] Daniel Drewski and Jürgen Gerhards, Framing Refugees: How the Admission of Refugees Is Debated in Six Countries across the World (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2024): 108.

[366]Annisa Nabilatul Khaira, Muhammad Yusra, and Rifki Dermawan, "Angela Merkel's Perception and Open Door Policy during the 2015 European Refugee Crisis," Jurnal Ilmiah Hubungan Internasional 18, no. 1 (2022): 1.

[367] "Germany: 'No Limit' to Refugees We'll Take In," Sky News, September 5, 2015, Accessed September 2, 2025, https://news.sky.com/story/germany-no-limit-to-refugees-well-take-in-10347281

[368] Joshua William Jose Salazar, "'De-/Securitizing' during a Time of Crisis: Analyzing Italy's and Germany's Narrative" (PhD diss., San Francisco State University, 2019): 68.

[369] Angela Merkel's New Year's address to Germany on December 31, 2015.

[370] Emanuele Albarosa and Benjamin Elsner, "Forced Migration and Social Cohesion: Evidence from the 2015/16 Mass Inflow in Germany," World Development 167 (2023): 15.

in late 2015 during the New Year's Eve celebrations hundreds of women were sexually assaulted by the individuals identified in the cited sources as suspects, some of whom had migration or asylum backgrounds and apparently entered the country through illegal means. which caused a backlash about the Open Doors Policy and created political anxieties.[371]Another example was the Würzburg train attack on 18th of July 2016. A 17-year-old refugee named Riaz Khan Ahmadzai who is from Afghanistan stabbed five people on and outside of the train around Würzburg and he was shot dead by the police soon after these attacks. He carried out these attacks on people because he was inspired by ISIS propaganda.[372]

These given examples of harassment and attacks made public to have doubts about ex-Chancellor Merkel's open-door policies and made certain parties to start making immigration a broader security issue within the country. From this point on it is evident that the trend of making immigration a security issue was already on the rise according to this research's perspective. These events had allowed certain right-wing parties to rise with the German politics especially the Alternative für Deutschland, AfD. This party used and gathered the support of the German people by presenting anti-Islamic, anti-refugee or anti-immigrant narratives.[373]

In short, how the AfD so quickly came to power can be summarized can be directly tied to the ex-Chancellor Merkel's Open Doors Policy and its socioeconomic burdens on the German people. These negative effects generated a great deal of opposition and a source for power to extract from the population by using populistic and security driven narratives. The coming of migrants and the rising anti-muslim attitudes with the country created a beneficial environment for right-winged parties such as AfD which as a result they had a significant rise to their votes since their creation back in 2013.[374] In origin, AfD was formed in 2013 as an anti-Eurozone party, but in the wake of the migration crisis of 2015, it mainly switched to an explicit anti-immigration and anti-Islam agenda, adopting rhetoric similar to that used

[371] "Gang Assaults on Women Shock Cologne," BBC News, January 5, 2016, Accessed September 2, 2025, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-35231046

[372] Eleanor Roberts, "ISIS Inspired Teen Who Attacked German Train Passengers, Official Says," CNN, July 20, 2016, Accessed September 3, 2025, https://edition.cnn.com/2016/07/20/world/germany-train-attack

[373] Shireen Mushtaq, Dua Hamid, and Javeria Sheikh, "Securitisation of the Refugee Issue in Germany: The Far Right Challenge to Government Policies," Malaysian Journal of International Relations (MJIR) 9, no. 1 (2021): 5.

[374] Khaira, Yusra, and Dermawan, "Angela Merkel's Perception and Open Door Policy," 1.

by PEGIDA (Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes)[375] designated movements. By political means, for instance securitizing migration, AfD brought forth the figure of culturally different immigrants, especially Muslims, as an existential threat to German identity, societal cohesion and security and hence constructed migration as a crisis needing extraordinary measures by intervention. Based on this frame, there was an electorate to whom AfD spoke that was already polarized against immigration, taking AfD from the ends of a tiny protest party to the third-largest party in the Bundestag in 2017. It was this growing backing that gained it even bigger deposits in the European Parliament elections in 2019, especially in Eastern Germany, thus consolidating its power on the national and European levels.[376]

Ex-Chancellor Merkel's criticism towards AfD's rise with anti-immigration narratives were open and direct. She said in one of the interviews, "*The AfD is a party that is not bringing together society and not offering the appropriate solutions for the problems, but it is stirring up prejudice and polarizing*."[377] Her criticism could be seen as a reflection of how the EU is and was behaving, the Union is fractured and looking for direct reactions to contain even within their own Member States' politics yet alone on the EU level as well.

Furthermore, with the turbulations within German politics and the populations' opinions towards immigrants and asylum, the country's policies also started to reflect that. By framing migration and the arrival of persons seeking international protection as security concerns, Germany's policies legitimized certain restrictive measures and legal barriers to create a social division within the country's politics and society. Residence rights, family reunification and welfare access were all examples of affected domains within the lives of different legal categories, particularly asylum applicants and beneficiaries of international protection.[378]For example, in 2016 Germany amended the Residence Act and suspended the Family Reunification until 2018. They defended this suspension as a necessary action to

[375] Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamization of the West (English translation).
[376] Özgür Ünal Eriş and Selcen Öner, "Securitization of Migration and the Rising Influence of Populist Radical Right Parties in European Politics," Ankara Avrupa Çalışmaları Dergisi 20, no. 1 (2021): 173-175.
[377] Reuters, "Merkel Slams Anti-Immigrant AfD, Defends Her Refugee Policy," Reuters, March 5, 2016, Accessed September 3, 2025, https://www.reuters.com/article/world/merkel-slams-anti-immigrant-afd-defends-her-refugee-policy-idUSKCN0W70WV/
[378] Ayelet Banai and Regina Kreide, "Securitization of Migration in Germany: The Ambivalences of Citizenship and Human Rights," Citizenship Studies 21, no. 8 (2017): 914-917.

ensure proper integration of family members who are entering the country.[379] Later on, Germany reinstated this policy however they put a limit on the family reunification of many beneficiaries of subsidiary protection. This policy fundamentally imposed a monthly visa cap of 1,000. This legally restricted access to family reunification for many refugees even though these people were legally recognized within the country, introducing an explicit exclusion through quantitative restraint tied to humanitarian criteria.[380]This policy clearly showed a step towards invisible barriers covered with legal bureaucracy against the asylum seekers. Based on the amendments and the changes of this policy it can be commented that the bureaucratic issues and selective access to family reunification creates a selective dual system that fundamentally limits practical realization. In the end another exclusionary dynamic within the German legal framework was made.

Moreover, before 2015, German policy was revolving around deterrence to avoid further inclusion and influx of refugees up until the crisis hit its highest points. Until 2013 with the third Merkel government, Germany's policies were revolving around that same system of deterrence to make Germany an unattractive destination for refugees. Such measures of examples were, prior to 2014, asylum applicants in Germany had to wait five years to be permitted to work. Other policies, such limiting resident rights (asylum seekers could not travel freely inside Germany), limiting access to health care, and lowering welfare payments, were also intended to deter refugees from traveling to Germany. Finally, there were no policies in place to integrate asylum seekers. It wasn't until 2013, when the third Merkel government implemented a number of extensive changes, that these deterrent policies began to shift.[381]

After 2015, however, these measures were changed and ex-Chancellor Merkel started to adopt a policy of integration. These changes brought a welcome culture within the country for the people who are seeking international protection and who were seeking a safe host. Nonetheless, this change of policy attitude still served a hidden exclusion and securitization of those people. After 2015, the legislation changes on the expansion of safe country lists and the before mentioned restrictions of family reunification created a certain clash of ideas

[379] "Family Reunification for Beneficiaries of International Protection: A Comparative Report," ECRE, February 2023, Accessed September 3, 2025, https://ecre.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/AIDA-Family-Reunification-February-2023.pdf

[380] v§ 36a of the German Residence Act (Aufenthaltsgesetz) – Family Reunification Caps for Beneficiaries of Subsidiary Protection.

[381] Barbara Laubenthal, "Refugees Welcome? Reforms of German Asylum Policies between 2013 and 2017 and Germany's Transformation into an Immigration Country," *German Politics* 28, no. 3 (2019): 416.

within the government. Welcoming TCNs who are qualified but at the same time structurally excluding them from the society is a pragmatic way of logic which is based on this study's opinion can be linked to securitization.[382]

There are also other policy packages to limit asylum applications and fast track the applications. This law was titled as Gesetz zur Einführung beschleunigter Asylverfahren (Law for the Introduction of Accelerated Asylum Procedures), popularly known as Asylpaket II.[383] This law was introduced on March 16, 2016 and came into force on March 17, 2016, as published in the Federal Law Gazette. This law was introduced to tighten the asylum policies but also to balance out the humanitarian expectations, however this decision drew several criticisms. The purpose of this law was to fast track and accelerate the asylum procedures of certain groups (e.g. from safe countries) who are applying. According to this law, accelerated means that the Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (Federal Office for Migration and Refugees or in short BAMF) could decide on the people's application results within a week and during this week these people should live in the special reception centres. The special reception centres were a new word to describe the new kind of accommodation in which this accelerated procedure was taking place. The people who were from these safe countries were housed in these new accommodations during the process. However, if the BAMF for any reason decides to refuse the applications of these people who were in those special reception centres in a matter of a week or maybe two, the applicant would be removed from the centre and deported if decided in short.[384]

Another example of similarly implemented law is the Orderly Return Law (Geordnete-Rückkehr-Gesetz) which also was titled as the Second Act to Improve the Enforcement of the Obligation to Leave the Country (Zweites Gesetz zur besseren Durchsetzung der Ausreisepflicht). This law was part of a migration package that was adopted by Germany back in 2019.[385] Certain key aspects of this law was to strengthen the cooperation requirements of the individuals who were required to get their identification documents from their countries of origins and if they failed to receive their documents they might have become the persons with unverified identities which blocked them from getting employed

[382] Réka Friedery, "The Development of the German Immigration Policy after 2015: A Balancing Act between Populism and EU Policy," *Slovak Yearbook of European Union Law* 1 (2021): 75-76.
[383] Asylum Package II: Section 30a of the Asylum Act.
[384] *Asylum Package II — What Does It Mean for Refugees and Their Supporters?* (Flüchtlingsrat Mecklenburg-Vorpommern), Accessed September 4, 2025, https://www.fluechtlingsrat-mv.de/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Information_Asylpaket-2_englisch.pdf
[385] Bundesgesetzblatt Jahrgang 2019 Teil I Nr. 31, ausgegeben am 20.08.2019, Seite 1294.

and even to get their legal residencies.[386]Another aspect was the extension of detention powers, this law essentially gave the police and other authorities gave more power to detain and enforce people who were mostly unable to provide their identification documents. In addition, the area where the detention of deportation candidates was also expanded, this addition also allowed authorities to detain certain third-country nationals, including applicants for international protection who were also in their asylum application periods as well. Also, people who were deemed flight risk could be detained even before their deportation.[387]A significant part of this law was the increased access for the authorities; these authorities were basically allowed to enter homes without a preapproval of the court to enforce deportation if they deemed necessary.[388] The removal of a crucial judicial decision making to force someone to leave their houses or their place of residence by force brings out a certain question whether Germany's political behaviour breaches human rights just because of perceived security needs. This severance of judicial steps puts yet another barrier affecting particular categories of TCNs, especially applicants for international protection and persons subject to transfer or return procedures away from German citizens. These social or legal exclusions makes this thesis question whatever the German politics started to stray from their core ideals at the start of their open-door policies to a more security centric ones.

Also, in 2018, in an effort to regain control over secondary movements at the German-Austrian border, Germany entered into a series of bilateral administrative arrangements with Spain and Greece-the so-called Seehofer Deals. While in the usual legislative sense such instruments would be legislation, the arrangements under discussion were contracts of executive nature (Verwaltungsabkommen) that the Federal Ministry of the Interior negotiated and on which there was no need for ratification by the Bundestag. Their legal basis was Article 36 of the Dublin III Regulation, which bars Member States from entering into "practical arrangements" for facilitating implementation of Dublin procedures.[389] The effect of these arrangements was to empower German border authorities to deny entry and

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[386] *7.13 Return of Former Applicants,"* European Union Agency for Asylum, in *Asylum Report 2020*, Accessed September 4, 2025, https://euaa.europa.eu/asylum-report-2020/713-return-former-applicants

[387] S. Sanderson, "German Deportation Law Fails to Yield Results amid Pandemic," InfoMigrants, August 21, 2020, Accessed September 4, 2025, https://www.infomigrants.net/fr/post/26782/german-deportation-law-fails-to-yield-results-amid-pandemic

[388]Entwurf eines Zweiten Gesetzes zur besseren Durchsetzung der Ausreisepflicht (Geordnete-Rückkehr-Gesetz), BGBl. I 2019, S. 1294, 1305 (§ 58 Abs. 5 AufenthG).

[389] Regulation (EU) No. 604/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 establishing the criteria and mechanisms for determining the Member State responsible for examining an application for international protection (Dublin III Regulation), OJ L 180/31, 29.6.2013, Art. 36.

return asylum seekers within 48 hours whenever they had their fingerprints taken in EURODAC in Spain or Greece, thus creating for all practical purposes a "*mini-Dublin*" procedure on the German-Austrian border.[390] In return, Germany committed to expedite family reunification under Dublin from Greece. Despite their formal limitations, these agreements symbolized a real sea-change towards securitization in the management of migration, as they reinstated quasi-permanent internal borders.[391]

Moreover, in 2018, the German government further established the AnkER Zentrums (Ankunfts, Entscheidungs und Rückführungszentren), centralized reception facilities meant to speed up asylum procedures and removals/deportations but in practice isolating applicants, limiting their access to independent legal and social support and focusing on containment rather than integration. Finally, the provisions of the Asylbewerberleistungsgesetz (Asylum Seekers' Benefits Act) were tightened to allow the extension of reduced-scale benefits to an asylum seeker for up to 18 months and to restrict healthcare coverage to emergency treatment, thus placing asylum seekers in a state of prolonged dependency and curtailed social rights.[392] These measures together show how securitization has been increasingly administered in Germany through administrative and legal hurdles that show asylum seekers not as future residents but rather as an issue of control, cost containment and removal.[393] The given benefits and their limits signal a broader problem of institutionalizing the aids as a tool of migration control, fundamentally an essential component in the process to normalize the exclusion and drawing a line between the population and the asylum seekers. To this thesis' perspective this institutionalization of benefits is a sinister way of controlling the asylum seekers.

In connection with all these laws and policies going into action reflected the rise of certain political parties, especially the above-mentioned AfD during this subchapter. Of course, the rise of these parties did not directly affect the legislative process of the government or the adopted policies, however their rise certainly mirrored the actions taken. Furthermore, AfD did not approve or pass new legislation on migration or asylum, but it certainly altered and

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[390] Wissenschaftliche Dienste des Deutschen Bundestages, WD 3-3000-147/18, "Die Vereinbarungen mit Spanien und Griechenland zur Rücküberstellung von Asylbewerbern," 2018.

[391] ECCHR, "H.T. v. Germany and Greece, Joint Third Party Intervention," October 2020.

[392] Asylbewerberleistungsgesetz (AsylbLG), BGBl. I 1993, S. 1074, as amended by Gesetz zur Änderung des AsylbLG, BGBl. I 2019, S. 1290 (extension of reduced benefits to 18 months and limitation of healthcare coverage).

[393] "Arrival Centres and AnkER Facilities," BAMF (Federal Office for Migration and Refugees), Accessed September 5, 2025, https://www.bamf.de/EN/Themen/AsylFluechtlingsschutz/Ankunftszentren/ankunftszentren-node.html

created a certain political environment in which those taken laws and actions were debated. With no positions on direct governing powers, a single party could not influence the policy outcomes through parliamentary means; instead, the party's main impact would have been the redefining migration or asylum seekers as an existential security threat in the eyes of the audience which in this case entailed both the population and the political area in Germany. This shift in discourse forced the more mainstream parties, especially the CDU/CSU (the Christian Democratic Union of Germany and the Christian Social Union in Bavaria[394]), to harden their migration stance as a means of containing the AfD's electoral appeal in the eyes of the people. Thus, restrictive reforms or those new legislations came not out of AfD's legislative agency or lobbying but out of the political atmosphere it had helped to create, wherein securitization rhetorics were becoming more and more normalized while the governing parties were competing in demonstrating the hardest stance on migration.[395] The main idea here is that even though Merkel's recent government stayed in power up until 2018 with its open doors policies and continued to welcome and receive applicants for international protection and other relevant TCNs through legally distinct channels, even Germany's political habitat started to change on a more security centric area.

In summary, within a securitization framework even after the migration surge of 2015, Germany continued to follow a human rights-based EU centric legal order for the coming different categories of third-country nationals, particularly asylum applicants, beneficiaries of international protection and persons subject to return procedures. The German government especially under the ex-Chancellor Merkel's leadership balanced a humanitarian reception stance with a gradual tightening of the asylum process within the country. Over time this process and the totality of these policies transformed into a more systematic strategy of bureaucratic containment with all the examples mentioned above during this subchapter. Although the rise of right winged parties had been observed and became more popular within the population, Germany still tries to balance the rights of the migrants while drawing a barrier. If one looks at the trajectory in its entirety, securitization in Germany has not proceeded through suspension of rights or open defiance of EU obligations but through embedding control logics into ordinary legal and administrative processes: normalizing restrictive ways to formally uphold constitutional and EU

[394] Unofficially the Union parties in Germany or also known as the Union.

[395] Asli Ilgit and Audie Klotz, "Refugee Rights or Refugees as Threats? Germany's New Asylum Policy," The British Journal of Politics and International Relations 20, no. 3 (2018): 618.

commitments to asylum. So, to say, Germany's way of securitization of immigration resembles a bureaucratic net that separates the population while pretending to uphold the EU values and human rights, the gradual layers that confine migration and persons who are seeking international protection managed a system of exclusion in the end.

10.3. Between Germany and Hungary and their reflection on the broader EU.

Germany and Hungary, these two Member States of the EU represents the different ends of the spectrum of the securitization of immigration within the Union. Understanding their stances over immigration especially after 2015 makes certain valid points regarding the broader EU's overall collective securitization process. Differentiating and pointing towards their policies and actions according to this thesis could make the securitization of immigration on the EU level be more transparent in general. During this part of the thesis the main part was to provide the most relevant and solid policies, actions and political directions of these two different countries to gather a solid framework to reflect on.

Moreover, this observed division between Germany and Hungary on migration issues perhaps constitutes a certain aspect of an older example in Europe between solidarity and sovereignty. In the past, Germany, even with presenting a tightened asylum regime, has generally acted within the logic of EU solidarity by promoting mechanisms for shared responsibility and within the framework of the Dublin state-centred model of burden-sharing, which it was seen after the 2015 with ex-Chancellor Merkel promoting the shared quota strategy (emergency relocation program) as well.[396] This model would thus emphasize an inter-state cooperation, but it is based on the presumption that Member States have to aid each other in handling asylum flows, even if this so-called solidarity is sometimes expressed in securitized and exclusionary terms. Hungary, on the other hand, identified itself so much with sovereignty as to reject relocation schemes outright and clung to an expression of responsibility-sharing as an infringement upon national control. Essentially, this translated solidarity as a threat to sovereignty, whereas Germany treats sovereignty as negotiable via mechanisms of EU solidarity.[397] The spectrum below illustrates how Hungary and Germany

[396] *"Relocation: EU Solidarity in Practice,"* European Commission, Accessed September 5, 2025, https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/migration-management/relocation-eu-solidarity-practice_en

[397] Valsamis Mitsilegas, "Humanizing Solidarity in European Refugee Law: The Promise of Mutual Recognition," Maastricht Journal of European and Comparative Law 24, no. 5 (2017): 727.

separated from each other while putting EU's values in a clash which based on this thesis prepares a security centric framework on the EU level.

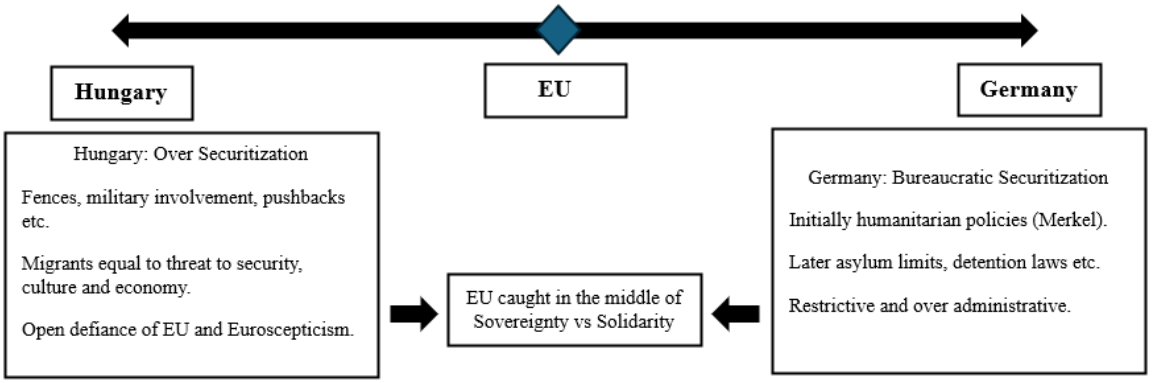

Figure 3: *Author's own compilation based on the author's own research and ideas.*

Based on the figure above, Hungary embodies their approach of the securitization of immigration as an over securitization of immigration. Hungary frames migration and including the arrival of persons seeking international protection, as an existential threat to sovereignty, culture and identity through border fences, the criminalization of irregular migration under various pretexts, policies and outright defiance of the EU law as it was mentioned before during this study; Germany however takes on a different path and adopts the bureaucratic securitization of control, which as a result it makes legal and administrative restrictions on control while maintaining formal adherence to EU frameworks while drawing barriers between the resident population and different categories of arriving TCNs, particularly applicants for international protection. in general. At the EU level, this divide crystalizes as the dilemma of burden sharing in solidarity versus exclusion based upon sovereignty and as a result shapes the securitization of the Union into a chaos, clash-ridden compromise, sitting somewhere in between cooperative mechanisms on the one hand and further strengthening of external and internal border controls on the other.

Furthermore, by visualizing a table of the taken actions, policies and procedures by these two Member States, demonstrates that it is observed that securitization of immigration at the EU level proceeds by two intertwined models of securitization, an open defiance challenging EU norm of asylum, and mobilizing its East-West bloc (e.g., Visegrád resistance to quotas) versus a more rule bounded paper and bureaucracy barriers to exclude the immigrants while

keeping an eye out for the EU's norms.[398] Below is the table that demonstrates all the relevant elements between Germany and Hungary while how they reflect the EU's securitization process' aspect on immigration.

Aspects	Hungary	Germany	Reflection on the EU
Overall Stance	Over Securitization stance, migration is presented as a threat and a danger for both culture and society.	Bureaucratic Securitization, initially a humanitarian stance with open doors policies.	Reveals internal fractures in EU migration/security framework (Solidarity vs Sovereignty).
Securitizing Actors	Viktor Orbán (Fidesz) basically a top-down securitization using strong speech acts, fearmongering and Euroscepticism.	Angela Merkel, humanitarian at first, however later pressured by the rising right wing to adopt a more security centric approach through bureaucracy.	Highlights the role of leaders in shaping migration discourse; clashes between pro-EU solidarity and nationalist resistance.
Speech Acts and Rhetoric	Migrants are a threat, poison, danger to Christian culture and EU values; constant Us vs. Them framing.	Merkel emphasized unity, compassion, openness; AfD and right-wing discourses later reframed migration as a cultural/security threat to country.	Demonstrates how securitization narratives polarize public opinion across EU Member States.
Taken Policies and Action	Physical barriers: fences at Serbian and Croatian borders; military used for border control; strict asylum laws (e.g. pushbacks, Serbia as safe country).	Open doors in 2015 that later turned into restrictive laws: family reunification limits, accelerated asylum procedures, Orderly Return Law, AnkER centers.	Hungary: direct clash with EU values and asylum directives. Germany: compliance with EU law but embedding restrictions bureaucratically that pushed the EU to adopt stricter strategies.
Reflection on the EU Norms and Values	Direct defiance to EU: Eurosceptic, stating EU asylum system as external	Formally upholds EU asylum law but gradually normalizes restrictions through legal/administrative	Adoption of stricter security frames between these two models of securitization

[398] Givi Gigitashvili and Katarzyna W. Sidło, "Merchants of Fear: Discursive Securitization of the Refugee Crisis in the Visegrad Group Countries," EuroMesco Policy Brief no. 89 (2019): 2-6.

	threat to sovereignty.	frameworks and barriers.	processes, fundamentally a general reflection.
Reflection on the Population	Rise of the Right Wing and security concerns within the population.	Rise of the Right Wing and security concerns within the population.	EU values weakening within the Member States and their populations.
Security Framing	Direct, visible securitization: fences, emergency laws, militarized border, open hostility to migrants.	Indirect, institutional securitization: bureaucratic exclusions (residency limits, welfare restrictions, detention laws).	The EU faces inconsistent security logics: fortress borders vs. administrative barriers.
Impact on the EU	Rising fractures and indifferent alliances.	Symbol of EU solidarity, but internal backlash empowered Eurosceptic and right-wing parties.	Dual pressure weakens the EU's cohesion and balance; migration policy becomes a battleground for sovereignty vs. solidarity.

Table 4: *Author's own compilation based on the author's research and data gathered.*

The table above fundamentally demonstrates the comparison between Germany and Hungary is analytically important and essential to make securitization on immigration more transparent because it captures the EU's core rupture and intent. By dividing the EU through these Member States' paths of policies on immigration through solidarity versus sovereignty as it institutionalizes a hybrid securitization while constituting an externalization, emergency governance and reframing asylum from a rights-based commitment into a fragmented risk management. As from Germany's approach of bureaucratic securitization of immigration, they formalize and translate a way of control that reflects the EU's intent through legal order and administrative barriers. These formalizations and policies are not just reflected through legal order but also seen through political actors' and areas' gradual transformations as well as it was seen through the past chapters and the table above.

On the other hand, Hungary's approach of over securitization of immigration makes a framework of exceptional measures and openly challenges EU's responsibility sharing and distancing supranational obligations. Hungary makes security centric policies a model

within the EU while putting sovereignty as a priority. This posture of Hungary forces the Union to accommodate sovereigntist claims in order to maintain consensus which as a result shifting the overall EU towards a more securitized paradigm that prioritizes border defence and deterrence over protection and solidarity as it was shown before during this thesis with FRONTEX, EES or ETIAS. Moreover, Hungary's stance on immigration also makes other Member States to recalibrate and adjust their policies in order to preserve cohesion and unity which the result has been a Union increasingly comfortable with framing migration primarily as a matter of control, security and risk management in general.

In essence, Hungary's sovereigntist exclusion and Germany's bureaucratic containment do more than mark out diverging national policy paths which they show how securitization is constructed and reinforced on the EU level. The Union's asylum and security framework evidently prioritizes control, deterrence, and externalization. This securitized logic is both shaped by and projected back onto the Member States. Germany interprets and brands this process as legal and bureaucratic restrictions with laid barriers in the language of solidarity, while Hungary frames it through defiance and claims of sovereignty. Together, these processes and policies show that the EU securitization of immigration in core fundamentally is a two-way process, basically, it develops through Member States' practices and disciplines them at the same time. The result is a collective securitization framework where security concerns dominate over humanitarian duties.

Before the concluding marks of this overall chapter, below part will demonstrate the anonymous face to face interviews (two yes or no questionnaire) combined within a table self-made by the author to observe the speech acts against immigration present within the EU, Hungary and Germany in general, the table mentioned can be seen below:

1. Do you perceive immigration to be framed as a security threat in political or public speech within the European Union?	**Yes:** 27	**No:** 9
2. Have you personally noticed negative or fear-based language about immigrants in public or political discourse in Hungary?	**Yes:** 13	**No:** 8
3. Have you personally noticed negative or fear-based language about immigrants in public or political discourse in Germany?	**Yes:** 11	**No:** 3

Table 5: *Author's own compilation based on anonymous face to face yes or no questionnaire to determine or to at least perceive the speech act within the EU, Hungary or Germany in general.*

The questionnaire presented above was conducted with 36 people in total which included academics and civilians who reside within the broader EU to at least have an idea to if speech act is present or in a sense reaching to these people regarding the immigration issue at hand. The author aimed to conduct these questions in a manner of direct contact to get more sincere answers and observe the interviewees' political and emotional responses, since securitization or speech acts in a sense resonate within the emotions of people.[399] It should be noted that some of these people did not want to answer certain questions regarding the targeted Questions of 2 and 3 because some of these people had no interest or specific idea about what happened in those respectful countries, however they all answered Question 1 since it was about the EU in general. Overall, these responses also provide further insight on people's reactions and how they felt through simple questions regarding security, immigration and the EU's effects combined. The author of this study compiled the first question specifically on purpose to understand if people of the EU directly perceive immigration as a threat. Since the nature of these questions are also political and can be private, author decided to keep this questionnaire anonymous and fast tracked. The second and third questions were more targeted since the author sought to find people in both Hungary and Germany (or who lived in both for a time) to determine their understanding of fear against immigration and thus its securitized discourse. Of course, this questionnaire can't give a determinate answer to the subject at hand since the focus group's number is limited but it can provide us with an idea. Furthermore, the given questionnaire is presented as an exploratory and illustrative component, and not as a source of representative empirical data overall. It was intended to point toward for initial intuitions and how immigration might be perceived and discussed in public and political/security discourses, and to serve as a contextual orientation device for the qualitative analysis that follows in detail. Due to the limited number of responses, the context of the study, the non-probability nature of response selection, and the lack of demographic balancing and sampling controls, the data cannot be considered representative of public opinion in the EU, Hungary, or Germany, just an idea for the reader to imagine the overall situation on what is happening. As such, the data from the questionnaire is presented descriptively and is intended only to suggest possible tendencies of perception among respondents and is not generalizable or subject to

[399] Vuori, Juha A. "Securitization as a context-changing speech act." Cooperation and Conflict (2025): 1069.

population-level inference. On the empirical level, the questionnaire serves as a supplementary component that assists in motivating the research problems of this dissertation and triangulating the interpretive reading of the discourse material on a minimal level.

As a conclusion, dissecting the differences and similarities of these two countries that share a common dilemma and comparing them through their responses puts them in a contrasting yet complementary position within the EU's securitization landscape. Their stances together reveal the Union's migration governance and how it reflects on the individual Member States all together. The comparison and analysis supports that the EU's collective securitization approach as parts on the different sides of the spectrum in a sense of speaking.

11.Conclusion

In conclusion, this study observed and researched the multilayered effects of the 2015 Refugee Crisis while dissecting various tools of securitization, policy tools, interviews, reports, regulations and budgetary documents. This thesis sets out to make securitization of immigration on the EU level transparent and in some sense pointable to show not only that it occurred or processed, but also how it was built over the years, signalled, evolved and sustained across texts, policies, regulations and practices. Using the mixed methods that were explained throughout this dissertation, this study made use of CDA approach over legal, institutional and political languages combined with the quantitative indicators, graphics, maps, statistics, illustrations, pictures and budgetary documents to synthesize the findings and outline their implications and limits.

Furthermore, comparing Germany and Hungary's approach of immigration specifically after 2015 both reflected and contributed to the EU's reaction and securitization of immigration. Essentially, the study demonstrated how each of these countries both reflected and represented the Union's collective securitization over immigration. While Germany's bureaucratic approach over securitization of immigration with legal boundaries reflected the EU templates of similar approaches, Hungary's view of immigration presented a hardened procedure through border strengthening and harsh policies reinforced the Union's emphasis on external border controls.

Moreover, all the findings and presentations during this dissertation were articulated to fit into the illustrated securitization process during this study. Categorizing the explained

components of securitization through following the framing of immigrants over the evolving collective securitization process provided the author a concrete method to pinpoint securitization on the EU level. Observing the measures under the EU security frame also provided this study with another perspective on how immigration issues were securitized and evolved into something much more than it is already. Focusing on FRONTEX, EES or ETIAS (conditions that facilitates the process and enables further framing of immigration) with their effects or expected effects made the study to construct a presentation for the transparent securitization process for the author.

Below is the table presenting the studied research questions and the empirical findings connected to the answers to these questions:

Research Questions	**Main Empirical Findings**	**How the findings answer the question**
1. What are the tools and policies of the securitization of immigration at the EU level?	The analysis identified FRONTEX, ETIAS, the Entry/Exit System, biometric databases, surveillance mechanisms, risk analysis, information-sharing systems, external border controls, return policies, and cooperation with third countries as the main instruments of securitization.	These overall findings demonstrate that EU's securitization process is based on a combination of institutional, legal, administrative, and technological tools. It is therefore not limited to one policy or institution but operates as an interconnected system of migration control.

2. How have these policies and tools been adapted to the securitization process at the EU level?	The empirical analysis showed that instruments originally designed for border coordination and migration administration have gradually acquired broader security functions. FRONTEX has gained stronger operational, surveillance, risk-analysis, and return responsibilities, while ETIAS and the EES enable pre-entry screening, biometric registration, and the identification of potential risks. Furthermore, gradual shift of EU's migration policies and agendas reflects an overreaction towards third country nationals and asylum seekers with constant changes.	The findings indicate that the EU migration tools have been adapted from reactive border-management instruments into preventive and data-driven security mechanisms. Measures initially introduced in response to migration pressures have become normalized within everyday EU governance.
3. How is securitization rhetoric used by the EU in the context of immigration and border control, and how does this rhetoric shape perceptions of immigration and migrants?	The Critical Discourse Analysis identified recurring terms such as crisis, risk, threat, burden, security and irregular flows within the EU rhetoric. Third country nationals and asylum seekers were frequently represented as collective security concerns rather than as individuals with rights. Hungary used more explicit threat-based rhetoric, while Germany relied more on humanitarian, administrative (bureaucratic securitization), and managerial language combined with security concerns.	These findings demonstrate that securitization rhetoric frames immigration primarily as a security and border-management problem. This representation can shape public perceptions by associating migrants with instability, danger, and pressure, while also legitimizing stricter border controls, surveillance, screening, and return measures.

Table 6: *Author's own compilation based on the conducted study during this thesis and the general research of the author.*

Furthermore, author suggests based on the findings that these general results above in connection with their respective research questions makes securitization process on the EU level more transparent and below is the list that might indicate the empirical findings even more clearly as summary:

- FRONTEX's gradual evolution had been observed through the years over (7€ million to almost 1€ billion in 2015) its exponential budget increase, budget division and transformation to an almost armed force.
- Gradual change of EU Migration Policies towards a more security-oriented approach rather than a humanitarian one. Reflected in documents, speeches and adopted regulation observed through CDA method both on supranational and national levels.
- Through observation and analysis of EES and ETIAS's mechanisms and the way they were being built while connecting the results of observations to the securitization components, pointed towards a securitized intention. Essentially, observed intended and planned operational mechanisms of EES and ETIAS fits into the assessed securitization intent.
- The comparison conducted in this dissertation shows that Hungary reinforced EU level securitization primarily through exclusionary rhetoric, border-control measures and the construction of immigration as an existential threat, essentially a direct over securitization. Whereas Germany contributed through a more managerial approach centred on regulation, surveillance and controlled admission which is a bureaucratic securitization approach. Despite these differences, both approaches helped consolidate the treatment of immigration at the EU level as a security issue requiring enhanced monitoring, restriction and institutional control.
- The increase in the number of migration and asylum indicators across the observed periods (especially the studied statistical sharp rise of 2015) points to a growing security-oriented intent within the EU, potentially indicating an ongoing process of securitization to counter these numbers for *intended outcomes*.
- Analysis of this study suggests, all the observed and studied tools of securitization connected to the given visualization of securitization process built by the author either on theory or on substantial levels, such as FRONTEX facilitating a continues threat narratives to create a security driven environment on the EU level.

There are also recommendations for the study at hand to further this topic which would benefit not just the EU but the whole scholastic area as well. Author's recommendations for future research and academics are:

- Studying technology's role by taking AI, algorithmic/risk-profiling systems at borders for bias, accountability and rights impacts in the centre.

- Taking a more concrete perspective of migrants' experiences through qualitative interviews to examine how EU securitization shapes routes, risks and lived experiences.
- Extending the compared countries to make it more generalized to further pinpoint the collective securitization pattern in the EU (such as Italy and Poland).

At the end, understanding and comprehending the effects of the Refugee Crisis on the EU is essential for not just any country but even for individuals. Identifying the tools of the securitization on the EU level through categorizing them over this thesis' illustrated components and process provided us a possibility for a framework. Later on, this framework essentially tries to make a solid connection between the theoretical and practical reality of the events that are unfolding, especially after 2015. This point had been the vital point of this dissertation and the main purpose, a means of identifying and pointing out securitization of immigration had been happening on the EU level through collective means. Furthermore, after identifying the tools of the process answering and connecting how these tools had been adapted and evolved in to being a securitization tools through examples such as FRONTEX, EES or ETIAS with the EU's taken actions/policies pointed out and got in line with the actors and their intended outcomes.

Taken together as a summary, in securitization terms post-2015 showed that there was a security-oriented logic being applied to migration. The EU continuously showed that migration was constructed as a security threat to the referent objects of the EU in general which were order, internal and external security as it was explained throughout this thesis.[400] This threat to referent objects led to the acceptance of extraordinary measures by key audiences (Council, Parliament, national actors, agencies, institutions and increasingly the population of the EU as a whole). The author's framework of research questions in line makes securitization visible by aligning certain aspects such as speech acts (speeches, official press releases, language of the policies/regulations towards immigration and quotes of securitizing actors) later the tools that facilitated the condition of the process while making sure framing kept on being operationalized.

[400] Gkliati, Mariana. "Let's Call It What It Is: Hybrid Threats and Instrumentalisation as the Evolution of Securitisation in Migration Management." *European Papers-A Journal on Law and Integration* 2023, no. 2 (2023): 577.

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