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Refugees Welcome?

**German Migration- and Asylum Policies during the
European Migrant Crisis from 2010 to 2017.**

Master Thesis in “Globalization: Transnationalism and Culture”

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Abstract

The topic of this study is the practical usage of migration policies by the German government during the refugee crisis from 2010 to 2017. The study searches for possible changes in how refugees were viewed legally and practically and which political groups might have influenced these changes. The findings lead to the conclusion that the German government was mostly aiming for a rather reluctant position in the refugee crisis. This position was forced to be abandoned in favour of a more engaging position in order to save the structure of the EU, while still trying to regain a more distant position again. Most of the direct changes in the government did not happen because of actual change in its opinions, but rather due to external influences, such as geopolitical changes in Europe, mood swings in the German public and pressure from different political groups. Visible interests in the actions of the German government were that of border control, economic benefits, international stability and humanitarian concerns.

Preface

The topic of this thesis originated from its importance in Germany. The process of refugee immigration and how the German government handled it is still causing heated arguments even under friends and families. This thesis is my contribution to the debate.

I would like to thank my supervisor for her excellent guidance and support during this process.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background and Relevance

Since the beginning of the Arab Spring in 2010 the issue of migration has become an important and highly debated issue in Europe. The arrival of more and more refugees trying to apply for asylum in certain European states has led to various measures that aim to deal with these migration flows. However, these measurements vary from country to country and even change over time. This thesis aims to analyse the behaviour of one specific state in this regard, namely Germany.

The topic of this study is the practical usage of migration policies by the German government during the refugee crisis from 2010 to 2017. The study searches for possible changes in how refugees were viewed legally and practically by analysing the regulation of refugees in Germany. It will also be analysed whether the behaviour of the German government towards the migration of refugees changed from the beginning of the refugee crisis until 2017 and what political groups might have influenced it.

The relevance of this study derives mainly from the importance of this topic on the academic, political and every-day level. Migration, especially the migration of refugees has created a heated debate that is still going on. This is particular the case for Germany, which is strongly involved in the refugee crisis as a key host country. As a German, this topic is also affecting me personally due to the many public and private debates and arguments that I am aware of. The refugee crisis was already an important topic in the beginning of my bachelor studies and even my bachelor thesis was revolving around it. Now and for the last two or three years its importance seems to have risen even more in German society due to the increased arrival of refugees in Germany itself.

This topic can however also be connected to a more global phenomenon regarding migration. All over the world migration has become an important topic in one way or another and many of the existing events and debates can be viewed as the same global process. Better transportation and communication has made it easier to be mobile for migrants, while a tighter

border control has led to more irregular migration. What is also new is the global scope of recent migration processes, their importance to domestic and international politics, as well as their rather strong economic and social consequences (Castles, De Haas, & Miller, 2014, pp. 5-6). The analysis of the German refugee policies could therefore be seen as an interesting part of a global process, making it a justifiable topic for this study programme. On an academic level this study can also contribute to new results in a constantly changing process of migration. There are many varying theories for migration, and new global situations – be it political, social or other factors – can lead to new considerations. An analysis of the recent German government could add new insight in the migration debate.

Lastly, Germany itself was chosen due to its rather central position in the European migrant crisis. It is one of the major receiving countries in terms of refugees and general migration, as well as one of the main actors in the EU. In 2015 Germany has been the second top country of destination for migrants after the United States and had over 12 million international migrants residing in the country (International Organization for Migration, 2017, p. 18). There appears to be some important changes in the responses of the German government towards arriving refugees, which should give us the possibility to analyse political shifts. Due to its important role in these regards, there is also a decent amount of data available that can be used for this study. Furthermore, during the period from 2010 to 2017 there has been only slight changes in the formation of political parties for the German government. This makes it easier to look for consistent changes within the ruling parties, especially for the main party in the government, the CDU.

1.2 Research Question and Procedure

In order to specify the analysis, this study will focus on the influence of the German government at that time towards refugee- and asylum policies as well as the influence of other important political parties and movements who might have influenced these policies. It will be examined how migration policies are framed, how they have changed and how the framings affect their practical implementation. The analysed time frame will start in 2010

with the beginning of the Arab Spring and the ensuing increase of conflicts and refugee flows and will reach until 2017.

The research question for the study will therefore be:

How did German refugee policies and their practical implementation change from 2010 to 2017 and which idea groups from main political actors and movements had the most influence in these regards?

To answer this question, different policies and statements will be looked at regarding the admission of refugees in Germany and will be compared in relation to the time they were mentioned. The data will derive from official statements and regulations of the German government, statements from important political actors such as parties and civil movements, news articles and articles from several institutions and organisations.

The study will also clarify important migration theories that focus on the receiving country. Especially security concerns will be mentioned and analysed. The main sources for this will be “The Age of Migration” by Stephen Castles, Hein de Haas and Mark J. Miller, as well as “Exceptional People” by Ian Goldin, Geoffrey Cameron and Meera Balarajan.

There are also several events of interest during the stated period that will be further analysed. These events include:

- The rather reluctant engagement of Germany regarding the crisis during the first years, when most refugees were not able to reach the country.
- The rather migration-positive attitude of Germany, when the numbers of refugees rose quickly in 2015 and Angela Merkel’s statement “We can accomplish this” (*Wir schaffen das*).
- The increasing negative opinion of politicians and movements towards refugees, as well as seemingly harsher asylum- and repatriation policies.
- The refugee deal between Turkey and the European Union, which reduced the number of refugees arriving in Germany.
- Talks about a cap for the number of yearly immigrants allowed to move to Germany.

In order to find out possible influences of different political groups, a political discourse analysis will be used. This method will be used in order to single out the possible interest groups for the study. The main source for this method will be Martin Nonhoff, who builds upon theories of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe. According to Nonhoff, laws and political regulations evolve out of hegemonic fights in terms of political discourse. This study will therefore explain the concepts of discourse, hegemony and hegemony projects in accordance to Nonhoff.

The method was chosen due to its ability to make intentions and interests more visible in public statements. By comparing the articulations of different political organisations and the government, as well as the actual policies, less obvious differences and changes can be analysed that are not directly stated by the actors. It can also be shown whether a certain interest group gained more or less influence on the government. The disadvantage of the method are the possible inconsistencies and vagueness of some articulations, which means that statements can be interpreted in different ways. To achieve a decent interpretation, it is therefore important to include statements and information of other institutions about the topic as well.

1.3 Context and Definitions regarding Migration

Before the theory and the actual analysis, it is important to explain the necessary terms connected to migration. In general, migration itself can be seen as the movements of people that results in a change of usual residence. Migration can either be internal or international, while the definition of international migration also normally includes a time period of at least one year. (Castree, Kitchin, & Rogers, 2013b). A migrant is therefore a person who changes their place of usual residence and moves to either a different country or a different region inside the same country (Castree, Kitchin, & Rogers, 2013a). It is however interesting to note that the number of internal migrants is way higher than that of international ones. In 2010 there were around 214 million international migrants world-wide, or around 3% of the world's population, while in 2009 it was estimated that there were around 740 million internal migrants (Castles et al., 2014, pp. 7-8).

Migrants can also further be differentiated according to their reason of migration. This study will concentrate on two types of migrants: refugees and asylum seekers. Refugees are persons who flee armed conflict or persecution and are recognised and protected in international law. They are granted certain rights of assistance from other states and are not allowed to be sent back in places, where their life and freedom would be in danger. While migrants in general can move for all kinds of reasons, such as finding work, education or family reunions, refugees move due to a direct threat of persecution or death (UNHCR, 2016). The criteria and rights of refugees are defined in the 1951 “Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees”. Furthermore, a person is already considered as refugee from the moment the necessary criteria of the convention are fulfilled by this person. This means the recognition of this person as refugee merely does not create the refugee status but confirms it (Goldin, Cameron, & Balarajan, 2011, pp. 147-148).

An asylum seeker is a person who wants to be recognised as a refugee. Asylum seekers apply for asylum in another country and must demonstrate that their protection from prosecution can be justified (UNHCR, 2017b). In comparison to refugees, their claim for refugee status has not been officially determined, they can still be considered refugees if they fulfil the right criteria.

Other groups that are often considered in these regards are stateless persons and internally displaced persons (IDP’s). A stateless person is someone who has lost his citizenship due to various reasons and is therefore not a citizen of any country. An IDP is a person who is forced to flee from their home but does not cross international borders. They are not protected by international law and seek protection in their own country (UNHCR, 2017b). However, due to the focus on the receiving country, these groups will not play an important role in this study.

These differences should be considered when analysing data like statements of politicians or other groups. These statements do not necessarily use the same definitions as stated here. For example, the term “refugee” appears to be often used as a general term for every person fleeing from violence. In this study however, refugees will be referred as persons who are fleeing across borders and are granted protection, while asylum seekers are persons who either applied for asylum or seek to do so.

According to statistics from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the numbers of forcefully displaced people that fit to these definitions have risen from around 31 million people in 2011 to around 60 million in 2016. The majority of these people are

however IDP's, while around 10 million people are refugees and asylum seekers in 2011 and around 19 million in 2016 (UNHCR, 2017a). It should also be mentioned that most refugees do not live in Europe, but in African and Asian countries (Castles et al., 2014, pp. 12-13). Even though there are considerably more refugees than asylum seekers, many refugees flee to neighbouring countries where they often do not go through formal recognition processes. Asylum seekers on the other hand mostly migrate to more distant countries (Goldin et al., 2011, p. 148).

Furthermore, it is questionable whether someone can be labelled as forced or voluntary migrant. A Migrant could primarily move due to economic reasons, but may also flee political oppression (Castles et al., 2014, p. 26). Especially onward migration from neighbouring countries to better states can have two goals: fleeing from violence, but also the hope of a better life elsewhere. Onward migration is however often restricted to a minority of migrants with the needed skills, resources and networks (Castles et al., 2014, p. 57). In migration transition theories, it is also argued that people need a certain level of agency in order to be able to migrate. People who are most deprived during a crisis are mostly the ones who are forced to stay due to a lack of capability. The differentiation between "forced" and "voluntary" migration is therefore seen as difficult (Castles et al., 2014, pp. 50-51). That being said, this study will still view the people fleeing from violence to other countries as refugees and asylum seekers.

1.4 Structure of the Thesis

Aside from this introduction, the thesis will be divided into six other chapters. Chapter two will summarise the major migration theories that are important in relation to the receiving country's behaviour. It will also describe how security concerns might influence a government on migration. Chapter three will include the methodology of the study, namely the political discourse analysis of Martin Nonhoff. The fourth chapter will give a small overview of the refugee crisis and the situation in the European Union (EU) concerning immigration. A further overview of the recent state in Germany, as well as its main political groups concerning migration will be discussed in chapter five. The main analysis of the government's decisions will be included in chapter six. Chapter seven will give a final conclusion for this thesis.

2.Theory of Migration

2.1 General Theory for Receiving Countries

There are many theories that try to explain the reasons and processes of migration. However, this study will mostly concentrate on the perspective of receiving countries and their reasons for supporting or controlling migration towards them. Many of the migration theories can be divided between functionalist and historical-structural theories. Functionalist theories view the social system as a collection of individual actors and emphasise the drivers of migration. The process of migration is seen in a positive light, as it would serve the majority of people and would lead to more equality. Historical-structural theories on the other hand are influenced by neo-Marxist political economy and see migration in a rather negative way. Here, migration is argued not to lead to more equality but further inequality due to unequally distributed political and economic power. Migration would therefore only benefit the wealthy receiving countries, while sending countries would be exploited (Castles et al., 2014, pp. 27-28).

2.1.1 Functionalist Theories

One way to view the behaviour of receiving countries can be found in the push-pull models that originally derived from the geographer Ravenstein in the nineteenth century. According to this model, migration is influenced by several plus- and minus factors in sending- and receiving countries, such as distance, population size and economic opportunities. Pull factors for receiving countries could be the demand for labour or the availability of land, but these countries can also form obstacles for migrants, such as physical barriers or immigration laws. This model however is criticised for being too simplistic and taking only economic, demographic and environmental factors into account. Furthermore, it has problems explaining

simultaneously occurring emigration and immigration in a country (Castles et al., 2014, pp. 28-29).

A similar theory is the neoclassical migration theory. Here, the assumption is made that social forces are tending towards an equilibrium. People are viewed to act rationally and would go to places where they would earn the most depending on a cost-benefit calculation. Therefore, migration would go from countries with high labour and low wages to countries with low labour and high wages, until both countries reach the same economic level (Castles et al., 2014, pp. 29-30). From the perspective of receiving countries, the acquisition of further labour force could therefore be seen as the main appealing element of migration. The theory is however criticised for being too unrealistic with the presented capabilities and knowledge of migrants, as well as with the accessibility of markets for the poor. It does also not account for possible structural constraints (Castles et al., 2014, pp. 30-31).

2.1.2 Historical-Structural Theories

As already mentioned, historical-structural theories have a more negative view on migration and see it as an unequal process that benefits the receiving countries. Migration is also regarded as a manifestation of capitalist influences in an uneven relation between developing and developed countries. This constellation would make migration not a voluntary choice for the individual, but a forced movement triggered by capitalist interests (Castles et al., 2014, pp. 31-32). In this theory, receiving countries seem to have more direct influence on the migration process than in the functionalist theories. Migration could be forced upon other developing countries in order to exploit them for economic benefits.

A similar group of theories in these regards are the globalisation theories that describe the process of globalisation as the widening, deepening and speeding up of worldwide interconnectedness. However, globalisation is also seen as a new form of imperialism that strengthens the power of core Northern states with their ruling classes and multinational

corporations. It is trying to implement the ideology of neoliberalism as new world order, which is characterised by market liberalisation, privatisation and deregulation. Nation states would play an important role in relation to migration as deciders of borders, movement policies and migration regimes. The goal for receiving countries is then often to encourage highly skilled migrants to immigrate, while low-skilled workers and forcefully displaced migrants are denied the same rights (Castles et al., 2014, pp. 33-35).

The strong role of states is also reflected in the segmented labour market theory. In this concept, international migration is caused by the demand for high-skilled and cheap low-skilled labour in advanced economies. In comparison to functionalist theories, receiving countries have therefore a more active role in causing migration and are not just an intermediate factor for the costs of migration. Race and racism can also play a role, as other ethnicities can face disadvantages or exploitation in the receiving country. A segmented labour market could be developed that treats immigrants differently than native workers. The weaker status of immigrants could also be used by employers and the receiving state to exploit them further, while racism can be used to justify these actions (Castles et al., 2014, pp. 35-36).

However, historical-structural approaches can also be criticised for viewing migration mostly as forced by others and not as an active choice of the migrants themselves. Migration arguably is not just negative and can actually lead to an improved outcome for the migrant. It is also doubted that capitalism is the root cause for migration, as pre-modern societies were used to migration as well (Castles et al., 2014, pp. 36-37).

2.1.3 Migration System Theory

There are other theories as well that are considerable to this study, but do not fit into the categories of functionalist or historical-structural theories. One example is the migration system theory that focuses on the effects of different forms of exchange on the process of

migration. These exchange forms consist of flows of goods, ideas and money and can change consumption habits, as well as influence ideas of a “good life”. These changes then can lead to migration if migration is associated with success. Furthermore, migrants can also reinforce migration in their country of origin if remittances from these migrants increase the inequality in the sending country and other people want to move as well. Here, the demand for migrant labour in receiving countries can also be seen as an important feedback mechanism that affects migration. However, migration can decline if the support and connection from migrants to their country of origin weakens (Castles et al., 2014, pp. 43-46). While this theory is mostly fixated on the decision of the migrants and their exposure to forms of exchange, receiving states and their governments could also play an important role if they directly or indirectly influence the information that these potential migrants receive.

All of the theories that have been mentioned in this chapter have viewed the behaviour of receiving societies mainly from an economic standpoint. Migrants are often welcomed when receiving countries are economically booming and want to fill labour shortages or boost their population. On the other hand, during economic crises and conflicts, immigrants can be faced with discrimination, racism and violence (Castles et al., 2014, p. 55). In the next section of this chapter it will be focused on how security concerns can affect the behaviour of receiving states towards migration.

2.2 Migration and Security Concerns

In the recent decades, border control has been shaped by two developments. On the one hand, governments compete for skilled migrants and change the migration policies in accordance to economic booms or downturns. On the other hand, migration is increasingly viewed under the topic of terrorism or security concerns (Goldin et al., 2011, p. 153). The process of “securitisation” in relation to migration is not a constant process, as linking security concerns to migration is not happening everywhere and also not every time. For Western Europe, migration was not being viewed as a security concern between 1945 and 1970 and in other

areas it is still not viewed that way (Castles et al., 2014, p. 198). However, refugee laws in Europe were created and adjusted according to humanitarian problems in the twentieth century. Since then, refugee flows have drastically increased and put more pressure on the refugee system (Goldin et al., 2011, p. 147).

Since the 1970s, the number of migrants increased and a bigger number of migrants are now living in developed countries. This led to a “quest for control” by the states with the goal to keep out people that are deemed undesirable for economic or security reasons. Immigration is regulated in a selective manner through the categorisation of migrants, such as economic beneficial migrants, migrants with family ties in the country or migrants who flee from prosecution. This is done in order to better manage immigration into the state and to decide what type of migrant is allowed to enter. If the state becomes more selective, border surveillance is increased and aims at keeping undocumented migrants from entering the state (Goldin et al., 2011, pp. 121-122). It has also been seen as important to improve identification processes for a better border control. Passports and visas, as well as biometric identifiers are all increasingly required in the migration process (Goldin et al., 2011, p. 154). Furthermore, detention centres have emerged as a method to deal with migrants who do not have adequate documentation. Here, the migrants wait until their application is processed or they have been deported (Goldin et al., 2011, p. 158).

Important actors in the fields of both, securitisation and de-securitisation, are immigration authorities like government employees, political leaders, as well as reporters, editors, migrants and their allies. The media plays an important role as well in their portraying of migrants in their coverages. Furthermore, the process of securitisation has a mass psychological dimension and can demonise migrants as potential terrorists to such a degree that it is creating far exceeding levels of fear which are not resembling actual developments (Castles et al., 2014, pp. 198-199).

Castles et. al. names three key types of threats that are associated with migration: cultural, socio-economic and political threats. Cultural threats assume that migrants challenge the cultural status quo of the receiving society. Aspects like religious identity and linguistic practices of migrants – in the Western world especially that of Muslims recently – have been viewed as cultural threats. Socio-economic threats can be found in connection to certain migrant population in other countries, like Chinese diasporas in South-East Asia or Syro-

Lebanese communities in West Africa. The threat of political disloyalty can be associated with migrant groups from certain regions or countries that are seen as not trustworthy for the receiving state's loyalty. An example would be ethnic Chinese in Indonesia that were suspected of political subversion on behalf of Communist China in the 1960s (Castles et al., 2014, pp. 199-200).

In relation to the state's wellbeing, migrants can however also be viewed in a positive way by increasing the power of the state. Migrants can be seen as facilitators of economic growth, they can serve in the military and their expertise and knowledge can be used in a beneficial way, if effective policies are in effect. Furthermore, migrants can contribute to a state's soft powers, in as they help to achieve foreign policy- and security objectives through better linkages and reputation between sending and receiving countries. In this way, influence can be built in other countries without the need for military or economic resources (Castles et al., 2014, p. 200).

3. Methodology

In this chapter the methodology for this study will be explained, namely the political discourse analysis from Martin Nonhoff. As mentioned in the beginning, laws and political regulations evolve out of hegemonic fights in terms of political discourses. The aim is to analyse these fights within the given data to see changes in the behaviour of the German government and to look for possible influences from other political groups. Therefore, two different types of data will mainly be used. On the one hand, official statements of the government and the political groups will be used in order to analyse the actual wordings of the government and other important actors. On the other hand, secondary literature in form of newspapers, institutions and organisations will be used in order to have a better overview of the actual situation and the outcomes of the government's decisions.

According to Nonhoff's theory, which builds upon the ideas of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, the general structure of the social system is antagonistic and can never be perpetually pacified. Long-lasting social structures can only be established if various social and political

forces agree under a common goal. However, due to the fragility of such alliances, social structures can only work in form of a hegemony (Nonhoff, 2007, p. 7). To better understand this, it is necessary to first clarify a few important concepts.

3.1 Discourse

Discourses are efforts to create a social structure. They are made up of articulations, such as language, objects, subjects, conditions or actions that give a certain meaning in relation to their social context (Nonhoff, 2007, p. 9). Meaning is given by putting two elements in relation to each other, but also by seeing them as different elements. A discourse can be seen in three different dimensions. First, discourses can be understood as conglomeration of several single acts of meaning production. Second, a discourse is in a constant process of arranging articulations. Here, it can be analysed when and how often certain articulations were used. Third, discourses are forming fragile and temporary structures due to the arranging of articulations (Nonhoff, 2007, pp. 175-176).

In other words, a discourse is the process of creating a structured frame for the social system with the help of certain articulations. These articulations are ordered in a certain structure and stand in contrast to other constructs of meaning. During the analysis, these articulation structures – here in form of words – can be analysed in the regulations and statements created by the German government.

If the analysis is within a liberal democracy, which it is, there are several arenas for discourses that exists at the same time and can sometimes even overlap. Each of these discourse arenas are framed under a certain version of the “social whole” (*das Allgemeine*), such as security, prosperity or civil rights (Nonhoff, 2007, p. 178).

Nonhoff also names five types of discourse relations that can be used as an orientation point to better analyse the given data:

1. Representation: “X” stands for “Y”.

2. Difference: “X” is different than “Y”.
3. Equivalence: “X” is different than “Y”, but in relation to “a” it is the same as “X”. This means that under certain circumstances (“a”) the analysed elements are seen as the same but are different elements otherwise.
4. Contrast: “X” is different than “Y” and in relation to “a” even in contrast to each other.
5. “Super-difference relation”: “X” is different than “Y” and has nothing to do with “Y”. This type of discourse relation marks the separation of two discourse arenas (Nonhoff, 2007, pp. 178-179).

During the analysis, it can now be observed what kind of meaning a statement has and in what relation this statement stands. It can for example be observed if certain words and their meanings in statements are different than other words used in the same discourse arena.

3.2 Hegemony and Hegemony Projects

A hegemony highlights the momentary dominant social structure. This structure can be defended, but as is was mentioned before, is in a precarious situation and can be overthrown and changed (Nonhoff, 2007, pp. 11-12). Speaking of a hegemony can have two different meanings. On the one hand, it can mean the dominance of a person or group. On the other hand, it can be associated to a dominant way of thinking, such as conservatism or neoliberalism. An important aspect in both cases is what is demanded. For a discourse analysis, particularly relevant demands are those who aim for the social whole - security, prosperity, civil rights etc. - or try to tackle the lack thereof. Therefore, it is useful to look at the demands of the different interest groups. A hegemony project is now an accumulation or formation of articulations with a common demand. These projects then always aim to become hegemonic. Therefore, the hegemonic project counts as more hegemonic the further and stronger its type of discourse is spread. It can be seen as a hegemony when the demand of the project represents the common will of political and social forces. This can be either through a high quantitative number of subjects who use this type of articulation, or through access to political leaders and institutions (Nonhoff, 2007, pp. 181-184).

In other words, a hegemony is the current dominating way of thinking in society and politics. This means that a discourse in a certain topic, e.g. migration will be seen through the lenses of this hegemony, e.g. neoliberalism. At the same time, other relevant hegemonic projects in this discourse topic will try to achieve hegemonic status, e.g. conservatism.

In order to analyse a political discourse, it is now important to look at the discourse strategy. A discourse strategy is the arrangement of discourse elements in relation to time elapsed. In this case, it is a hegemonic strategy where the hegemonic project aims for hegemonic status. This strategy can either be defensive if it is already in the hegemonic position, or it can be offensive if the hegemonic project is in the opposition to the current hegemon (Nonhoff, 2007, pp. 184-185).

For a political demand to become hegemonic, Nonhoff names three major offensive strategies. The first strategy is the formation of equivalent demands, or an equivalence chain, that goes hand in hand with the main demand. This was already partly addressed in the discourse relations from the previous section. Demands are not the same but can mean the same under a specific circumstance “a”. The circumstance in this situation is the contrary to the demands of the equivalence chain in relation to the social whole. The demands of the equivalence chain are therefore the same in relation to their opposite pole of demands. This then leads to the creation of two confronting chains of demands. The second strategy is therefore the dichotomy of the discourse. The hegemonic project will try to articulate all problems of resistance, lethargy and deficits of the social whole in the contrary chain while it articulates all demands of positive solutions to these problems in their own chain of demands. The third strategy is the strategy of representation, where the demand of the hegemonic project represents the whole equivalence chain of demands. In order to do so, this demand should stand in contrast to every existing deficit of the social whole, while the other demands mostly stand in contrast to only one deficit (Nonhoff, 2007, pp. 186-187).

It should however also be mentioned that in order use these strategies there must be an implementation of borders that marks the space or arena of the discourse. This can be done by referring to a certain version of the social whole (e.g. security, prosperity or healthy environment), as well as by narrowing down the discourse to a specific reference group (e.g. all members of the Catholic Church, all Germans or all citizens). This can however also be used as an additional strategy, when the drawing of the discourse borders is questioned.

Examples can be the demand that the state should not interfere in family life or that politics and religion should be separated (Nonhoff, 2007, pp. 187-188).

In summary, the political discourse analysis is the examination of political topics in form of a discourse made of articulations. Several hegemonic projects with their demands try to achieve hegemonic status in their discourse arena and in relation to a specific version of the social whole. For this they form an equivalence chain of demands with the demand of the hegemonic project as representative. This chain then stands in contrast to a chain of other demands of the same discourse arena.

Nonhoff's concept can be further illustrated with the example of feminism. This way of thinking would portray a hegemonic project, while the discourse arena or the version of the social whole would be called "equality". The demand of feminism would then be "gender equality", as well as other smaller demands, while the contrasting chain of demands could be viewed as "sexist" or "patriarchy". If now the majority of a society or the major political actors of a state articulate in the same manner, feminism would have achieved the position of a hegemony.

The aim for this study now is to identify possible hegemonic projects, or groups of interest in relation to the reference group of refugees and asylum seekers. It can also be observed how certain interest groups argue in the discourse arenas of "security" or "economic prosperity".

4. Context: Europe and the Refugee Crisis

The refugee crisis was strongly influenced by the Arab spring which began in December 2010. This revolution movement spread across the Arab world and caused the death of thousands of people and forced millions of others to leave their homes. Especially in Libya and Syria conflicts led to large refugee flows. In Libya the conflict also led to the migration of over one million African, Asian and European migrant workers who mostly went back home or to neighbouring countries. There have also been migration flows from other African and

Middle Eastern countries, but these flows already existed before and have not significantly increased through the Arab spring. Although most migrants fled to neighbouring countries in the first years of the Arab spring, many European politicians, especially in Italy and Greece already feared a big migration flow towards Europe and wanted their countries to be prepared (Castles et al., 2014, pp. 14-15).

In Europe, as well as in some other regions of the world, refugee policies have become stricter. While in the beginning the regulations were influenced by the Cold War and the welcoming of Eastern refugees, it has developed into a more exclusionary regime with the aim to keep out asylum seekers from the global South. Changes have been made to restrict access to refugee status, temporary protection has been favoured more over a permanent one, bordering states to the EU have been declared safe in order to send migrants back to these countries and European cooperation on asylum and immigration has been strengthened through the Dublin Regulation and other EU agreements (Castles et al., 2014, pp. 225-227).

European states have tried to control migration flows since the 1970s with employer sanctions for the recruitment of undocumented migrants, while giving residence permits to undocumented workers who fulfil certain conditions. However, these policies have not been as efficient as hoped because of the resistance of employers or the fear of migrant workers to regularize due the possible loss of their jobs. An effective border control was also lacking due to insufficient personnel or poor coordination. The EU tried to harmonize these measures in 2007, however there are still disagreements over the directive between member states (Castles et al., 2014, pp. 215-216). Even though international regulations and rules are in place, asylum processes are still strongly influenced by the state's policies. Different states have thus widely different recognition rates for asylum seekers (Goldin et al., 2011, p. 152). Still, since the Lisbon Treaty of 2007, migration and asylum policies are now included as normal issues in the EU governance (Castles et al., 2014, p. 231). Another measure from the EU to control its borders was the establishment of Frontex, which is an intergovernmental agency that integrates the national border security systems of EU member states and provides multilateral border controls (Goldin et al., 2011, p. 156).

Besides the development towards stricter regulations in Europe, there are also interest groups who benefit from migration and want to keep it. These can be actors, such as travel agents, labour recruiters, brokers, interpreters, housing agents, immigration lawyers, human

smugglers or even banking institutions. Migration can become an industry and political measures against it are then in the disrupting the economic interests of these migration agents who want to continue the migration flow. Furthermore, while politicians can make statements to combat migration, at the same time they can also be influenced by employers who lobby to support migration (Castles et al., 2014, pp. 235-238).

5. Context and Political Groups in Germany

As was mentioned in the introduction, Germany is one of the major receiving countries in the world. It does also host a significant number of refugees and asylum seekers that has constantly increased over the years. While in the end of 2010 there have been a bit more than 500.000 refugees and asylum seekers, in the end of 2016 this number increased to over 1.6 million. These numbers increased exponentially, with a rather slow increase in the first years, but especially in 2015 and 2016 the numbers increased drastically (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2017a). The major increase seems to be mainly coming from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq, however the Syrian forced migrants represent by far the greatest number. Here, the numbers increased again exponentially, reaching over 450.000 asylum seekers and refugees in 2016 (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2017b, p. 24). However, it is also interesting to note that especially in 2015 and 2016 the average duration of stay for these people have declined as well. While up until 2013 the average time was around twelve years, in 2016 the average is six years (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2017b, p. 30).

One of the reasons for the arrival of many refugees in Germany was due to the problems of the Dublin system. The actual rules of the system imply that asylum seekers must apply for asylum in the first EU country they arrive in, which would make it nearly impossible to reach Germany. However, in practice the Italian government let asylum seekers march further North in order to reach the other European countries without registering them. Furthermore, a repatriation of asylum seekers to Greece was not enforced due to the already problematic humanitarian conditions in the refugee camps (Münkler, 2016).

Between 2010 and 2017, Germany had two governments. From 2009 until 2013 it was a coalition of the CDU (and its sister party the CSU), as well as the FDP. From 2013 until 2017 the coalition was between the CDU/CSU and the SPD. However, during the whole time Angela Merkel (CDU) was chancellor of Germany while her party was the senior partner in the government (Zeit Online, 2018). As mentioned in the beginning, this study focuses on the influence from the main political actors and groups in the German state, which will be further illustrated in this chapter. It should however be mentioned that the statements of the political groups themselves are not necessarily reflecting their actual behaviour. The positions could also have changed over the years due to various reasons. The groups that will be analysed include the established parties of Germany, the CDU, CSU, SPD, FDP, AfD, the Greens (*Bündnis 90 die Grünen*), the Left (*Linke*), as well as the protest movement PEGIDA.

5.1 CDU

The *Christian Democratic Union of Germany* (CDU) is one of the main parties in the Federal Republic of Germany. In the European Parliament the CDU belongs to the Group of the European People's Party, which has a centre-right political orientation (It's Your Parliament, 2018e). On the national level the CDU is forming a common fraction with their sister party the CSU. Its program is mostly marked by conservative, liberal and Christian-social positions and its voters come rather equally from different occupational groups (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2017e). Together with the SPD it is the strongest party in Germany, although during the timeframe of this study the CDU/CSU, had constantly at least 10% more votes than the SPD (Zicht, 2017).

The CDU seems to communicate viewpoints that aim to stay somewhat centric about the topic by defending the immigration of refugees and asylum seeker while also stating rather strict criteria. The party describes the process of integration for refugees and asylum seekers as “supporting and demanding” (*Fördern und Fordern*). According to this view, the right of residence should depend on the person’s willingness to integrate, which includes learning the

language and culture. Refusal of integration efforts would then lead to cuts of social benefits or restriction of the resident status. It is also emphasised that a quick access to the job market for persons with an estimated right of residence is crucial as well for integration (Konrad-Adenauer-Haus, 2016).

In an interview with the German newspaper *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, the general secretary of the CDU Peter Tauber stated that Germany should not close itself off from the rest of the world and mentioned on request that this also means the possibility of another terrorist attack by some migrants. Furthermore, it is necessary to include migrants in order to fulfil economic and demographic demands and religion would not play an important role in that. On the other hand however, he made it clear that only hard-working migrants with the desired values are welcome, while refugees should leave as soon as the conflict is over (CDU, 2016b). He also sees it as important to reduce the numbers of refugees in Germany, but also distances himself openly from the AfD and agitative opinions on the internet (CDU, 2016a). Mr. Tauber additionally distances himself slightly from statements of the CSU and their word for immigration (*Zuwanderung*) and emphasises a similar word (*Einwanderung*) that is less negatively nuanced (Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung GmbH, 2016).

Overall however, the asylum policies seem to have become stricter. In the government programme plan for 2017 and onwards the CDU agreed with the CSU to a yearly quota of maximum 200.000 immigrants that come due to humanitarian reasons. Other important actions are the continuation of border controls, quicker asylum decisions and returns of asylum seekers, as well as the declaration of more countries as secure countries of origin (CDU, 2017a). Illegal migration and wrong incentives for migration should be stopped and it is also positively emphasised that refugees and asylum seekers are now more often screened and stopped in third countries (CDU, 2017b).

The discourse position of the CDU is difficult to define as it probably changed according to changes in the government's position. However, important aspects seem to be the values of control and safety, while also articulating humanitarian reasons, although the latter seems to have gotten weaker, while the former has gotten more emphasised. Another constant argumentation is the economic importance of useful migrants in the workforce. Comparing these findings with the mentioned security concerns in the theory chapter, the main interest seems to be the "quest for control" with the differentiation of welcomed/skilled and

unwelcomed migrants, as well as the aim for better border control and more economic power through the preferred migrants.

5.2 CSU

The *Christian Social Union in Bavaria* (CSU) can only be voted in Bavaria and is on the national level a part of the CDU. It is also a part of the Group of the European People's Party in the European Parliament (It's Your Parliament, 2018e), however in comparison to the CDU the CSU has a greater emphasis on conservative and Christian values. Furthermore, it aims for more autonomy of the Bavarian state. The CSU has a strong position in Bavaria which allows it to receive over 50% of the votes in most elections. This is partly due to the strong influence of Catholicism and conservatism of the mainly rural population. Furthermore, the CSU can also tend to populism, especially since the competition from the AFD (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2017f).

In their programme plan for the 2017 elections in Germany the CSU openly stated that it wishes a reduction of refugees and asylum seekers migrating to Germany. The party also acknowledged the humanitarian reasons why migrants have to move and their need for protection, however after every acknowledgement it states that there are strict rules to be followed in order to be granted rights and protection in Germany. Furthermore, the CSU demands a quota or “upper limit” (*Obergrenze*) for the annual number of refugees migration into Germany of maximum 200.000 (the one stated in the section about the CDU) and openly demands a high-skilled-migration policy for better controlled migration of desired migrants (CSU, 2017, pp. 4 + 18-19). In the party's plan for the EU the concerns are about the EU's border security, the fight against human trafficking, the support of a faster and stricter asylum- and deportation procedure, as well as the improvement of the refugees situation in their home countries in order to stop migration flows (CSU, 2014). In terms of populism, the articulation against migrants can sometimes be more extreme. During a speech in 2011, the

chairman of the party Horst Seehofer stated that they would fight off immigration into the German welfare system “until the last bullet” (Der Tagesspiegel, 2011).

As a sister party, the CSU seems to be similar to the CDU with their views and goals about refugee- and asylum policies but also a bit more negative. On a discourse level, the intentions of the party appear more blatant in terms of reducing the number of refugees in Germany. Humanitarian reasons are mentioned, but security and border control over migration are far stronger emphasised. Economic interests on the other hand do not seem to play an important role. Agreed restrictions with the CDU, such as the upper limit of 200.000 refugees annually was a demand from the CSU, but was also apparently supported by the majority of Germans (Berliner Morgenpost, 2017b). It could therefore be assumed that the CSU acts less protective of the government’s decisions like the CDU and tends more towards populist demands. In terms of interest groups in the political discourse, the party can be positioned even further towards interests of security control.

5.3 SPD

The *Social Democratic Party of Germany* (SPD) is as mentioned the second strongest party in Germany and was the coalition partner of the CDU in the German government from 2013 until 2017. In the European Parliament it is member of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats which has a social-democratic political orientation (It’s Your Parliament, 2018f). The SPD is the oldest still existing party in Germany and sees freedom, equality and solidarity as their core values. Since 2000 however, it faces a crisis as more traditional social-democratic voters turned away after several new agendas, bad leadership and the establishment of the Left (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2017h).

In the government programme for 2017 – 2021 the SPD names similar goals as the CDU, however, the emphasis seems to be more on the humanitarian aspects. Refugees and their needed provision should be distributed better and with more solidarity in the EU, while border

control and Frontex should be strengthened, but under strict adherence of non-refoulement and the support of a sea-rescue programme in the Mediterranean Sea. While the party wants to fight human trafficking, it is also seen as necessary to enable a legal form of immigration. There seems to be a greater emphasis on good integration and protection of refugees as well, whereas the goal of higher refugee emigration should be achieved by voluntary emigration. Furthermore, the safety of the country is more emphasised when it comes to deportation of refugees. However, the SPD also aims to create an immigration law in order to have a better and more flexible access to qualified workers, although the party also aims to separate economic reasons for migration from humanitarian ones (SPD, 2017, pp. 74-78).

In a political convention from 2015 about the refugee policy of the party, humanitarian reasons are more foregrounded than with the CDU and CSU. Integration is not just articulated as a mere demand towards the refugees, but also as a necessity to create solidarity in the whole German society (SPD, 2015, pp. 1-2). Refugees are therefore shown in a more included fashion than within the CDU and CSU. This can also be seen with the use of quotation marks for “illegal migrants”, implying a critical view of this term. Another aim of the SPD in relation to immigration laws seems to be the enabling of legal immigration of more than just high-skilled workers in order to relieve the asylum system. Lastly, the party also praises and supports the voluntary engagement of German citizens in the assistance of refugee integration. (SPD, 2015, pp. 6-7).

In conclusion, the SPD has many of the same basic goals as the CDU and CSU but emphasises noticeably stronger on the humanitarian aspects and problems of the refugees. Looking at the discourse, refugees appear as more included into society and are described more as victims of conflict rather as a burden. Furthermore, the support and praise of voluntary integration work suggest that the party leans more towards the refugee-accepting parts of the society in comparison to the CSU. While interests of securitization and border control can be found here as well, they are weaker as in the CDU and CSU. Instead the topic of the refugee policy seems to be seen more under demands such as “solidarity”. Furthermore, the SPD also seems to represent the security interests of refugees themselves to some degree.

5.4 FDP

The *Free Democratic Party* (FDP) was the other coalition partner of the CDU from 2009 until 2013. In the European Parliament the party is member of the Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe, which contains several liberal parties (It's Your Parliament, 2018a). This also reflects the political standpoint of the FDP, as it values freedom of the individual. The state should not infantilise its citizens but enable them and protect chances for them. It sees itself as a party of the middle-class and the centre, with most of its voters being freelancers. While the party received their so far best election results in 2009 with 14.6%, their popularity shrank heavily after several domestic controversies surrounding donor favouritism until they have become a laughing stock in satirical programmes. During the 2013 election the FDP even received less than 5% of the votes, which disqualified the party for the parliament in this period of government. Since then the FDP is reforming and slowly gaining more support again (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2017d).

In terms of immigration policies for refugees and asylum seekers, the party aims for more individualisation and suggests a division in different migrant groups, such as individually politically forced migrants, war refugees, and permanent immigrants. Very striking here is the strong emphasis on economic aspects. Permanent migrants will be selected according to the usefulness of their working skills, education and ability to integrate. Refugees will get protection as long as the conflict in their country of origin is going on, however, should the individual fulfil the same mentioned criteria for the job market there is also the possibility for permanent residence rights. The FDP also approves of a faster deportation procedure for non-conforming asylum seekers, as well as a faster and better asylum procedure (FDP, 2018c).

Another aim is to strengthen the EU borders and granting more authority to Frontex, which shows security aims, although the importance of humanitarian sea-rescue endeavours are stated as well (FDP, 2018a). In comparison to the CDU and CSU, the FDP opposes a quota for refugees and set more value on efforts to enable asylum applications outside of Germany in order to stop the dangerous journey to Europe (FDP, 2018d). Similar to the SPD, there is also emphasis on a better distribution of refugees in the EU with binding quotas. The quotas are individually calculated after population, economic power, as well as family ties and

language connections. Countries who deny their engagement should pay into a fund that will be used to support receiving countries and neighbouring countries of the EU (FDP, 2018b).

Looking at the discourse behaviour of the FDP regarding refugee policies, the main emphasis seems to be on economic factors and the emphasis on the individual. Similar to the CDU and CSU, a better control of the European borders appears to be an important demand, however here the interests are less focused on a better securitisation but on a better access to the desired migrants for the job market. Fitting to their standpoints as a liberal party, it can therefore be assumed the FDP is mostly driven by liberal or neo-liberal ideas in the discourse about refugees and asylum seekers. On the other hand, there also seems to be a decent focus on humanitarian aspects, although not as strong as with the SPD.

5.5 AFD

The *Alternative for Germany* (AFD) is a relatively new party and member of the right-wing and Eurosceptic group Europe of Freedom and Democracy in the European Parliament (It's Your Parliament, 2018b). The party was founded in 2013 and was mainly presenting a Eurosceptic view on the European debt crisis. However, since 2015 the liberal-conservative views in the party became less important, while right-wing-popular and national-conservative ideas gained more ground. The party is also criticised for using populist methods and campaigning for right-wing votes by being opposed to increasing migration and pressure on the welfare system. A part of this change towards more right-wing populism was due to the influence of the PEGIDA movement from Saxony and local East-German party leaders who supported more Islamophobic views. This finally led to a division in the AFD with a part of the rather liberal-civic members leaving the party. Nonetheless, the position of the AFD was even stronger in the following regional elections due to the exploitation of the growing dissatisfaction over the rising numbers of refugees in Germany (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2017a).

The topic of immigration appears to be a very important topic and can be found throughout many places in the party's manifesto. In terms of immigration- and integration regulations, the AFD distances itself from the other parties and their policies and sees them as failures. At the same time the party projects itself with its views as a victim of an ideologically-based climate and political correctness and compares its treatment with that of totalitarian states. From an economic standpoint, the German immigration system is seen negatively as well, as this system would rather lead to "immigration into the German social security systems and the low-wage sector, but not into the qualified job market" (AFD, 2018, p. 57).

Furthermore, the party predicts an even greater migration flow in the future and describes the current crisis as merely "the beginning of a gigantic mass migration towards European countries" (AFD, 2018, p. 58). It is therefore argued that the asylum system should be changed in a stricter fashion. Some of these measures include the creation of shelters and asylum centres outside of Europe where asylum seekers have to apply instead of in Germany itself, a faster and stricter repatriation law, as well as the restriction of free movement within the EU. It is also important for the AFD that actual causes of flight are strongly analysed in order to differentiate between migrants who really flee due to war and "irregular migrants" who should not be called refugees at all. The language here appears rather strict and unwelcome towards migrants who have to strictly pass all criteria in order to get protection, while they lose all rights as soon as they do not fit in this group anymore. The party also criticises the current asylum system as misguided humanitarianism and therefore blames it for the drowning migrants in the Mediterranean Sea (AFD, 2018, pp. 58-61).

The AFD opposes the idea of multiculturalism and clarifies that German is the predominant culture in Germany, which also includes the value of Christianity. Although freedom of faith is supported, there is a strong emphasis against the Islamic religion which is seen as incompatible with German culture, values and laws. There is also the effort to differentiate Islam as a religion on one side and Muslims on the other. For example, the party accepts that most Muslims do not pose a threat as they are integrated and law-abiding citizens. However, due to the perceived dangers of Islam an increase of Muslim migrants is seen as a threat to the German society (AFD, 2018, pp. 45-49). Using "Islam" and not "Muslims" as their main focus for criticism could also be seen as a strategy in order to criticise certain migrants without appearing too racist. It should be easier to associate security threats with Islam, but by doing that it is also possible to indirectly associate Muslims with these threats as well.

In comparison to the other parties, the desire for better border control is not associated with the outer border of the EU, but mainly with the German border. The AFD opposes the idea of a unified Europe under the EU, which it views as less democratic. It therefore aims to reduce European cooperation to a loosely connected economic union (AFD, 2018, pp. 15-16). The national security is described as in decline and a stronger law enforcement and emphasis on public safety is therefore seen as important. These demands also include stricter immigration authorities, the establishment of a border police force and the refusal for stricter firearm legislation in order for citizens to protect themselves against criminal activities and terrorism. Immigrants are also partly described as a threat in this regard, as their higher proportion in criminal activities is emphasised (AFD, 2018, pp. 23-26).

Due to the political change over the years and the split-off of parts of its members, the early views of the party should be analysed as well. This is however difficult, as AFD itself has for example removed its manifesto for the 2013 election (Landeszentrale für politische Bildung Baden-Württemberg, 2018), while the press archive of the party only includes more recent statements. Looking at a press release about the 2013 manifesto, asylum policies seems to have had less significance then later. The main concern in terms of immigration was the better control to acquire high-skilled migrants (Focus, 2013). Bernd Lucke, the founder of the AFD who later left the party due to its right shift, even criticised it for acting inhumane regarding the refugee crisis (Spiegel Online, 2016a). The position of the AFD regarding refugees and asylum seekers therefore seems to have become more extreme.

All in all, the AFD appears to be the party who is most focused on the refugee topic. Looking at the discourse behaviour, the articulated tone towards them is even more unwelcome and negative than that of the CSU. The social whole that the party uses to view immigration seems to primarily be “security”, while the demands appear to be that of “protection of German values and wellbeing”. Immigrants, especially Muslims are seen as a threat and their articulation in this regard can be seen as that of populism and scare tactics. Due to their strongly national focus, the EU can also be seen as on the antagonistic side of the discourse strategy. Therefore, the AFD can be viewed as even more dedicated to interests of protection in terms of the securitisation debate, while economic and humanitarian interests of the other parties are unimportant.

5.6 The Greens

Alliance 90/The Greens is a party that is member of the European Free Alliance Greens in the European Parliament that are characterised by green politics (It's Your Parliament, 2018c). Established out of protests against environmental pollution, nuclear energy and nuclear armament, the party receives rather strong support from young and female voters today. The Greens are now more moderate than its more radical beginnings, which makes them more of an established party than an alternative to the older parties that they presented themselves before (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2017g).

Many political demands in regards to asylum policies are similar to that of other parties, such as a faster asylum application procedure, better control of the European borders, the improvement of life conditions in the countries of origin and an improved immigration law that better differentiates refugees from economic migrants. However, the treatment of refugees and asylum seekers is described here in a rather caring way and with an emphasis on the humanitarian aspects. The right for asylum is not articulated as an unwelcome factor, but more as a right and duty that needs to be protected. Similar to the SPD, refugees and asylum seekers are viewed as victims, while the intake of many already accepted immigrants in Germany is praised. In terms of integration, the Greens speak of a “welcoming culture” (*Willkommenskultur*). Although it is also stated that an asylum seeker has to leave Germany if the application for asylum has been declined, several exceptions due to humanitarian reason are emphasised as well. The party is also in favour of a legal route for refugees to Europe in order to prevent human trafficking and supports family reunification of especially Syrian refugees (Bündnis 90 / Die Grünen, 2017).

In total, the discourse language of the Greens appears to be refugee friendly. Refugees and asylum seekers are not seen as potential threats that need to follow a strict set of rules, but rather as victims that need help. The discourse is most similar to that of the SPD, however whereas the SPD emphasises more on solidarity with the refugees, the Greens emphasise more on their victimhood. Also similar to the SPD, interests of refugees and refugee-positive actors seem to be represented by the party as well.

5.7 The Left

The Left is a member of the European United Nordic Green Left in the European Parliament, which consists of left-wing political parties (It's Your Parliament, 2018d). The party's programme is marked by social demands, a partly anti-capitalistic position and consequent negation of military deployments. There are however also internal conflicts about the political views of its members, which makes an exact classification difficult. This can also be seen in the refugee policies of the Left. While the party itself is in favour of a rather welcoming refugee- and asylum policy, which is even more liberal than that of the Greens, its members, especially in Eastern Germany, are more distant to this idea (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2017c).

Similar to the AFD, the Left also criticises the current immigration- and integration system, although from the other side. The system is seen as being too insular, acting too suspicious against refugees and taking their rights away. The party is also against measures to block the escape routes for migrants and aims to “fight against the causes of flight and displacement instead of fighting against refugees” (Die Linke, 2018c). The causes the party views responsible for the refugee crisis can best be compared with views from historical-structural theories. Forced migration is caused by exploitation in unequal trade relations, as well as through the influence of big agrarian companies and transnational corporations. Looking at other demands, the Left appears to be even more in favour of refugees and their needs in comparison to the Greens and SPD. These demands include the stopping of deportation, rights of residence for everyone, better and safer escape routes for refugees and a solidary integration society (Die Linke, 2018c). The Left could therefore be seen as a kind of opposite pole or nemesis to the AFD. This can further be shown in the fact that one of the main topics on the Left's web page is the sole criticism of the AFD, where the party is accused of agitation and radicalisation against refugees (Die Linke, 2018b). However, the Left also criticises the CSU for using right-wing populist policies in regards to refugee policies (Die Linke, 2018a).

In summary, the Left can be seen as the most refugee-friendly party due to its liberal views on immigration policies. Similar to the Greens and SPD, solidarity and the victim status of refugees are mentioned, although not as strongly emphasised. Instead, the discourse language is rather demanding and criticising. Refugees and immigrants in general are welcome, but the fact that they have to come in the first place is seen as a problem of economic exploitation. Therefore, the party does not appear to represent interests of securitisation, but rather views of historical-structural theories. However, due to their refugee-friendly policies the interests of refugee-friendly actors could be represented as well. Due to their opposing position to the AFD, the discourse strategy in relation to refugees seems to be the “protection of people in need” as demand, while aspects like “racism” and “hate” appears to be the antagonistic side. Although articulated in a slightly different way, this does also seem to be the case for the Greens and SPD.

5.8 PEGIDA

The final political group are the *Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the West* (PEGIDA), which is a protest movement that was founded in Dresden (Saxony) 2014. Even though PEGIDA itself claims not to be a right-wing or left-wing movement, the actions of its initiators and followers show a clear leaning towards right-wing ideas. Although its main goal is the circumvention of an Islamisation in the Western world, the movement did not state what they mean by that. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that there is only small number of Muslims in Dresden with around 0.4% while in all of Saxony it is 0.2%. There is also a tendency to emotionally over-simplify the topic or to agitative comments. Lutz Bachman, the founder of PEGIDA for example mentioned during speeches in their demonstrations that refugees would live in luxurious accommodations, while poor pensioners could not even afford a piece of stolen (traditional German Christmas cake) during Christmas. While he distances himself from racist comments when publicly asked, he simultaneously describes migrants as “dirty pack” (*Dreckspack*), “junk” (*Gelumpe*) and “animals” (*Viehzeug*) on Facebook (Pfahl-Traugher, 2015).

The movement is also directed against the political elite in Germany and uses slogans such as “lying press” (*Lügenpresse*) or “traitor of the people” (*Volksverräter*), which are slogans that are similar to those that were used by the National Socialists in the Weimar Republic. Another popular slogan that activists of PEGIDA regularly use is “We are the people” (*Wir sind das Volk*). This slogan was used during protests in the German Democratic Republic against the authoritarian SED regime, however here it is mainly used to legitimise the movement’s views. It represents itself as the will of the people, while simultaneously indicating that migrants and dissidents do not belong to the people (Pfahl-Traugber, 2015).

Looking at the groups statements on their web page, many views resemble those of the AFD. Conservative views about the German culture are held high, while religious fanaticism and Islamisation is seen as threat. There is also a similar negative description on the situation of the German society that could be viewed as a scare tactic. Further demands are a stricter immigration policy with aims to acquire high-quality migrants, more resources for police forces, a law for mandatory integration and the establishment of a looser European economic union with strong sovereign nation states (PEGIDA, 2018).

Looking at the views and discourse language of PEGIDA, the group is very similar to the more recent statements of the AFD. However, especially the more informal statements of its organisers and followers can be seen as even more extreme and are clear signs of right-wing populism. On the other hand, more extreme views could also be caused due to the fact that PEGIDA is not a political party but a movement and can therefore behave differently towards public statements. There is also a strong emphasis on domestic concerns. Due to their similarities, it is also likely that many PEGIDA followers are in favour of the AFD and vice versa. This would make sense, as the AFD was influenced by ideas from PEGIDA. The demands in the political discourse can thus be compared with that of the AFD, a strong emphasis and demand on “national protection”.

5.9 Discourse Strategies and Interest Groups

Having looked at the main political groups in relation to refugees, it is now possible to make an overview of the main interests in these groups and their discourse strategies. The different interests can be divided into four groups: economic concerns, securitisation, humanitarian concerns and foreign policy. These groups are also partially connected, but still possess unique characteristics and different foci in regards to the social whole.

Economic concerns have “economic wellbeing” as their discourse arena or social whole. A popular demand in this regard is the acquisition of high-skilled labour and other necessary migrants for the job market. Supportive demands for this are the effective categorisation of migrants, as well as an efficient border control to achieve this. Parties that articulate in this manner are especially the FDP, but also the CDU and to some degree the SPD. Another demand chain is articulated by the AFD, PEGIDA and partially the CSU, who rather demand the protection of national welfare and see refugees and asylum seekers as negative and therefore as an antagonistic demand chain. Border control is therefore a demand as well, but with a stronger emphasis on stopping migration in general. Refugee quotas can be put in both interest groups, either in accordance to the job market or to reduce the pressure on the welfare system. A third view offers the Left who demands efforts of global equalisation in accordance to historical-structural theories. Border controls and more categorisations are therefore antagonistic.

Securitisation concerns are positioned in the discourse arena of “border control”, but in different ways. The CDU, CSU, FDP and partly SPD and Greens demand a better border control of the EU borders. Smaller demands that vary from party to party in this regard are better screenings of migrants, legal access options and the fight against human trafficking. The AFD and PEGIDA are more focused on national border control with their demands and aim for repatriation and the closing of national borders. Migrants, especially Muslims are viewed as security threat and indicator of terrorism and criminality, which again puts the demand for more migrants on the antagonistic side of the demand chain. The EU could be seen on the antagonistic side as well, as it would weaken the ability of national border control.

Humanitarian concerns are expressed by almost every group, but only accurately in the Left, Greens, SPD and to some extent CDU and FDP. The discourse arena is that of “general

human wellbeing” or “humanitarian duty”. The main demand therefore appears to be the protection of war refugees, while other demands seem to be the protection of human rights and the right to asylum and protection. The contrasting chain of demands could be viewed under terms such as “racism” or “hate”.

Lastly, interests of foreign policy do not directly form a discourse arena of its own but shows the various international interests of the political groups. As with interests of securitisation, most groups support a European focus in regards to the refugee crisis, while the AFD and PEGIDA demand a more national focus. Furthermore, the aid to sending countries can be interpreted in various ways, such as humanitarian aid, economic re-development and better border control through third countries. The standpoints of the single political groups are then similar to the ones in the other three interest groups mentioned above. Now that every important political- and interest group has been exemplified, the next chapter will start with the main analysis of this thesis.

6. Analysis of the Main Events During the Refugee Crisis

Now that the discourse languages and interests of the political groups have been presented, the main events described in the introduction can be analysed. The first section analyses the rather passive German behaviour in the beginning of the refugee crisis. The second section will deal with the increasing refugee flow towards Germany and the more welcoming position in 2015. Section three comments on the growth of negative positions and harsher policies. The Turkey deal with the EU will be discussed in section four. Finally, section five analyses the discussion about an “upper limit” (quotas) for refugees in Germany.

6.1 Beginning of the Refugee Crisis and Reserved Positions in Germany

The first years of the refugee crisis does not appear to have been as important as the more recent years since mid-2015. As mentioned before, the number of refugees and asylum seeker increased exponentially over the years, but only drastically since 2015. In a study of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge) about the German refugee situation in 2014 the main reason for refugees to choose Germany was the respect for human rights, as well as other protective rights. The majority of these refugees stated the wish to stay permanently in the country. It is also interesting to note that the biggest part of refugees consisted of Christians with 37.3%, while Muslims only made out 16.8% (Worbs, Bund, & Böhm, 2016, pp. 5-8).

There were also still efforts for better immigration regulations in order to receive more high-skilled migrants. These regulations started in 2005 but were further improved in 2012 (Heckmann, 2016, p. 10). Although PEGIDA was already created in 2014 and attacks on asylum shelters started to increase, it did not yet reach the levels of the later years. Support for PEGIDA even started to dwindle during the spring of 2015 (Heckmann, 2016, p. 14).

The role of Germany in the first years seems to have been still rather refugee friendly in comparison to many other European countries. In a speech about the condition of Germany in 2013, Angela Merkel boasted that Germany paid 340 million Euro to support the situation of refugees outside of Germany, but she also stated that it was the first EU member who allowed the accommodation of 5.000 Syrian refugees in the country (Die Bundeskanzlerin, 2013). Later in the same year, while many European countries either ignored the crisis or viewed refugees negatively, the German government promised to offer temporary residence to 10.000 Syrian refugees (Amnesty International, 2013b). Minister of state for migration, refugees and integration Maria Böhmer also stated humanitarian reasons for why German society should help Syrian refugees integrate and protect them. She also spoke of the importance of a “welcoming culture” (Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung, 2013b). At the end of 2014, all members of the EU only took 36.300 of the 380.000 refugees that were marked by the United Nation Human Rights Council (UNHCR) as in need of protection. Germany

granted the accommodation of 20.000, more than all other EU members together (Amnesty International, 2015a).

However, in comparison to the actual numbers of refugees and the later numbers of asylum seekers, the German contribution was still minimal. The German government’s attention towards the refugee crisis therefore seems positive, but rather reluctant. This can further be shown in the importance of the refugee topic in the annual report of the government. The term “refugee” does only appear once in the 2010/2011 report, five times in the 2012/2013 report and nine times in the 2013/2014 report. In comparison, in the report for 2014/2015 it is mentioned 86 times, in the 2015/2016 report 105 times and in the 2016/2017 report still 31 times (Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung, 2011, 2013a, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017)¹.

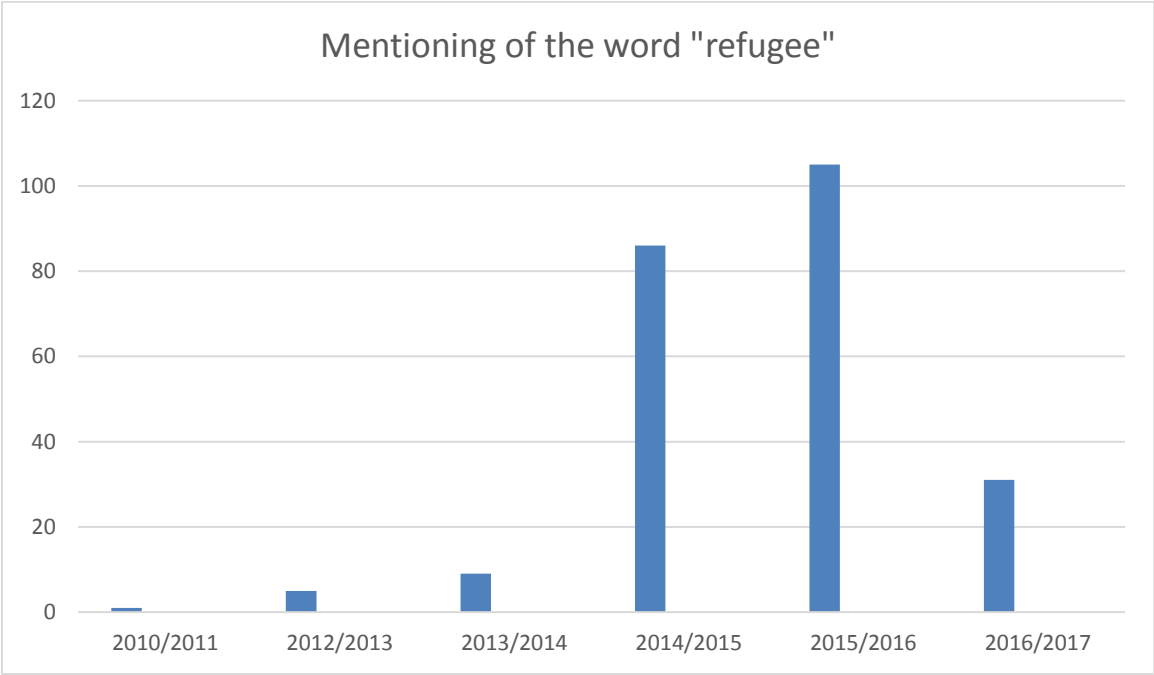


Table 1. Mentioning of the word “refugee” in the annual reports of the German government from 2010 until 2017

Another repeating aspect is the “outsourcing” of the refugees on the EU and its members. In 2013 the German secretary of the interior Hans-Peter Friedrich demanded a common European acceptance for Syrian refugees, while also emphasising that Germany would primarily focus on regional aid in Syria and the surroundings. The accommodation of 5.000

¹ The annual report for 2011/2012 was not available on the page of the German government.

Syrian refugees are described as symbols of humanity and solidarity (Bundesministerium des Innern, 2013). In 2011 Friedrich stated that the refugee situation in Northern Africa would not be that of a mass flight and that Italy should negotiate with Tunisia about the repatriation of refugees. Also interesting to note here is his statement that countries only receive European solidarity once its capacities are overstrained (Bundesministerium des Innern, 2011). On the one hand, this shows that the German government wishes to have a rather small and distant role in the refugee crisis and relies on other countries instead. On the other hand, the mention of solidarity in 2013 after it was denied before might be a sign of the government's willingness to improve the situation once it changes for the worse.

The rather distant behaviour of the government can also be seen with its reaction towards the Lampedusa tragedy in 2013 near Italy, where several hundred refugees drowned due to a shipwreck. Demands for an increased accommodation of refugees to relieve Italy were declined, arguing that Germany would already accommodate more refugees than Italy (Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung GmbH, 2013). Amnesty International also criticised Merkel for staying too passive with sea-rescuing efforts in the Mediterranean Sea, while also tolerating an isolating and rather inhumane European border policy towards refugees and asylum seekers (Amnesty International, 2013c). The lack of legal access to Europe also forced many refugees to cross the sea, leading to thousands of deaths (Amnesty International, 2015a). Furthermore, the government is also criticised for not taking in more refugees according to their economic strength and for not providing enough personnel for the asylum procedure (Amnesty International, 2013a).

Interests of border control still seem to have a strong influence on the government's decisions. In 2014, the Italian sea operation "Mare Nostrum", which was praised for saving thousands of refugees at sea, was replaced with the less extensive and less financed Frontex operation "Triton" (Amnesty International, 2015a). The then German secretary of the interior Thomas de Mazière argued for the Frontex operation, viewing Mare Nostrum as "emergency aid" that "turned out as a bridge to Europe" which could not continue. He argued for a better European border control and emphasised the importance European coordination, the fight against human trafficking and the registering of refugees in arriving countries like Italy. (Die Bundesregierung, 2014).

In February 2014 Merkel herself praised countries such as Jordan and Turkey for its efforts to accommodate many refugees and considered further support for it. Additionally, she mentioned that although not as much as Turkey, Germany has housed 28.000 Syrian refugees since 2011. However, it was also stated that further engagement would depend on more support in Europe and on decisions of the United Nations Security Council (Die Bundeskanzlerin, 2014b, 2014c). Looking at Merkel's arguments, it can be seen that she shows sympathy and willingness to help in regards to the refugee crisis, but also wishes to not engage too much with it. Considering the geographical distance of Germany and the willingness of other European countries to help, however still shows a careful, but rather refugee-friendly behaviour of Merkel that can still further increase according to the growth of the crisis. Later that same year, she still emphasised the goal of regional improvement and security in order for people to not flee in the first place, but also mentioned the necessity to accommodate further refugees (Die Bundeskanzlerin, 2014e). Furthermore, she viewed refugees as one of the weakest groups in society and understands it as a responsibility to help them (Die Bundeskanzlerin, 2014d).

Yet Merkel also emphasises different values for refugees from different countries. While refugees from Libya were seen as accepted refugees by Merkel in 2011, refugees from countries such as Tunisia were not due to the higher guarantee of freedom in this country (Die Bundeskanzlerin, 2011). This shows a rather strict interpretation of what can be considered a refugee. The level of security and conflict seem to play an important part in the definition of a refugee for the German government. With the worsening of the conflict in the Middle East and continuing refugee flows in 2014, Merkel still showed humanitarian concerns for refugees from Syria and Iraq, but also wishes to declare more South-Eastern European countries as secure in order to have more capacity for the refugees "who need help the most" (Die Bundeskanzlerin, 2014d). There seems to be less support for economically caused asylum seekers and there are also first statements of an overburdened migrant situation (Die Bundeskanzlerin, 2014a). Similar statements were made by de Mazière, where he argues – partly in order to convince the Greens - for the importance of stopping "migration out of poverty" (Armutsmigration) from safe countries of origin. (Die Bundesregierung, 2014).

In summary, the position of the German government in the beginning of the crisis was rather distant, but still refugee friendly. Refugees from countries in Northern Africa and the Middle-East with current conflicts are accepted as victims that need humanitarian help and German

accommodation efforts seem to have been greater than that of other European countries. However, the major aim seems to be on supporting other regions financially, while the number of accommodations is still low in regards to Germany's economic capabilities. The government appears to not wish to deal with the accommodation of refugees alone and relies on additional international help. At the same time, the problems for refugees at the EU borders is not paid that much attention, while more emphasis is put on fighting human trafficking and improving refugee registration at the borders. Incidents such as the Lampedusa tragedy or operation Triton further show the government's wish for more border control, while not being too involved with taking care of refugees and asylum seekers. There is also a clear difference between asylum seekers from Libya, Syria and Iraq who are seen as real humanitarian victims, whereas asylum seekers from other countries are seen as economic migrants and therefore not worthy of protection.

Furthermore, the topic of refugees becomes more prominent with each year. Especially since 2014 many statements of the chancellor are dedicated to this topic. And even though it can be argued that the government could have been more engaged, there are still signs of increasing support and care. If this is caused due to the SPD as coalition partner from 2013, due to widening of the refugee crisis or due to another aspect is difficult to say. Especially Merkel's arguments and use of words have some parallels with that of more refugee friendly parties in Germany and could perhaps explain the later increased involvement in 2015. Nonetheless, she also differentiates between humanitarian and economic asylum seekers. On economic terms, the aim to get more skilled workers seems to have been a concern for general immigrants in the early stages of the crisis or slightly before that, however the later emphasis seems to have been more in terms of a possible overburdening.

Looking at the migration theories, the government's behaviour can be partially seen in the sense of historical-structural theories with an interest for more high-skilled workers and a better registration of refugees. In terms of functionalist theories, there appears to be several barriers for refugees and asylum seekers, but also some pull factors, such as the demand for high skilled workers and the value of humanitarian concerns. The latter one can also be viewed in the lenses of the migration system theory. The concerns for humanitarian aspects could have indirectly influenced some migrants to move towards Germany.

All in all, the discourse behaviour of the German government can be seen as a mixture of European border control interests, economic reasons and humanitarian concerns. Of these three the humanitarian aspect seems to have been articulated the most, however border control

interests have had a strong influence on the actual decisions. For a more detailed picture it is therefore important to further look at the events from 2015.

6.2 Stronger German Involvement in the Refugee Crisis

As mentioned before, 2015 was the first year where the numbers of refugees and asylum seekers increased drastically. By the end of this year, Germany became the largest recipient of new asylum claims in the world with 441.800 claims (International Organization for Migration, 2016, p. 4). This was an increase of 135% in comparison to 2014 and most of the new asylum seekers came from Syria (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, 2017, p. 14). The sudden high numbers of refugees and asylum was due to the increasing importance of the Balkan route for these migrants (Münkler, 2016). In the summer of 2015, thousands of refugees and asylum seekers who used this route were stuck in countries such as Macedonia, Serbia and Hungary, where they feared abuse and violence from criminal groups and public authorities (Amnesty International, 2015b). At the same time, the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees accidentally published a statement regarding the suspension of the Dublin procedure for Syrian citizens², which led to many asylum seekers stopping the application process in Hungary with the intention of going to Germany (Blume et al., 2016, p. 2).

On the 31st of August 2015, Merkel then held a conference about the government's domestic- and foreign policies where she mentioned the refugee topic intensively. Here, the tone towards refugees seems even more supportive than before. During the conference, she also praised the voluntary work and positive reactions towards refugees in Germany, mentioned that most Germans would be welcoming and cosmopolitan and stated that the German job market would be capable of absorbing even more people. Refugees are viewed as people in need that would require help, while the duty of humanitarian aid for them is emphasised and hate against refugees strictly criticised. It was even expected that around 800.000 asylum

² The director of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees sent an internal message with the name "Rules of procedure for the suspension of the Dublin procedure for Syrian citizens". This message was inexplicably received by the media and broadcasted to the public. The Federal Office for Migration and Refugees therefore were forced to make this statement official.

seekers could come until the end of that year, including many family reunifications and long-lasting stays. However, there does also seem to be a visible emphasis on economic interests, such as a quick and efficient integration of refugees in the German job market. Continued wishes for more European cooperation have been made as well. The most famous part however was the following statement: “Germany is a strong country. The motive we need to approach these things must be: We can accomplish this”. (Die Bundeskanzlerin, 2015e).

The phrase “We can accomplish this” (*Wir schaffen das*) has become a popular and often repeated statement in German media that aimed to showcase Merkel’s refugee policies (Heißler, 2016) (Diez, 2015) (Spiegel Online, 2016c). It was also repeated multiple times by Merkel herself during speeches where she defended her policies (Spiegel Online, 2016b) (Blume et al., 2016). It is also considered that Merkel’s positive attitude towards refugees might have further encouraged them to come to Germany. For the next three months Syrian asylum seekers were not sent back to the first EU country of arrival and their asylum applications were respected (Amnesty International, 2016a).

Looking at what was happening, it appears that the German government changed its attitude from a rather distant supporter of refugees to a more active one. Especially Merkel presents herself in a strongly positive way towards refugees and asylum seekers. However, there seems to have been other interests for the accommodation of these refugees aside from humanitarian ones. According to Herfried Münkler, it was foreseeable that a closure of German borders would have led to the end of the Schengen area and maybe the end of the EU itself. It was also feared that Germany could then be blamed for this development, especially considering its central position in the EU. Furthermore, the closing of German borders would have led other countries to do the same, if they were not doing this already. Half a million refugees would then be stuck in several Balkan states with brittle stability, which then again could lead to violent unrest and the collapse of civil order. The decision of the German government to accommodate these refugees was done as an emergency solution and without a long-term plan (Münkler, 2016, p. 2).

Considering these geopolitical interests in this situation, the decision to be stronger engaged with the accommodation of refugees could be seen as a flight-forward strategy or even as the lesser of two evils, where the only two choices were either complete openness or complete closure. Already a few days before Merkel’s speech, the prediction for arriving asylum

seekers that year was raised to 800.000, four times more than last year (Blume et al., 2016, p. 1). Knowing of the increasing number of refugees and asylum seekers, the openness towards refugees could also be seen as a sign of support towards the EU. In this regard, the mention of a capable German job market that can absorb more people might not just be a sign of economic interests, but also international interests that aim to relieve the pressure on European border countries. Münkler also states that Germany's actual plan was to gain more time in order to relieve EU border states such as Greece and to better secure the European borders. In the meantime, Germany would absorb the pressure until a common European solution would be found (Münkler, 2016, p. 2).

It can therefore be argued that interests of border control played an important part as well, namely control of the European borders. It has already been shown in this study that European cooperation is viewed positively by the German government. Therefore, international interests of containment and security seem to play an important part in the German government. Furthermore, the central role that Germany possesses in the EU and its highly export-oriented economy (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2017b) would be strong incentives for Germany to keep the EU intact. Another indirect influence factor for the openness towards refugees would then be that of economic interests. The accommodation of Syrian refugees would prevent the closing of borders and therefore guarantee a stable EU with free internal movement. All in all, the decision to be more open - at least until a European solution can be found - seems to have been the more beneficial option, regardless of humanitarian reasons.

However, even though humanitarian concerns do not seem to play as much of a role as it was evident in the beginning, it still does play an important role. This especially seems to be the case with chancellor Merkel, who argued strongly in support of refugees from Syria during her conference. The choice of words and style of articulation has many aspects of more refugee-friendly parties, like the Greens, the Left or the SPD. This is further made clear by the fact that all three parties even praised Merkel's refugee policies (Willner, 2016) (Alexander, 2015), while she faces criticism from parts of her own party and the sister party CSU (Issig & Vitzthum, 2015) (Focus, 2016b). It can therefore be argued that at least Merkel herself had a refugee-friendly attitude that appears to be even too high for the discourse interests of her own party.

In conclusion, the decision to have a rather welcoming policy towards Syrian refugees seems to have been partly made as an effort to save the EU and the stability of its members. The situation in the first years of the crisis allowed Germany to have a more distant role, which was no longer possible since 2015. Interests of more border control at the European borders, as well as economic interests in terms of free internal movement in the EU seem to be important factors influencing the government's actions. Nonetheless, the decision of the government led to a more refugee-friendly policy, while chancellor Merkel articulated an even greater support than many others. Humanitarian interests therefore still played an important role and probably have influenced the decisions of the government, given the strong position of Merkel. Due to Merkel's influence, the influence of the SPD in the government is rather questionable.

Looking at Merkel's emphasis on humanitarian concerns and the seemingly general welcoming attitude of many Germans, it can also be argued that interest demands of humanitarian help have gained more ground in the political discourse. However, due to still ongoing protests against the accommodation of more refugees, it has not yet reached a hegemonic status. In terms of migration theories, the behaviour of the government seems to be best described with functionalist theories. Due to the geopolitical situation, pull factors for refugees have increased and barriers decreased in order to relieve European border countries. From the standpoint of the migration system theory, the welcoming attitude of the German government could further explain the even higher numbers of asylum seekers in the following months. The next chapter will analyse how this situation evolved in Germany.

6.3 Increasing Criticism and Harsher Asylum Policies

While in 2015 the attitude of many Germans and the German government was welcoming towards refugees, criticism inside Germany was rising as well. The number of criminal offences against asylum shelters in 2015 rose to 1031, which was a five-fold increase in comparison to 2014. Refugees faced increasing hostility in some areas of Germany. The government condemned the violent acts and similar cases of hate crime, but it lacked an efficient plan to solve this situation. There have also been anti-refugee protests from groups

such as PEGIDA, AFD and other smaller far-right groups (Amnesty International, 2016b, pp. 41-43). Part of the rising dissatisfaction was the still not shrinking number of new arriving asylum seekers at the end of 2015, the realisation that the integration process would be more complicated than thought and first predictions that showed a lack of available positions on the job market (Münkler, 2016, p. 3). Public opinion towards refugees further worsened after the incident on New Year's Eve 2015/2016 in Cologne. During the nightly celebrations several hundreds of women were sexually assaulted or robbed by criminal groups. Most culprits appear to have come from several Northern-African and Middle-Eastern countries (Guinan-Bank, 2017).

Another form of protest came from other European countries. The government - and in particular Merkel - was criticised for deciding to take-in the Syrian refugees without prior consultation with the European Parliament. Furthermore, the hoped-for European engagement for a common solution towards the refugee crisis was not coming and most European member states refused their participation. Some Central-European countries even viewed the refugees as a pure German issue (Münkler, 2016, p. 2).

As mentioned in the previous section, Merkel was also criticised in her own party, as well as in the CSU. Her liberal refugee policy, it was argued, would be the reason for even more refugees deciding to come to Germany (Fried, 2015). In early 2016 more than 40 party members of the CDU openly rebelled against the chancellor and criticised her liberal refugee policies. Due to the number of new refugees they feel that "we are on the verge of our country being overwhelmed" and therefore asked Merkel to resume applying the EU's Dublin asylum regulations (Connolly, 2017) (Focus, 2016a). In the CSU, Horst Seehofer complained that Merkel's refugee policy was wrong and demanded an quota for refugees, which Merkel declined (Issig & Vitzthum, 2015). Markus Söder, another high-ranking CSU member even went further and posted a statement on Twitter where he compared uncontrolled and illegal immigrants with the terrorist of the Paris attacks in 2015 (Vitzthum, 2015).

A few days after her decision to accommodate the Syrian refugees, Merkel herself defended her policies and praised again the welcoming attitude of many German citizens who greeted and helped the new arriving refugees. She also stated again the humanitarian duty of protecting people in need. Towards the claim of an exaggerated willingness to welcome refugees, she made the following statement:

“I honestly have to say: If we now have to begin to apologise for showing a friendly face during an emergency situation, then this is not my country” (Die Bundeskanzlerin, 2015b).

This further shows the rather special position of Merkel and the inner conflicts in the government concerning the refugee policies. However, there are also other aspects in her speech showing continued interests in border control. Merkel emphasised the importance of hot spots in Italy and Greece in order to better distribute arriving refugees, while already planning talks with Turkey (Die Bundeskanzlerin, 2015b).

While statements were rather positive at first, Merkel’s later statements towards her policies have become more reluctant. During statements at the end of 2015, the main concern in regards to refugees seems to be the search for a common European solution, more distribution in other countries, a better registration of asylum seekers and the reduction of arriving refugees. Emphasis on humanitarian duties has gotten weaker in comparison to earlier statements (Die Bundeskanzlerin, 2015c) (Die Bundeskanzlerin, 2015d). One year after her phrase “We can accomplish this”, Merkel now distanced herself from it. In an interview, Merkel stated that she thinks people often overrated her phrase, while some would even feel provoked. (Meckel & Schmitz, 2016) (Welt, 2016b) (Schuler, 2016). Part of the reason for this appears to be a compromise to Horst Seehofer’s demand for refugee quota, a shrinking popularity for the CDU and the rise of the AFD (Meckel & Schmitz, 2016). She also still defended her decision to take-in the Syrian refugees in 2015, while also stating that she prepared for this situation to not happen again. In her opinion, the decision to accommodate these refugees was not the mistake, but the lack of a reformation for the European Dublin system (Welt, 2017) (Schuler, 2016).

Looking at the changes in Merkel’s behaviour and use of words, it appears that she slowly moved away from her liberal position due to increasing pressure from several sides. Dwindling popularity, rebellion in her own party and the rise of the AFD appear to be the main factors inside of Germany, while the absence of help from other European countries were further problems. Taking in consideration that the liberal stance in 2015 was rather an emergency solution while still hoping for a common European engagement, it makes sense that the high level of German engagement would not persist over a longer time and without international support. Overall, Merkel’s position is now closer to that of her own party again, where the visible emphasis is now moving towards that of border control. However, her stance towards refugees still seems to be rather friendly and there are no signs of more

extreme views such as with the AFD, PEGIDA or even some members of the CSU. Nonetheless, pressure from these groups could still have had an effect on Merkel's shifting position.

Following the increasing protests, it is also no wonder that the legal treatment of refugees and asylum seekers got stricter as well. New laws were adopted by the German government in order to restrict rights of refugees and asylum seekers, such as family reunification and tighter residence rights. Syrians, Iraqis and Afghans now received less frequently full refugee status and more likely only subsidiary protection. Furthermore, the number of Afghan asylum seekers who were deported back to their home country due to a rejected application increased despite the worsening security situation in Afghanistan (Amnesty International, 2017). Some of the changes appear to be derived directly from single events. Following the New-Year's-Eve incident in Cologne, secretary of the interior de Mazière stated that not all refugees should be viewed as general suspects, but also announced efforts to declare more Northern-African states as secure countries. The countries that were targeted were the same countries were most of the culprits appeared to have come from (Guinan-Bank, 2017). Another reaction towards the incident were new measures that aimed for a quicker repatriation of delinquent migrants (Hanewinkel, 2016a).

In total, the German government appeared to aim for a more reluctant position towards refugees, similar to that of the first years. Especially Merkel's position is still friendly but moved to a more pragmatic position due to increasing pressure. Her public statements now appear more towards that of her own party. While interests of border control were never gone, they have now become more emphasised again. Articulations of a welcoming behaviour and humanitarian duties on the other hand have decreased. Due to this shift, it appears that the discourse fight for hegemony between the different interest groups is more even now. The lack of a dominant position in the discourse might also explain the increasing struggles within public opinion and the government. It also seems that articulations of economic interests have decreased as well. Whether that is due to the absence of the FPD in the government or because of a saturation of the German job market is not completely visible. However, the tendency seems to be more to the latter one. In comparison to earlier years, there were more tendencies towards more extreme positions, such as Merkel's earlier defences on the one side

and statements of the CSU on the other. This is probably due to stronger German involvement in the refugee crisis and the impossibility of remaining a more distant actor. Viewing from the position of the migration theories, the government appears to react similar again to the position mentioned in 6.1. This means that pull factors have been reduced again, while more barriers have been enforced. This can be further shown in the next two sections.

The increasing protests and change of public opinion within Germany and the German government also seem to show a divide between domestic and international interests. On the one hand, domestic interests in terms of national protection and relieve of social systems appears to have gained more influence through pressure on the government. On the other hand, international interests of stabilising the EU received less support than expected from other countries. Therefore, more extreme groups such as the AFD and PEGIDA do not appear to have had a direct influence on the articulation of the government, but probably had an indirect influence on new refugee policies by adding further pressure. The domestic interests also appear to be more in line with interests of these parties, including the CSU, which would further show the increasing indirect influence of these groups. The last two sections will analyse events that occurred during the same time span that has been discussed here but will focus more precisely on a single topic.

6.4 The Refugee Crisis and the Deal with Turkey

Another important decision on the international level was the deal between the EU and Turkey. The EU-Turkey statement was agreed on the 18th of March 2016 as a consequence of the Syrian refugee flow into Europe and aims to end irregular migration from Turkey into the EU. The agreement states that from the beginning the 20th of March all new refugees who came illegally to Greece will be sent back to Turkey, while Turkey will stop new sea- or land routes for irregular migration. In return, the EU will take a legally accepted Syrian refugee from Turkey for every returned refugee, but to an upper limit of 72.000 and will allow Turkish citizens to enter the EU without a visa, as long as Turkey fulfils the necessary requirements. Furthermore, the EU will grant Turkey 3 billion Euros for the refugees in the

country and aims to activate a voluntary humanitarian admission scheme once irregular crossings have been reduced (European Commission, 2016).

The EU-Turkey statement appears to have been quite successful in reducing the numbers of arriving refugees and asylum seekers. According to the European commission, the agreement has reduced the daily number of arriving people from 1.740 to between 50 and 80 (Cremer, 2017). Looking at statistics from the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, the number of applications for asylum in Germany started to fall drastically a few months after the implementation of the agreement and have kept staying low until now (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, 2018, p. 6). In 2015, the number of applications were 476.649 and reached 745.545 in 2016. In 2017, the number was reduced to 222.683 (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, 2018, p. 3).

The agreement with Turkey was controversial, as several human rights organisations criticised Turkey for its bad treatment and increasing violation of human rights (Hanewinkel, 2016b). Refugees face deficits in access to schools, the job market, social services and medical care and it is also possible that refugees in Turkey can further be repatriated back to Syria or Afghanistan. (Cremer, 2017). Another problem is the fragile relation between Turkey and the EU. On the one hand, Turkey can be seen as the gateway to Europe and resembles an important geopolitical partner. On the other hand, western countries criticise Turkish domestic-political developments and its diplomatic closeness to Russia. The failed military coup in July 2016 and a series of terrorist attacks additionally led to increasing problems with the EU (Tekin, 2017, p. 1). On the European side, the agreement with Turkey appears problematic as well. The UNHCR and MSF ‘Doctors Without Borders’ criticised the situation in Greek hotspots, stating that they would evolve to trapping centres where humanitarian needs and protection would not be considered (Hanewinkel, 2016b).

Cooperation with Turkey in regards to the refugee crisis seems to have been an important goal for the German government since at least 2015. As mentioned in section 6.2, Merkel already stated in her “We-can-accomplish-this” speech her intentions of creating refugee hotspots in Italy and Greece, while planning talks with Turkey. She also praised Turkey for its efforts in the refugee crisis like she did in the years before (Die Bundeskanzlerin, 2015e). In a later conference, while asked what she would do about the human rights issue in Turkey, Merkel reacted rather reluctant. She stated that she would take action in these regards, but she did not

actively criticise the Turkish government or made any clear articulations towards humanitarian efforts that would resemble the same level of engagement like it was with the situation in Germany (Die Bundeskanzlerin, 2015a). After the failed military coup in Turkey, Merkel articulated a rather neutral position by partly criticising the Turkish legal situation on the one side, but also criticising the military coup and emphasising the importance of continuing talks on the other (Die Bundeskanzlerin, 2016b). Merkel later even defended the deal with Turkey, stating it would be crucial for the fight against human trafficking (Welt, 2016a), and contemplated over the establishment of similar agreements with other countries (Die Bundeskanzlerin, 2016a). Her support for the agreement was also criticised by the SPD and CSU, but due to different reasons. While the SPD was worried about Turkish compliance with important EU rules and rights, the CSU criticised the possible visa-free movement of Turkish citizens. The problematic humanitarian situation of the agreement was criticised by neither of them directly (Becker & Weiland, 2016) (Spiegel Online, 2016d).

The behaviour of Merkel shows that her position towards such an agreement does not seem to have changed considerably over time. Aside from slight criticism due to humanitarian issues in Turkey, the articulation appears almost apologetic and understanding due to the simultaneous praising of Turkey. Merkel's rather indifferent attitude appears to stand in contrast to the humanitarian duties she valued in August 2015, even though refugee hotspots and talks with Turkey were already mentioned. This seems to further showcase the importance for the German government to achieve European border control as was discussed in section 6.2. The geopolitical importance of Turkey in this regard is probably also one of the factors for the rather mild criticism of Turkish human rights issues. Furthermore, the increasing unfriendly opinion towards refugees in Germany could have further strengthened the support of such an agreement. Overall, humanitarian concerns outside of the EU appear to play a less important, or at least less emphasised part in comparison to the situation inside the EU. The criticism of the SPD and CSU further shows that Merkel's position in this regard seems to be quite equal to that of her own party, namely the importance of border control, but without too strong emphasis on anti-migrant opinions.

In conclusion, the EU-Turkey statement seems to have been prepared since an increasing number of refugees and asylum seekers were arriving over the Balkan route. There is no strong visible change in Merkel's articulation towards the deal, neither during her more liberal refugee position nor later during her more reluctant stance. The importance of European

border control is therefore even stronger visible here than with other situations that were discussed before. It also further shows the apparent wish of the German government to not receive more refugees and to not be as engaged in the refugee crisis as before. The discourse behaviour is therefore similar to that of the first years, but with a stronger emphasis on European border control and less on economic interests. Humanitarian concerns are partly addressed, but in a weaker way as before. Theory-wise, it can be said that the government has increased their migration barriers and reduced their pull factors.

6.5 Talks about Refugee Quotas in Germany

In comparison to the deal with Turkey, the idea of a quota or “upper limit” was not immediately agreed upon by the entire government. The idea was brought up by Horst Seehofer from the CSU as a reaction to Merkel’s liberal refugee policies in 2015, while Merkel herself was strictly against it (Issig & Vitzthum, 2015). Even in 2016, when the government started to be more restrictive again, Merkel still refused a quota of 200.000 refugees a year, stating that such a measure would not be compatible with the German constitution. SPD and opposition were also criticising the impracticality of such an upper limit (Hanewinkel, 2016a). However, in October 2017 during exploratory talks for the upcoming governmental coalition, Merkel eventually came to an agreement with the CSU that Germany would not accept more than 200.000 humanitarian-issue-related migrants annually. Admittedly, this agreement was more flexible than the proposal from the CSU. If refugees or asylum seekers leave Germany due to various reasons, the number of leaving migrants could then be added to the maximum limit of new refugees in that year. The actual number can also be changed according to national and international developments and after ruling of the government and parliament (Hanewinkel, 2017). This compromise was then later also accepted by the SPD (Die Freie Welt, 2018) and implemented into the new coalition agreement for the next government (Bundesregierung, 2018, p. 14).

Looking at this development, it appears that the government shifted even further towards refugee-restrictive policies. Even though the compromise is now more flexible than it was proposed by the CSU, it can still be seen as gain for Seehofer, who also stated that he would be satisfied with the deal (Berliner Morgenpost, 2017a). It is also another visible interest towards more border control, and this time not the European border but the German one. This shift is also viewed by many as a measurement against the AFD, which gained many votes from the conservative parties after the last election in 2017. An agreement to an upper limit would therefore be a partial yielding towards the AFD in order to regain the lost votes (Connolly, 2017). Although this seems plausible, it should also be kept in mind that the AFD itself still criticised this agreement. According to the party's deputy chairwomen Beatrix von Storch, 200.000 refugees annually, especially from Muslim countries, would still be too much. She therefore demands the closing of the German borders, the cancellation of refugee-related international conventions, as well as the repatriation of the refugees that arrived due to Merkel's liberal policies (Die Freie Welt, 2018). Therefore, even if the government's behaviour is moving more towards restrictions, there are still big differences to groups such as AFD and PEGIDA.

Looking at other European countries, a restriction to 200.000 refugees annually is still a rather high number in comparison to most other EU members. With further dropping refugee numbers arriving in Germany, a limit of 200.000 is also not considered as unrealistic (Connolly, 2017). In terms of the agreement's articulation, it can be viewed as a compromise as well. The word "upper limit" (*Obergrenze*) was removed and changed to the softer description "the total number of the intake based on humanitarian reasons ... shall not exceed 200,000 a year" (Connolly, 2017). Merkel herself used the term "breathing cap" (*atmender Deckel*) (Berliner Morgenpost, 2017a). This shows that the government still tries not to show a too extreme or restrictive appearance. Still, the decision to set an upper limit where there was none before, especially while arguing that the quite similar proposal from the CSU would be against the constitution, shows that the government has again moved towards more restricted asylum policies.

In conclusion, the agreement to limit the annual number of new refugees in Germany is a further shift towards more restrictions against refugees in the pursuit of more border control. This further shows increasing barriers in terms of functionalist theories, but this time more visible for Germany itself. This greater visibility can also be seen from the perspective of the

migration system theory, as in a further aspect to demotivate migrants from coming to Germany. Although this would have a rather small effect, given the still high number of 200.000 refugees annually.

Despite the increasing restrictions however, there is still a strong difference between the government's form of discourse and that of more extreme groups such as the AFD and PEGIDA. While restrictions have been made, the articulation of the government has not significantly changed. There is still emphasis on humanitarian aspects and a softer language directed to refugees, while the measure of a quota itself is rather seen as a method to stop the AFD from getting more votes. In a way, this measure could even be interpreted as a kind of necessary evil in the eyes of Merkel and her government. Furthermore, German engagement is still high in comparison to most other European nations. However, although still opposed to the articulation of the AFD and therefore also its hegemony project, the situation still led to a more restrictive system, where interests of national border control are now more visible. Therefore, the AFD seems at least to have influenced the government in an indirect way. Another factor that might have influenced the quota is the rather precarious relationship with Turkey and therefore a possible cancellation of the EU-Turkey deal. The quota can therefore also be seen as a method to prevent a similar refugee situation in Germany as before. The allowance for 200.000 refugees a year would however also relieve other European countries to some extent, showing further possible interest for European stability.

7. Conclusion

The aim of this study was to analyse the German refugee policies in regards to the European refugee crisis from 2010 to 2017. For this it was examined how the practical implementation of certain policies, as well as their articulation to the public changed and which political interest groups might have influenced this. Different political groups in Germany were compared with each other on the one side and with the statements of the government on the other to see in what direction the policies were shifting. The methodology used for this was the political discourse analysis by Martin Nonhoff.

The conclusion of this analysis is that the German government was mostly aiming for a rather reluctant position in the refugee crisis. This position was forced to be abandoned in favour of a more engaging position in order to save the structure of the EU, while still trying to regain the more distant position. Most of the direct changes in the government did not happen because of actual change in its opinions, but rather due to external influences, such as geopolitical changes in Europe, mood swings in the German public and pressure from different political groups.

Interest groups that were most visible inside the government are that of European and national border control, humanitarian aid, economic benefits and international stability. The government's interests in border control were mostly articulated in form of the European borders and other important third countries and were simultaneously important for economic interests of registering migrants and gaining high-skilled workers. With the increasing pressure in the EU due to refugees and asylum seekers, international interests of stability and economic longevity in the EU gained more influence. This led to a more welcoming policy in Germany in order to relieve the EU as a whole. In the ensuing months and years interests of national security against refugees and asylum seekers increased, while economic interests either became less important or changed towards concerns for too much pressure on the social system. Humanitarian concerns were also present from start to finish and were especially emphasised by chancellor Merkel herself. They were another important factor for the liberal policies in 2015 but became less important afterwards due to increased pressure from other interest groups. Humanitarian concerns were however mostly focused on refugees from Syria, Libya, Iraq and partly Afghanistan, while economic asylum seekers were not accepted as worthy enough. During the analysed period, none of the interest groups appears to have gained the position of a hegemony regarding the refugee question, which could explain why this topic is still a heated debate in German society.

In regards to the different political groups and their influence on the government, the CDU under Merkel appears to have had the biggest influence on the government's policies, while the influence of the junior coalition partners SPD and FDP were rather small. The CSU gained more influence towards the later years due to increasing pressure. More extreme groups, such as the AFD and PEGIDA did not directly influence the government's policies or behaviour. Until the end the government articulated their policies in a rather refugee-friendly way, while Muslims or migrants in general were not seen as a major threat. However, the mood swing in the public, the increasing popularity of the AFD in elections and the increasing

pressure against liberal refugee policies were pushing the government more towards stricter rules, harsher policies against criminal migrants, stricter asylum regulations and lastly even the enforcement of an upper limit. Therefore, it can be said that the AFD and PEGIDA had at least an indirect influence either on the government itself or on the demands of the CSU.

This thesis gave a snapshot and a first glimpse into the complex topic that is the European refugee crisis. For a further and more detailed analysis it would be important to analyse other actors outside the German government as well. This includes citizens, refugees and asylum seekers, migrant-dependent industries, as well as other European, African and Middle-Eastern countries. It should also be remembered that this refugee crisis is a still ongoing process which needs to be continuously updated following new events and decisions. The topic of the European refugee crisis was already an important part of my bachelor thesis and is now an important part of my master thesis as well. It is still a current topic and I reckon it will still keep us busy for many years.

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