What do *they* threaten? Towards an Explanation of the Selection of Different Referent Objects during Securitization

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Abstract

Securitization is the claim that an object is threatened and in need of protection. However, previous studies do not elaborate how decision-makers choose an object in need of protection. Gramsci's concepts of hegemony, historic bloc and war of position take the background of the securitizing actor into account. A hegemon needs to accommodate different allies and ruled groups and needs to fulfil its responsibilities as a hegemon which constrains the choice of referent objects. Challengers can be more provocative in framing a referent object as they have nothing to lose. A sociological discourse analysis of the AfD and the CSU in the discussion on the securitization of migration reveals that both parties securitize different referent objects, namely culture and identity or physical security and the welfare state. The CSU is a hegemon with many allies, coalition partners, and hegemonic responsibilities which implies a need for compromises to keep its position. CSU politicians thus carefully formulate physical security and the welfare state as referent objects in line with its governmental responsibilities and its allies. The AfD is a challenger without allies to lose and, therefore, challenges the hegemon more provocatively in a war of position by referring to culture and identity as a referent object. This reveals that the background and the identity of the securitizing actor matter for securitization processes.

1. Introduction

Immigration in liberal democracies, environmental degradation, weapons of mass destruction, hunger, economic crises, political extremism – these are examples of potential security threats. When politicians frame one of these issues or any other issue as a threat to the security of a state or a society and convince their electorate to accept this interpretation, they move the issue at hand beyond politics. The social construction of a development as a security problem is thus an extreme form of politicization: the politician gains control over the issue and its interpretation (Buzan, Wæver & De Wilde 1998, 23-24) and can use it as a strategy in the political game, for example to win support or to distract from other problems.

The legitimacy and justifiability of different solutions to the security problem depend on the definition, construction and framing of the security problem (Edelman 1988). These differences include, for example, the legitimate authority to solve the problem or ways of financing a solution. These costs are not necessarily material, such as tax raises, but can also be immaterial, such as a loss of privacy due to new surveillance laws. For these reasons, it is important to understand why actors construct and prioritise security threats and the objects they threaten differently.

One of the most influential theoretical frameworks capturing the process how an issue moves to the security sector is the securitization theory of the Copenhagen School. Securitization theory received scholarly attention as it provides an understanding of the securitization of an issue, what the consequences thereof are and illuminates many case studies on for example migration or global warming (Wæver 2008). However, securitization theory attracted criticism for being imprecise about alternative voices in the field under consideration, the identity of securitizing actors, the audience of the securitizing move or opponents (Balzacq 2005; Bourbeau 2011). More importantly, securitization theory does not shed light on how a referent object is chosen, as Chapter 2 demonstrates, although the consequences of securitization partly depend on this choice. The research question following from this is:

Why are some referent objects prioritised over others in the securitization process?

The problem of securitization theory is that it does not specify the identity of the securitizing actor and his/her background or ideology. Especially this broader context may lead to gaining important insights about the prioritization of referent objects in the process of securitization. Gramsci's interrelated concepts of hegemony, war of position and historic bloc, which have been influential in political theory, may provide one possible answer to this question. A hegemon needs to accommodate different allies and ruled groups who support hegemonic ideas and has responsibilities bound to its position. These alliances, responsibilities and the interest of staying a hegemon influence the choice of the referent object. Non-hegemons can be more provocative to challenge the hegemony in a war of position as they have nothing to lose. Ideology and ideological differences function as an underlying factor delimiting the range of justifiable and credible referent objects by providing a moral framework.

Alternative explanations may involve the context within which a party operates, *id est* the audience they target to win as many votes as possible. However, this is unlikely if both parties target overlapping parts of the electorate. Furthermore, a party's homeland may have suffered from extraordinary events shifting the focus towards a specific referent object. An example of this is Bavaria which suffered from two terrorist attacks by IS-sympathizers in summer 2016 [137].[1] However, such extraordinary developments usually spark debates and attract attention from all over the country, making them an unlikely explanation for a specific referent object in Bavaria.

This thesis proceeds in five sections. The second chapter reviews the current state of the literature and its lack of attention on how a referent object is chosen, the third explains the relevance of Gramsci's main concepts of hegemony, war of position and historic bloc. The fourth chapter lays out the cases of the AfD and CSU and sociological discourse analysis as a method of analysis. The fifth chapter analyses how both parties securitize migration, namely in terms of identity and in terms of state security. The sixth chapter analyses the parties' positions in the historic bloc as a challenger and a hegemon, and their nationalist-conservative and Christian-conservative ideologies in relation to the securitization of migration. Chapter seven discusses the findings and concludes that Gramsci's historic bloc can explain the different prioritization of referent objects.

2. The Shortcomings of Securitization Theory

Securitization is a claim that an object is threatened and in need of protection (Buzan, Wæver & De Wilde 1998, 23-24). This is called a securitizing move. The existential threat is the (potentially) harmful object; the referent object is the object under threat (Buzan, Wæver & De Wilde 1998, 36). A claim for the protection of a referent object justifies extraordinary measures, resources, attention and legislation to protect it (Buzan, Wæver & De Wilde 1998, 24; Den Boer 2011, 103). Securitization takes an issue beyond day-to-day politics and elevates it to a special realm above normal politics (Wæver 1995, 53).

[1] The number in brackets indicates the primary resource listed in the appendix. P. indicates the page number of the resource if applicable.

To do so, a securitizing actor stages an existential threat to a referent object in a speech act (Wæver 1995, 98). This speech act has a specific rhetorical structure distinguishing it from other forms of politicization: it involves the aspect of survival of the referent object, a supreme priority of action and existential issues (Buzan, Wæver & De Wilde 1998, 26). This speech act needs to convince the audience to accept the existential threat and the referent object as such. Otherwise securitization fails. Securitization thus involves the social construction of a threat and is intersubjective (Buzan, Wæver & De Wilde 1998, 25) – objective indicators for a threat and a referent object do not exist (Buzan, Wæver & De Wilde 1998, 30).

This theory has been applied to state security in the first place. Accordingly, political and military sectors dominated most analyses (Wæver 1993, 17; Wæver 2008, 581). More recently, analyses cover other sectors like environment, economy and societal security (Wæver 2008, 581). "Societal security is defined as *the defence of an identity* against a perceived threat, or more precisely, *the defence of a community against a perceived threat to its identity*" (Wæver 2008, 581, emphasis in original). Identity serves as an organizing force of society and as a basis of identification for individual community members. Political organizations are entangled with these identities but are distinct (Wæver 2008, 582). Therefore, state and societal boundaries generate different logics of securitization.

In a safe environment, communities can reproduce and sustain their identity independent from the state (Wæver 2008, 582). Of course, identities are fluid, changing and context-dependent. However, securitizing actors construct them as given and frozen during securitization (Wæver 2008, 583). Actors often construct migration as a threat to identity, namely as a change in the composition of the population threatening the identity of the community (Wæver 2008, 584). Many studies have analysed different aspects of the securitization of migration, for example its consequences (Karyotis 2016), the role of the media (Tsoukala 2016), its relation to racism (Ibrahim 2005; Togral 2016), the rhetorical arguments used (Ceyhan & Tsoukala 2002), and the role of Islam (Cesari 2012).

These aspects suggest that securitization is a political choice to prioritise one issue above another "to gain control over it" (Wæver 1995, 52). However, it has been rarely studied how and why a prioritization of for example referent objects and threats occurs and how practical constraints influence this choice. One discussion revolves around the size of a referent object: "individuals or small groups can seldom establish a wider security legitimacy in their own right" (Buzan, Wæver & De Wilde 1998, 36). Entire systems also face problems as a referent object. Attempts to establish all humankind or the global environment as referent objects often fail (Buzan, Wæver & De Wilde 1998, 36). Limited, middle-size collectives, such as states or nations, have been more successful as referent objects because of a credibly constructed feeling of belonging and identity (Buzan, Wæver & De Wilde 1998, 37).

Others argue that referent objects need to be "necessary components of human well-being" (Balzacq 2014, 123) to be morally justifiable. "Human beings are justifiable referent objects by virtue of being intrinsically valuable" (Balzacq 2014, 123). Other referent objects must contribute to human well-being. When selecting a referent object, the state, security professionals and political leaders enjoy primacy

(Buzan, Wæver & De Wilde 1998, 32; 38; Bigo 2002). However, the literature is not elaborate on the motivations for selecting a referent object and not another although both contribute to human well-being, for example for preferring identity above law and order or vice versa.

Most studies treat the state as a unified actor (Bourbeau 2011, 35). However, there are different actors within democratic states who may perceive a threat differently and socially construct a referent object in line with their perception. Different studies found that the position and the social identity of a securitizing actor, behavioural constraints, opponents, public opinion and the nature of the audience influence the language of the speech act and the level of securitization (Balzacq 2005, 172-174; Bourbeau 2011). Including the identity of a securitizing actor, *id est* his function, ideological affiliation, professional background and power position may provide insights about the securitization of different referent objects.

3. Theoretical Framework from Gramsci

Including the broader context, the political game and the identity of a securitizing actor in a theoretical framework may provide one possible answer to the question why some referent objects are prioritised during the securitization process. The interrelated concepts of hegemony, war of position and historic bloc from Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks* (1971) may shed light on the prioritization of referent objects. Gramsci's thoughts about ideology and power relations have influenced academic discussions, political theorists and intellectual discourses across the entire political spectrum and, therefore, may provide insights in this context. This chapter introduces Gramsci's concepts and presents the main theoretical argument that can be tested empirically.

The concept of cultural hegemony means that the ruling class convinces society to accept its worldview as a universally valid ideology, thus justifying the status quo (Gramsci 1971, 208). This hegemony rests on ideological consensus and not on domination (Gramsci 1971, 275-276). This involves two crucial aspects (Ramos 1982, 37). Firstly, rules make some sacrifices marginal to their interests to create an equilibrium between the rulers and the ruled groups. This satisfaction of some demands of ruled groups secures their support for the hegemon. Secondly, the ruling class assumes political, intellectual, moral and economic leadership based on the common worldview (Ramos 1982, 37). Accordingly, hegemony rests both on coercion and consensus.

The war of position refers to an intellectual and cultural struggle in which the proletarian culture and its value system challenge the hegemony of the ruling class (Gramsci 1971, 206; 238). A war of position involves the economic, cultural and political level of society (Ramos 1982, 39). It becomes an ideological struggle once it moves to the political dimension of society. The aim of a war of position is the appropriation of ideological elements merging into a new collective will and a new hegemony (Ramos 1982, 39-40).

Various social forces and factions consent to a social order in which ideas, institutions and social relations (re)produce the hegemony of the ruling class (Gramsci 1971, 275-276). This alliance of social

forces between the base and the superstructure consenting to the set of hegemonic ideas is called the historic bloc (Hoare & Sperber 2015, 98; Forgacs 2000, 192). The historic bloc contains more than political alliances: it is a complex construction of different political, economic and cultural allies (Hoare & Sperber 2015, 98). Additionally, the ideological landscape of society is an important factor in the historic bloc (Hoare & Sperber 2015, 98). The historic bloc is not necessarily stable: its composition can change throughout time and space and it can exist under different conditions. It also serves as a strategic concept by suggesting ways of building alliances and being an organising element of a counter-hegemony.

Ideology functions as the underlying basis of these concepts (Gramsci 1971, 120). Gramsci defines ideology in terms of the practices and politico-ideological discourses of an entire social class (Ramos 1982, 35). These "underlying structures of belief, perception and appreciation" (Schön & Rein 1994, 23) determine how one interprets the world around oneself. Furthermore, ideology serves as a filter to evaluate what is morally acceptable. Ideological discourses thus function as a basis for policy positions (Schön & Rein 1994, 23). One cannot observe ideology directly (Schön & Rein 1994, 35). Language codes indirectly reveal ideological frames.

These concepts serve the theoretical main argument to develop a better understanding why some referent objects are prioritised above others during securitization processes. Actors can consent to hegemony but are not necessarily motivated by the same ideology determining policy-positions as the hegemon. If these differences between the policy position of an actor and the hegemon become insuperable, an actor may initiate a war of position and challenge the hegemon openly in a framing contest. This may be especially attractive in the case of securitization issues because the choice of a referent object influences the measures used to contain the threat and ultimately which part of society bears the costs of containing the threat. Furthermore, issues of security are often indivisible, thus the actor winning the framing contest and gaining control of the topic either determines the policy implemented subsequently or can influence policy-makers to compromise.

The selection of a referent object and the reasons for this choice may depend on the role of the securitizing actor in the historic bloc because the different interests at stake in a war of position interact with an actor's position and its power. Non-hegemons have nothing to lose. If they are unsatisfied with the status quo, they can challenge the hegemonic ideas in a war of position. This may even generate support from other unsatisfied ruled groups. This hypothesis regarding the choice of referent objects follows from these characteristics:

H1: Non-hegemons more provocatively define a referent object to challenge hegemonic ideas in a war of position.

Hegemons, on the contrary, are usually part of a governing coalition on state or federal level, are allied with partisan and non-partisan organizations providing material and immaterial support and,

accordingly, convinced voters and supportive associations to accept the hegemon's ideology. Several behavioural implications follow from this: the hegemon needs to accommodate different ruled groups and allies and balance these interests to stay in its position as a hegemon. Under different circumstances, allies and rules groups can withdraw their support. Moreover, specific tasks and responsibilities are associated with the role of a hegemon, such as policy-making, raising taxes and protecting the country. The following hypotheses connect to the choice of the referent object and the position of a hegemon during securitization:

H2: Hegemons conservatively define referent objects to accommodate their allies.
H3: Hegemons frame the referent objects in line with their hegemonic responsibilities.

Ideology and ideological differences function as an underlying basis for different referent objects and delimit the range of justifiable and credible referent objects by providing a moral framework.

4. Case Selection

Many authors found that migration has become part of the security sector in many Western democracies (for example Den Boer 2011; Karyotis 2016; Tsoukala 2016; Ceyhan & Tsoukala 2002). Politicians often link migration to issues of national security, radicalisation or terrorism implying a lack of a uniform referent object (Githens-Mazer 2012; Githens-Mazer & Lambert 2010; Hörnqvist & Flyghed 2012). This has led to a vivid public discussion about migration and security, especially after the refugee crisis in Germany in 2015 as a reaction to the events (Scott 2013). The *Alternative für Deutschland (AfD)* and the *Christlich Soziale Union (CSU)* are selected as cases to study the choice of referent objects during the securitization of migration because they differ regarding their position in the historic bloc and belong to the most active parties in the debate.

The AfD was founded in 2013 as a reaction to financial policies during the Eurocrisis and is represented in ten state parliaments (Oppelland 2016). Its officials criticise the established parties for being dishonest to their voters and frequently challenge the government's policy ideas. First, their critique related to financial policies. After the split in 2015, officials directed their criticism towards migration policies. As a young party, the AfD has not developed an extensive network of associations influencing its positions yet. The CSU, on the contrary, is part of the hegemonic coalition and has been part of the Bavarian governing coalition since 1957 (Decker 2016a). Additionally, it has been part of federal governing coalitions with the Christian Democrats. It could build an extensive and dense network of associations and allies supporting and influencing its positions.

Both parties are located on the right of the political spectrum in terms of ideology and are committed to conservatism. The CSU even claims that there cannot be a democratically legitimate party to its right. The AfD, on the other hand, claims to fill this gap to the right. Consequently, the CSU presents itself as more populist to attract voters from the right margins (Decker 2016a). Despite this similarity and their

competition, the parties differ: Researchers label the AfD as a nationalist party with populist patterns of argumentation (Oppelland 2016; Merkle 2016) and the CSU as a Christian party (Decker 2016a).

To gain insights into the historic bloc, the ideology and the relevant referent objects of securitizing migration, data is generated through a qualitative content analysis of primary and secondary resources, such as party programmes, press statements and interviews. The timeframe of analysis ranges from September 2014 to November 2016 to cover the events before and after the refugee crisis in late 2015. The AfD and CSU party programmes of 2016 and seven programmes of AfD state branches reveal the long-term goals related to migration to receive framing competences on the issue (Müller 2004, 71; Schäfer 2010, 174). 11 short- or mid-term resolutions and 40 AfD and 29 CSU press releases of party officials formulate ideas about the most recent developments in the field of migration and security (Kießling 2004, 189; Schäfer 2010, 174). In addition to carefully constructed, politically correct, written statements, 11 speeches of and two interviews with AfD-officials and three speeches and six interviews and 14 newspaper articles regarding the CSU contain more spontaneous statements on migration. The publicly available, prime time political talk shows *Anne Will* (5) and *Hart aber fair* (2) on migration with guests from the AfD and the CSU provide additional oral statements.

A sociological discourse analysis studies how AfD- and CSU-officials construct a social reality (Manheim et al. 2012, 352). An intertextual analysis takes both text and context into account as social sciences often neglect the capacity of language in producing, sustaining, or transforming relations, identities and structures (Fairclough 1995, 94). Discourse involves three levels, namely written or spoken texts, discursive processes and social processes (Fairclough 1995, 97). The analysis thus involves a description of the text, its interpretation regarding discursive processes which focusses on hidden propositions and language codes revealing an ideology and an explanation of the link between discursive and social processes explaining how different discourses contribute to the (re)creation and maintenance of different forces in an institution (Jorgensen & Phillips 2002, 60-95).

The findings from this small-N case study are not generalizable to a larger population. However, a small-N case study is more useful to understand perceptions, motivations and cognitive factors such as norms and ideas than a large-N study which does not allow the researcher to trace these processes and discourse in depth (Blatter & Haverland 2015, 5-6). These insights may improve the understanding of the concepts of the referent object and the securitizing actor and their backgrounds that not covered extensively in the literature (Yin 2011, 100).

5. Migration as a threat to different referent objects

The AfD emphasises that migration poses a threat to societal security, *id est* culture and identity. The CSU, on the other hand, focuses on a threat to the physical security of the state and its citizens and to the capacities of the welfare state. These topics have been on the agenda for a long time but gained prominence in September 2015 after chancellor Merkel opened the borders to a massive influx of people. This chapter analyses the referent objects in more detail.

i. The AfD and cultural identity as a referent object

AfD-politicians frame migration as a threat to three different referent objects. Doing so, officials use very short, provocative statements as a strategy to attract attention [141]. Firstly, migration threatens the functioning of social security systems [3]. "Low-skilled migrants (…) rely on social security benefits generated from tax revenues" [4, p. 63] to provide for a living. This statement on poor migrants coming to exploit the welfare state illustrates the fear of AfD-officials that migration exhausts the welfare state's capacities at the expense of the taxpayer [5-22].[2] In the end, "migration into social security systems is impossible to finance" [10] and leads to "using up the financial reserves of insurances" [8].

Secondly, migration threatens the physical security of the state and its citizens. Apart from importing conflicts from their home countries [28; 37-39] and abusing the right to asylum [22-26], terrorists use migration movements to enter the country and commit attacks (32; 35) as the following statement illustrates: "Not every refugee is a terrorist but most terrorists are refugees now" [34]. Additionally, criminality (27; 31) and "violence is connected to uncontrolled migration from other cultures" [29] and "many women tell that they have become victims of sexual assaults" [30]. These references to criminality, violence and terrorist attacks express a concern about the physical security of the state and its citizens (Kopke & Lorenz 2016, 227). The AfD suggests to protect the state and citizens by expelling criminal migrants and secure the border with firearms if necessary [4; 33-36; 40].

The AfD does not primarily focus on these two referent objects. The emphasis on societal security as the most important referent object distinguishes the AfD from other parties. Its two position papers on asylum express a "constitutional duty of the state to protect the national identity" [41, p. 1; 42]. Accordingly, they perceive an obligation of the nation state to preserve the German culture and its traditions [4]. Officials claim that current governmental policies are actively encouraging the extinction of the German culture by replacing it with a society from all over the world [44-51]. The current government is thus not fulfilling its constitutional duty because "mass migration leads to the extinction of German and European cultures" [43]. The fear of becoming a cultural minority is often expressed with the phrase "today we are tolerant, but foreign in our own nation tomorrow" [52; 53]. These formulations express a concern that migration threatens the existence of the nation as a cultural unit [4]. The AfD proclaims assimilation of migrants as a means of protection of the German culture [63].

Apart from these more general fears of cultural extinction, AfD-officials often refer to Muslim migration as a threat to identity and culture. "They [the government] accept to pave the way for a fundamentally religious culture that is antagonistic to women and put women's rights and our democratic order in danger" [25]. Moreover, "antisemitism and the rejection of Western values characterize the thinking of many Muslim migrants. Additionally, the attitudes of many of these people towards women's and gay rights is unacceptable as they stick to their archaic worldview" [27]. AfD-officials name a lack of gender equality and human rights [56-61], contempt for Christians and Jews [55-56], cultural imperialism and domination [2; 62-64] and the prioritization of religious laws above

[2] [5-22] refers to the resources from 5 through 22 in the appendix.

state laws [54] as reasons for securitizing Muslim migration as a threat to culture and identity. When framing the German *Leitkultur*[3] as a referent object, AfD-politicians often use right-wing, radical and even racist vocabulary (Geiges, Marg & Walter 2015, 153; Häusler 2015). Examples include "Medieval values and society structures" [66-70], "stone age Islamism" [71-73]; archaic traditions [38] and a Muslim invasion of Europe [72]. Overall, the AfD securitizes migration in terms of a cultural threat (societal security) and uses an Islamophobic, stigmatizing language while doing so.

ii. The CSU and physical security as a referent object

From the 1970s onwards, the CSU advocated a limit to migration and opposed multiculturalism (Schäfer 2010, 188). This discourse persists until today. "Germany must remain as it is. (…) We object any changes of our cosmopolitan country caused by migration or refugee flows. We must not adapt to migrants, it is vice versa: those who want to come here, must adapt to us!" [76, p. 2]. This reflects the fear of some CSU-officials that migration threatens culture and identity. The German *Leitkultur* is a constitutive part of society, it can and will not change and needs protection against changes through migration [82-85]. Accordingly, migrants must adapt to German values, norms, and traditions to protect the *Leitkultur* [74-81; 88-89]. Statements as "those who want to stay with us must accept our German culture and live it" [75, p. 5] exemplify this. Integration and inculturation serve this aim [90]. Some occasionally refer to Muslims and Islam as "hard to integrate" as they come from a different culture [86-87; 91-94] This discourse became prominent after the rise of the AfD that tried to attract voters on the right margin of the CDU/CSU.

CSU-officials more often refer to the welfare state and the physical security of the state and its citizens as referent objects. Firstly, "we increasingly reach our capacity limits regarding the number of asylum seekers in Bavaria. This applies to organizational framework, such as accommodations: many municipalities claim to run out of accommodations for asylum seekers. This applies to personnel: the personnel of many organizations and institutions involved have reached their limits. Bavaria also reaches its financial limitations. Therefore, we must counter increasing migration flows." [112]. This illustrates the opinion of many CSU-politicians, namely that a high influx of migrants and their families puts the financial, personnel and organizational capacities of the welfare state, especially in municipalities, under severe pressure [1; 103-111]. Additionally, migrants from safe countries receiving benefits they are not entitled to put the social security system under stress [86; 95-98].

The suggestions to solve the refugee crisis reflect the welfare state as a referent object as well: the government must expel migrants illegitimately receiving benefits and introduce a limit of migration to protect the capacities of the social security system [74-77; 100-102; 112-116]. CSU-politicians name two reasons why the welfare state needs protection: On the one hand, the state is responsible for migrants to provide them with humane living conditions and means for integration [117-118]. On the other hand,

[3] The term *Leitkultur* refers to the dominant societal and cultural characteristics of a nation.

the state is responsible for its own citizens and the wise use of capacities avoids "social competition with the native population – for example in housing" [117; 119-121; 75-77].

Additionally, CSU-politicians refer to the physical security of the state and its citizens as a referent object [124-126] because "the security of our population is our no. 1 concern" [123]. Seehofer poses that "we need to know who is in our country" [137] to protect it from criminals and terrorists. Border controls are necessary for "the registration of refugees as well as the search for terrorists entering the country. We cannot accept that people without a verified identity enter our country" [128; 129-132]. This relates to a strong state knowing who resides in it to protect its population. Having unregistered migrants inside the country endangers the security of the population as no one knows what these people plan to do here [130]. Although only few migrants pose a threat to security, terrorists use the same routes and hide in groups of migrants to enter Germany and perpetrate attacks or radicalize young, poorly integrated migrants for violent Islamism [130-135]. Additionally, migration burdens the capacities of the police as they must protect the population from (foreign) criminals and migrants from far-right violence [127]. Law and order needs to be reintroduced, especially at the border to only allow migrants with a verified identity to enter the country and expel foreign criminals as a solution to protect the state and its population [136-139]. Overall, the CSU frames the referent object threatened by migration as the capacities of the welfare state and the physical security of the state and its citizens by referring to the exhaustion of the financial and organizational capacities and the possibility of foreign criminals and terrorists hiding in migration movements.

To conclude, this chapter argues that securitizing actors can choose different referent objects when securitizing the same threat. Migration is a prominent topic in the political discourse and debates in Germany – especially since the refugee crisis in September 2015. When discussing migration, the AfD marginally articulates a threat to the welfare state and the physical security of the state and its citizens through foreign criminals and terrorists. Its officials emphasise a threat to the German *Leitkultur,* its values and identity and the fear of becoming outnumbered. While doing so, they are especially hostile to Muslims and use populist language codes. The CSU, on the contrary, only at times mentions the German culture as a referent object. Politicians in Bavaria emphasise the capacities of the welfare state and social security systems and the fact that criminals and terrorists abuse refugee movements to threaten the physical security of the state and its citizens. Securitization theory cannot explain why these two parties prioritise different referent objects. The following chapter fills this gap.

6. Historic bloc and ideology

As demonstrated in the previous chapter, the AfD and the CSU securitize migration differently, namely as a threat to societal security in terms of identity and culture or as a threat to the physical security of the state and its citizens. Securitization theory cannot explain why these two actors securitize migration differently. Taking the position in the historic bloc into account may explain why different actors choose different referent objects. Some actors are in power while others challenge the ideas of

the powerful in a war of position. The position of an actor in the historic bloc influences how they construct the political discourse delimited by their ideology and official tasks they have. This chapter reviews the material conditions of power, *id est* the political power, allied groups supporting a party to gain and stay in power and party internal dynamics regarding the securitization of an issue, based on secondary literature including power conditions. Ideology limits the range of justifiable policy-positions without losing their credibility. While the Christian-conservative CSU is part of the hegemonic coalition, the nationalist-conservative AfD is a challenger to the hegemonic ideas. Therefore, the CSU needs to accommodate different ruled groups and coalition partners to keep its hegemonic position and can only cautiously refer to referent objects with solutions that are practicable. The AfD can be more provocative in challenging the hegemon as it can only gain popularity from doing so.

i. The AfD as a challenger

The AfD challenges the hegemonic ideas –its politicians strongly emphasise culture and identity as referent object when securitizing migration. The AfD is not in a leadership position and lacks support from social and economic forces it needs to compromise with. Without the need for compromises with allies and without leadership responsibilities, the AfD must be more provocative when securitizing migration to challenge the hegemonic coalition in a war of position. This section relates these characteristics of the AfD's position as a challenger to its framing of the referent object.

Firstly, the AfD is a young party established as a reaction to the government's policies during the Euro-crisis (Oppelland 2016). Different initiatives, such as the *Plenum der Ökonomen* (2010), *Bündnis Bürgerwille* (2012) and *Wahlalternative 2013,* formulated (non-)partisan criticism of Euro-policies. This led to a politicization of supporters from part of the established parties and the middle class (Oppelland 2016). In April 2013, the AfD was established as a full-fledged party, competed in the federal elections 5 months later and is still growing in terms of membership (Oppelland 2016). Its name *alternative for Germany* reflects the criticism of governments policies and presents the party as an alternative to established parties (Decker 2016e, 11). Officials present the AfD as a party of common sense for the average citizen and as a voice of the middle class and the conservative majority to the right of the Union-parties [4; 140] (Bebnowski 2015, 2; 6). Its slogan *Courage to tell the truth* insinuates that the established parties lie to citizens by not presenting policy alternatives (Oppelland 2016) and govern the state as a cartel and in their self-interest [4; 140] (Bebnowski 2015, 1). This point of view connects to AfD-positions on migration which openly attack the government for putting the future existence of the German culture at risk and call the government *Germany-abolisher* in a war of position.

These positions have not been part of the party from its beginning onwards. Many unsuitable persons with a lack of leadership skills or a far-right political past received leadership positions because of the quick establishment of organizational structures (Decker 2016e, 17). These former far-rightists, amongst others, introduced nationalist ideas and fears of cultural extinction in the AfD. This culminated in controversies about leadership, influence and political direction: Frauke Petry and her nationalist-

conservative supporters refused to accept the liberal Bernd Lucke as the face of the party in 2014 (Decker 2016e). The most important dispute revolved around the AfD's position towards the non-partisan Pegida[4] movement and the integration of far-right forces in the party (Korsch 2016, 116-119; Kellershohn 2016, 191). In 2015, the nationalist-conservative wing gained an intra-party majority and, consequently, Lucke and many other liberal members left the AfD. Accordingly, nationalist elements became part of the party ideology (Oppelland 2016; Siri 2016, 69; Decker 2016e, 10; Häusler 2016, 241). The AfD can adopt more radical positions in the war of position challenging the hegemon after the intra-party liberal opposition left.

Additionally, the AfD lacks connections outside political structures. Its Erasmus foundation aims to educate party officials and support the party with scientific research (Plehwe 2016, 63). However, the foundation is not operational yet and cannot support AfD-positions with facts. Its largest working group, the *Junge Alternative* for people below the age of 35, should recruit voters and interest young people in the party. However, 90 percent of its 1,200 members are AfD-members who support the nationalist-conservative wing, especially Björn Höcke, and network with far-right associations (Herkenhoff 2016, 1). Several small, Christian-fundamentalist associations also support the AfD (Kemper 2016). In terms of finances, the AfD is largely dependent on public subsidies which cannot be withdrawn unless the party is constitutionally outlawed [150; 152]. This means that the AfD lacks allies in the historic bloc who can withdraw their support and weaken its position. Its position is that of a challenger already and the few supportive organizations occupy even more radical positions than the AfD and very likely support its provocative framing in the war of position. The AfD thus has nothing to lose and can at best gain from challenging the hegemon by attracting attention as Frauke Petry admits [65]. AfD-politicians typically provoke with pointed statements and afterwards claim that the media have misunderstood them [49]. A leaked e-mail of Petry about media strategies confirms that "pointed and provocative statements are indispensable to us to be heard in the media. They give us the necessary attention to present ourselves as more knowledgeable and in detail subsequently" [141].

These radical positions in the war of position against the hegemon led to some electoral successes – the AfD's ideas resonate with a part of the electorate and established parties take the AfD seriously as a challenger. In the 2014 elections for the European Parliament, the party gained 7.1 percent of the votes, receiving 7 seats. Currently, the AfD is represented in 10 state parliaments, namely Thuringia, Brandenburg, Saxony, Bremen, Hamburg, Baden-Württemberg, Saxony-Anhalt, Rhineland-Palatinate, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, and Berlin (Oppelland 2016). Nonetheless, the AfD is not part of any governing coalition because established parties refuse to form a coalition with the AfD and the AfD itself prefers to challenge governmental policies as an opposition party now. This confirms its role as a challenger in the historic bloc and the need to provocatively frame a referent object. Overall, the AfD

[4] Pegida is a rightist movement which started with protests in Dresden in 2014 and quickly spread to other German cities. Pegida is short for patriotic Europeans against the Islamization of the occident. The movement is classified as nationalist, islamophobic, and far-right. The AfD-founding fathers were skeptical and distanced from Pegida, while the nationalist-conservative wing was more friendly towards the movement.

lacks material conditions of power. It is not part of a governing coalition, it receives little support from organizations outside political structures and its intra-party organization allows for nationalist ideas. The AfD has no responsibilities and is bound to adopt a right-wing position. Its position as a challenger in the historic bloc forces the AfD to adopt more provocative frames when framing culture as a referent object to challenge hegemonic ideas in a war of position and attract attention. Its nationalist-conservative ideology explains why this provocative frame relates to culture and identity and the maintenance of inherited traditions (Ball et al. 2016).

ii. The CSU as part of the hegemonic coalition

The CSU is part of the hegemonic coalition – its officials emphasise physical security and the welfare state as referent objects. This means that its behaviour is more restricted as the CSU must compromise with supportive organizations and coalition partners to retain its influence. This section explains how its position as hegemon forces the CSU to frame a referent object more cautiously.

Researchers label the CSU as a *Volkspartei* open to everyone regardless of class or denomination (Decker 2016a; 2016b). It has been in office from 1957 onwards with an absolute majority from 1966 to 2008 and since 2013 – longer than any state branch of a party (Kießling 2004). Therefore, the CSU could create institutional resources of power not available to opposition parties – cooperation effects occur between governmental and partisan resources, for example governmental routines coincide with electoral campaigns (Kießling 2004, 72). Additionally, the CSU uses patronage as a strategy, *id est* it influences who receives influential positions outside government. CSU-members occupy key position across different sectors in Bavaria, e.g. in banking (Kießling 2004, 72). The CSU needs to continuously attract voters and not lose them by adopting radical positions on prominent topics, such as migration and security, to sustain these resources of hegemony. Officials need to balance the conservatism of the middle class, which relates to the Bavarian way of life (Kießling 2004, 63), with the margins of the electorate.

The CSU successfully eliminated all like-minded competitors within its territory (Decker 2016a). The development of a resilient organizational structure eliminated the Bavarian party in 1966 and continues to silence intra-party disputes by putting the overall success above any personal differences (Kießling 2004, 45). This resilient organizational structure includes the maintenance of many local branches which are well-connected within the party (Kießling 2004, 76). These networks on local level might explain the focus on the welfare state – German counties and municipalities provide living conditions for and integrate migrants and let their voice hear through party structures and by addressing party officials [142].

It concluded a pact with the CDU on federal level – the CSU runs for office in Bavaria, the CDU in all other states and they form a quasi-coalition with a common faction in the *Bundestag* (Decker 2016a; 2016d). The CSU has more influence on federal policies than any CDU state branch due to its status as an autonomous party (Decker 2016d; Kießling 2004, 68). It receives three to four minister portfolios in

Union-led governments and has a factual veto regarding fundamental decisions of the faction. The government adopted different CSU-policy suggestions on migration, for example [143-144]. However, apart from the opportunity to influence federal policies, this restricts the range of positions the CSU can take without losing its credibility as a coalition partner. Seehofer acknowledges this restriction on a congress on migration: "We are part of the coalition in Berlin, we want to have a voice in it and that means that we must compromise." [122]. Furthermore, CSU-politicians are responsible for policy-making to govern the country because of being part of federal and state governments. Protecting the state and its citizens is one of these responsibilities and explains the focus on physical security and the functioning of the welfare state as referent objects.

Several organizations outside political structures support the party leading to a high recruitment rate and providing the party with scientific information about different topics. The Hanns-Seidel foundation connects the party to scientific research, educates party newcomers and thus finances part of costs related to research and education (Mintzel 1975, 352; Kießling 2004, 75). Its publications regarding migration cover broad topics from fighting the causes of migration to the analysis of mixed migration movements containing refugees entitled to asylum and migrants. This eventually resonates in CSU demands for development aid to prevent migration and for preventing the abuse of asylum.

The nine working groups familiarise people with the party, provide expertise and function as independent associations open to non-members (Nerl 2010, 393-394). The *Junge Union Bayern* for young people under the age of 35 is the largest working group with its approximately 31,000 members of which ¼ are CSU-members (Müller 2004, 216; Nerl 2010, 401). It serves as a recruitment pool for future party officials (Nerl 2010, 407; Gruber 2010, 495) and lets its voice hear during recruitment discussions, for example demanding the resignation of prime minister Streibl (Kießling 2004, 228; Nerl 2010, 408). It exercises indirect influence on thematical discussions when its members move on to become party officials (Nerl 2010, 408). Markus Söder is a recent example of a voice influencing the discussion on migration and the securitization thereof – he was socialized politically in the *Junge Union Bayern* and served as its president (Müller 2004, 218) before he received different minister portfolios in the Bavarian government. Successful recruitment of the working groups, networking on all societal levels and the maintenance of local branches lead to a high recruitment rate and a less pronounced decline in membership than other parties (Müller 2004; Kießling 2004, 74; Niedermayer 2016). On the other hand, this means that the CSU must listen to and compromise with these groups when securitizing migration to secure their support during campaigns, for example.

In addition to that, non-partisan organizations elevated the CSU into the position it occupies today. The farmers' union and associations of displaced Germans from Eastern Europe traditionally recruited voters until the late 2000s in exchange for policies friendly towards these groups (Hinterberger 2010; Hopp 2010). The Catholic church and the CSU used to be inseparable but split in the 1950s and 60s to attract members and voters from other denominations (Gerngroß 2010, 87). Nonetheless, the church and the CSU still have a close relationship (Gerngroß 2010, 91). Christian values function as a manual for

action and ethical guidance and received the status of the *Leitkultur* in the 1990s (Decker 2016c; Gerngroß 2010, 92; Schäfer 2010, 178) [145-148]. These values as ethical guidance may partly explain the focus on the welfare state and the provision of humane living conditions for migrants and natives as a referent object.

Apart from these interest groups and the churches, many (internationally) well-known companies, such as Evonik Industries AG, MAC Mode, Substantia AG, Allianz SE, BMW, Daimler, Dr. Oetker, Ergo Versicherungsgruppe AG, Verband der Bayerischen Metall- und Elektroindustrie and Verband der Chemischen Industrie [149; 151; 153], support the party financially hoping for policies taking their interests into consideration. This may indirectly influence the CSU's position to grant a working permit to migrants quickly, integrate them to relieve pressure on social security systems [154] and to have cheap labour for the economy. Overall, its political position with institutional sources of hegemony, the elimination of competitors, the ability to rely on a network of supportive organizations and the fact that associations and companies turn to the CSU for lobbyism are a sign of being part of the hegemony. These connections and the CSU's federal ally CDU restrict the range of positions to adopt on migration if the CSU does not want to lose their support and, subsequently, its position as a hegemon. Furthermore, as a governing party, the CSU is responsible for providing security and a functioning of the state which directs its position on migration into these directions.

To conclude, the AfD and the CSU occupy different positions in the historic bloc. The AfD is a challenger in the historic bloc and opposes hegemonic ideas in a war of position. It lacks representation in governments, allies to compromise with and was explicitly founded to offer voters alternatives to existing policies. As a challenger without support and with nothing to lose, the AfD must securitize migration and the referent object provocatively to attract attention, challenge the hegemon in a war of position and generate support for its positions. Its officials, like Frauke Petry, even admit the need to attract attention which is in line with hypothesis 1. The CSU, on the contrary, is part of the hegemonic coalition the AfD is challenging in a war of position. The CSU belongs to governing coalitions and receives support from many (non)-partisan organizations. Being part of the hegemonic coalition implies that the CSU must compromise with its allies and fulfil its responsibilities as a governing party to be re-elected and keep its position. Accordingly, it cannot frame any referent object in every possible way during the discussion on migration as Seehofer admits. This is in line with hypothesis 2 and 3. More recently, many even accuse the CSU of becoming more populist as a reaction to AfD statements to defend its position (Oppelland 2016). This adds to the understanding of the choice of referent objects in the process of securitization by including the context and the background of the securitizing actor and how this position influences the choice of the referent object.

7. Conclusion

To conclude, this research provides a starting point to gain more detailed insights in securitization theory. Securitization theory explains how an issue becomes part of the security sector, fits many

different cases and captures the consequences of securitization processes (Wæver 2008). However, it attracted criticism for being imprecise about the context of securitization, such as the identity of the securitization actor or the audience of the speech act (Bourbeau 2011; Balzacq 2005). In line with this, securitization theory cannot explain why different actors choose different referent objects and different logics of securitization when referring to the same threat.

Drawing from Gramsci's concepts of hegemony, historic bloc, war of position and ideology as an underlying factor, a hegemon in the historic bloc cannot freely securitize any referent – a hegemon needs to accommodate different allies and ruled groups who support the hegemony and its ideas. A hegemon additionally has specific responsibilities bound to its position as a hegemon, such as policy-making based on its economic, political, intellectual and moral leadership. These alliances, responsibilities and the interests of staying a hegemon influence the choice of the referent object. Non-hegemons can be more provocative to challenge the hegemony in a war of position as they have nothing to lose. Ideology and ideological differences function as an underlying factor delimiting the range of justifiable and credible referent objects by providing a moral framework.

The underlying, conservative ideology explains the focus of both parties on protecting traditions and inherited structures. The nationalist element of the AfD's ideology connects well with its focus on culture and identity during the securitization of migration. In the case of the CSU, its Christian ideology does not directly connect to defining physical security as the referent object of securitizing migration. The historic bloc can explain this focus: The CSU as a hegemon with coalition partners, (non)-partisan supportive organizations, and governing responsibilities cannot adopt all possible referent objects. Seehofer admits that the dense network of allies increase the need to compromise to be taken seriously and that the governing responsibilities demand some attention for security, amongst others (122). This may explain the emphasis on physical security and the welfare state. The AfD, on the other hand, is challenging hegemonic ideas. It was founded to provide alternatives to government policies and it lacks allies and coalition partners decreasing the need to compromise. Therefore, AfD-officials must define and frame its referent object, culture and identity, provocatively to attract the necessary attention to challenge the hegemon in a war of position.

On the one hand this research provides first insights on and a better understanding of the under-researched issue of referent objects as Gramsci's theory includes the background and the identity of the securitizing actor. On the other hand, it is a small-N study with only two cases and the findings are not fully generalizable to a larger population. When selecting two ideologically very different parties, ideology might be a stronger explanatory factor than the position in the historic bloc. Accordingly, the relative weight of contextual factors may differ. Furthermore, it does not explicitly include external events and other contextual factors that might shift the focus of the debate across all parties, such as a terrorist attack or developments abroad. External events may be a different reason for choosing a different referent object. In the case of this research, the same events within the country influence both parties. Therefore, external events may only be a weak explanation for differences in these cases.

To shed more light on the selection of referent objects during securitization more research is needed. Avenues for future projects may include: an extension to other cases and countries to increase the generalizability of the findings of this research, providing other explanations for the prioritization of referent objects connecting the responsiveness of parties to positions dominant in the electorate or research on other contextual factors of securitization, such as the impact of the audience or electoral cycles on the choice of referent objects. This research already provided a starting point to refine securitization theory by drawing from Gramsci's concepts of historic bloc, hegemony, war of position and the underlying factor ideology.

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Appendix: Primary Resources

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