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# GERMAN AND FRENCH APPROACHES TO MIGRATION SECURITIZATION PROCESSES

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## Abstract

This article compares the situation in France and Germany regarding the securitization of migration. The analysis shows that France is more lenient towards immigrants than Germany and views immigration more as a threat to national statehood. Germany views it as a threat to national security. It also turns out that the issue of immigration has become a subject of debate between the extreme right and left in both countries.

**Keywords** Migration, securitization, racist and xenophobic discourses against immigration, migration situation in Germany and France, migration policy.

## INTRODUCTION

In contemporary political science, the broad study of the causes and consequences of migration is becoming increasingly relevant due to the fact that it is more related to the security sphere than to its socio-economic aspects. In many scientific works, there is increasing debate about when and why migration is securitized, what are the consequences of securitization of immigration, and what should be the balance between human rights and levels of security.

With the end of the Cold War and changes in the way security threats are perceived, immigrants have come to be seen as the cause of widespread threats related to terrorism, drug and human trafficking, or organized crime. In this context, the traditional concept of security has been expanded by the "securitization" of policy areas that were previously alien to it, including human trafficking and irregular migration [11].

## METHODS

This article uses scientific methods and approaches used to analyze various socio-political problems. In particular, content analysis of ethnology, sociology, later scientific works and official information on migration problems was carried out. In this case, special conclusions were formed by summarizing the basic concepts and theoretical approaches most often used in the classification of modern migration processes. These conclusions are based on the results of the event analysis of the current migration situation in Germany and France.

## The main part

Thus, the securitization of migration consists of four specific axes: Socio-economic - due to unemployment, the growth of the informal economy, the crisis of the welfare state and the deterioration of the urban environment; Security narratives about the weakening or loss of sovereignty, borders, and the control system that connects internal and external security;

Identitarian - the perception of migrants as a threat to national identity and the demographic balance of host societies; and Political – anti-immigration, racist and xenophobic speeches and actions [4:24].

If immigrants are not integrated into host communities, especially if they come from a completely different cultural background, the potential risk of religious and ethnic conflicts is higher, requiring new government efforts to integrate ethnic minorities into national communities [13:25-50].

From this point of view, Germany and France, which are considered to be the countries with the most immigration in the world and in Europe, have a great scientific and practical importance in terms of “securitization” of immigration. It is important to study the similarities and differences, experience, achievements and shortcomings.

When we examine the stages of formation and current situation in Germany and France according to the four streams of securitization of migration mentioned above, we can see that they have similar and unique approaches.

The first issue is related to the importance of migration in the security and defense strategy, and it is known that in Germany, migration has been widely studied in the framework of national security and defense strategies. Especially after the migration crisis of 2015, while migration has become a priority in German’s domestic and foreign policy, France’s national security and defense strategies have not given any place to migration issues. This leads to the conclusion that migration may be safer (in the non-dangerous category) in France[8:6-28]. However, we do not rush to conclusions.

The second issue is that terrorism has undoubtedly played a major role in the securitization of migration. The link between migration and security in politics became more pronounced after 9/11,

but the relationship between migration and terror became closer after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, although it began much earlier. It must be said clearly that the association of Muslims with terrorism has increased. After all, in the political rhetoric of the Western countries, Islam has been strengthened as an “enemy”, this image has been derived from the Orientalist thinking for centuries. At the time, the Bush administration created a unique form of rhetoric to frame its policies in the “new” war on terror. Scholar David Domke coined the term “political fundamentalism” to describe the new blend of evangelicalism and foreign policy activism that characterized the Bush administration after 9/11 [5:21]. In other words, the “political fundamentalism” of the West was created in the struggle against the “religious fundamentalism” of Islam. In favor of America, Germany has introduced two security packages containing very different security measures related to immigration and migrants; and with respect to the then-debated Immigration Act, new aspects were put into context after the events of 9/11 [11:6]. Even in France, the events of September 11 started to suggest the need to update the Action Plan against terrorism. At that time, Muslims were not associated with terrorism in France, but the situation changed after the attacks on Charlie Hebdo in 2015 [16:464-488].

Following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the Council of Europe held an extraordinary meeting ten days after the attacks to review the international situation. During this session and subsequent meetings, the European agenda focused on many aspects and measures of the fight against international terrorism and other aspects related to security. Thus, immigration has become increasingly linked to domestic and international security.

As a result, European countries, especially Germany and France, began to implement the

following in the matter of immigration:[11:7]

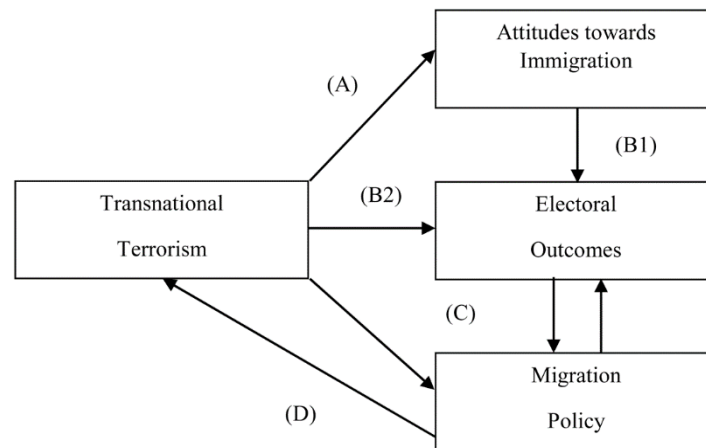
- Facilitating information exchange between authorities
- Expanding the definition of crimes, possibilities of prosecution and punishment
- Facilitate deportation for illegal immigrants and long-term residents
- Deprivation of citizenship or residence permit
- Strengthen control over access to the territory and membership.

For example, in Germany, the visa database has been expanded, and it is possible to collect information for law enforcement agencies by providing this information to special agencies. This is related to the new powers of the authorities and especially the special services. These include, among other things, the ability to collect information about financial transactions, mail and telecommunications, as well as flight reservations from relevant companies [10:75]. In France, too, the situation for immigrants has worsened after the terrorist attacks. Nicolas Sarkozy, the Minister of the Interior of France, described the problem of defining the country's national identity and the general disregard for republican ideals by immigrants. He sought to "restore to the French a sense of pride [of origin]". On July 24, 2006, France passed a law tightening its migration policy, which encouraged selective immigration and declared the mandatory integration of immigrants into French secular society when necessary [9:133-142].

Of course, the fight against terrorism is an important event, and in the 21st century, which is called the "century of terrorism", it is undoubtedly of great importance in ensuring the state, society and national security and stability. However, attributing terrorism to immigrants, an ethnic or

religious group can raise other problems and issues. Researchers M.Helbling and D.Meierrieks explain how linking migration to terrorism affects political decisions and changes in society with the following points (see Figure 3.3.1): [7]

First, it suggests that transnational terrorism can influence public perceptions of (and attitudes toward) immigrants and migration (A). More specifically, fear of transnational terrorism and real or perceived threats may translate into stronger anti-immigration sentiment; these feelings can be triggered by transnational terrorism at home, as well as in neighboring or distant countries. Second, anti-immigration (right-wing) sentiment may increase support for anti-immigrant political parties. This may reduce the chances of re-election of governments of different ideological orientations (B1). Terrorism can also affect electoral outcomes in other ways (B2), such as by reducing economic activity and life satisfaction in target countries. These effects may further reduce the electoral success of incumbent governments. Transnational terrorism threatens their political survival, creating a strong incentive for governments to adopt more restrictive migration policies (C). Governments can expect that tougher policies will serve as a political signal to voters and thus discourage political support for right-wing or opposition parties. At the same time, restrictive migration policies can help reduce transnational terrorist activity (D). For example, a strict immigration policy may increase the costs of terrorist entry and thus reduce the level of terrorist activity directed against the country that pursues such a policy. By reducing (future) transnational terrorism, governments can restore confidence in voters and limit the economic damage caused by terrorism, further increasing the government's chances of political survival.

**Figure 3.3.1. Impact of terrorism and migration on socio-political processes**

*Manba: Helbling M., & Meierrieks D., 2022.*

The third issue is a cultural factor, from a cultural point of view, migrants can be perceived as a threat to cultural identity. Depending on a variety of factors, the host society or part of it may find that certain types of newcomers do not integrate easily. In this regard, Thomas Faist has argued that the reformulation of international migration in the public discourse from a security point of view has contributed to the “Clash of Civilizations”. Cultural fears and conflicts between citizens (from European countries) and foreigners (from non-western, Muslim countries) are increasing. This “helps make culture a more important marker between natives and migrants” [6:12]. At the same time, culturally alien immigrants are stigmatized and used in public discourse and election campaigns. The perception of immigrants as a threat is evident when the various accusations are combined.

For example, in Germany in 2003, when the Hijab scandal, known as the Ludin case, opened, and in 2009, 8 out of 16 states passed laws banning “religious symbols”, the hijab, and its dangers. media and public attention. In 2009, eight states began banning the hijab for public servants,

including teachers, on the grounds that the hijab could undermine public trust in civil servants. The degree of prohibition and the justification for it varies between federal states. The main issue here was that other religious symbols were seen as a threat to collective religio-cultural identity [12].

Against the background of the terrorist attacks of 2015-2016, Francois Hollande spoke about the vital need to create a “French Islam” that can adapt to the French way of life. Emmanuel Macron, in turn, called communitarianism the main problem of French society. According to the President, the failure of the policy of integration of immigrants, together with the “Islamic crisis”, led to communitarianism in the country [9:138].

In 2021, the process of securitization of both immigrants and Islam as an introduced religion intensified in France, moving from political debate to political-institutional stages, such as political appeals by representatives of the French security forces. On April 21, Valeurs actuelles published an open letter from twenty retired French generals to the French president and the French government. In the letter, the generals call for the protection of the country, which is at risk of “disintegration” and

“civil war” due to fundamentalism, Islamism, communitarianism, separatism [9:139].

The fourth issue, and another form of migration threat, is discussed at length in former German central banker Thilo Sarrazin's 2010 German-language book, *Germany Will Destroy Itself* ('Deutschland schafft sich ab'). The threat emphasized here was not to cultural values and identity, but to economic prosperity. Sarrazin expressed general concerns that immigrants, especially Muslims and Turks, pose a threat to long-term social and economic well-being. Based on evidence that the children of Turkish immigrants have not succeeded in both education and income, a long-term erosion of talent and intelligence in German society is predicted as the Turkish population and Muslim background increase [14]. When low levels of education and poor labor market performance are explained by ethnicity and religion, and a small part of the population is shown to have the potential to change the whole society (for the worse), the discourse of securitization builds internal boundaries of exclusion and marginalization (internal threat). will play the lead role. Indeed, although political and social themes are not unique to this bestseller, the way threats are discussed resonated with the general public and was debated by the political elite. Political and official responses to the securitization discourse have been ambivalent, with respect to the portrayal of immigrants and newly naturalized citizens as security threats. A number of political parties and institutions adopted the discourse of securitization as their political agenda, that is, they mobilized against the perceived threat and danger and called for it to be limited by punishment and exclusion. Other parts of the debate began to see the integration, integration and welfare of the Muslim population and citizens as a matter of national priority. This was not due to the need to promote equality and ensure the participation of marginalized and

disadvantaged groups in society, but to prevent poverty, exclusion and isolation due to potential violence within the immigrant family. In this sense, the struggle for social equality has, ironically, become associated with securitization [2].

The divisions in German society were felt even more acutely during the 2015 refugee crisis. While Merkel's government opened Germany's gates to Syrian refugees by insisting that the German people fulfill their obligations under the UN Convention on the Status of Refugees, representatives of the ultra-right wing have accused Merkel's refugee policy of causing Germany's socio-economic and cultural decline. severely criticized. As a result, in the 2017 elections, the radical wing *Alternatif für Deutschland* became the first ultra party in German history since World War II to enter the Bundestag with around 13 percent of the vote.[3] If we look at the election program of the AfD, it is possible to find a lot of anti-immigration opinions there. Also, with a separate section entitled “Islam is in conflict with the free democratic basic order”, it is emphasized that Islam does not correspond to Germany, it is not compatible with German culture, and in addition, it is recommended that Germans should remain loyal to their culture and traditions. prayers are advanced [1].

Thus, in the “refugee crisis” in Germany, the right-wing party AfD gained popularity, which, like the right-wing radicals in France and other countries, tried to play on the concerns of the unemployed, farmers, small businessmen and others, and increased the fear of refugees in society. Representatives of this political movement see themselves as defenders of the vulnerable and affected by globalization. For complex problems, they offer simple solutions with a sense of nationalism. In general, this rise of the right-wing populist trend can be called a “reaction to the saturation of liberalism.”[15:128]

The situation in France is similar to that of



Germany. Socio-economic and cultural factors lie in the securitization of immigration. The Front Nationale (FN) party plays a key role in the securitization of immigration in France. A closer look at the political perspective of the FN reveals that the group espouses ideologies that are openly critical of immigrants and threats to French cultural exceptionalism. In their speeches, far-right parties represent the "Islamization" of France, which is in full swing. At the beginning of the century, the FN was the first to speak about the "incompatibility" of Islam and the French Republic as a political entity. For party representatives, Islam is a combination of "religion", "state" and "government system". According to far-right rhetoric, Muslim immigrants are more dangerous than other immigrants: they are "invaders" who live "with their <...> lifestyle, faith, civilization"[9:138].

German and French immigrants, the targets of securitization discourse, face internal cultural and social boundaries that exclude them from equal citizenship. Paradoxically, once they are perceived as a security threat, the claims of a marginalized group of citizens for social opportunities and equality are taken into account by society. It was not their rights as citizens that led the government to engage with the country's immigrants, but the need to respond to the immediate security threats they posed. The conflict between equality and exclusion within the framework of civil norms is evident in the above cases. The discourse of securitization adds a dimension to the problem of immigration in shaping external and internal borders and deepens the vulnerability of civil rights in Germany and France.

In Germany and France, securitization practices and discourses of the immigration problem have permeated minority politics to such an extent that they blur the distinctions between immigration and asylum policies on the one hand, and

immigrant and minority policies vis-à-vis the "native" (long-standing) minority on the other. This could have negative consequences for various minority groups in Germany and France.

Also, the rise of populist parties across Europe, particularly in Germany and France, could have major negative consequences for the future of the EU, as many of these Eurosceptic parties are calling for a radical reform of the EU to better manage migration for the region. In addition, the ways in which populist radical parties and movements conceptualize immigrants as a threat to society's security will have negative consequences not only for immigrants who arrived in recent years, but also for minority groups that have been living there for a long time. Worse, the centrist parties, worried about the rise of populist parties and movements and their electoral success, deviated from their traditional views and ideologies and assimilated the anti-immigration ideas of the radical and ultra-right party programs and intensified anti-immigrant measures into practical politics, "human rights" and "democracy" is leading to the weakening of its defenders.

## **CONCLUSION**

Studies based on the methods of comparative analysis show that within the framework of the European Union, efforts have been made to fight against illegal migration, to ensure cooperation on immigration, to find democratic solutions to the problem of migration, and to ensure the integration of immigrants. At the same time, specific practices of migration policy have been formed at the national level. According to the results of a comparative analysis of the case of Germany and France, the immigration policy of the two countries differs in several aspects:

- 1) according to the composition of immigrants: while immigrants came to France mainly from colonial countries, Germany was initially composed of immigrants from southern European

countries and Turkey later from Eastern Europe and Russia.

2) according to the classification of work: in France, immigrants work mainly in the private sector and in seasonal jobs, so immigration has a decentralized form, while in Germany, immigrants work in large companies, so it has a centralized system.

3) Regarding citizenship (naturalization): Germany still had a consanguineous (ie one parent must be German or a German citizen) citizenship system until 2000, while France had its own provides citizenship based on birth in the territory.

At the same time, there are some similarities in the immigration policies of Germany and France:

1) Both countries are considered welfare states and have a standardized wage distribution that attracts more vulnerable people, primarily asylum seekers and refugees, rather than highly skilled professionals.

2) Both countries take part in active immigration policy within the EU and play a major role in its formation and implementation.

3) both countries still have very restrictive immigration policies and procedures, in other words, obtaining residence and work visas is very complicated in both countries.

4) both countries have a policy of assimilation and integration of immigrants on a large scale.

There are differences and similarities between France and Germany regarding the securitization of migration. Different aspects:

1) is measured by the level of securitization. France has a more lenient approach to immigrants than Germany.

2) France sees immigration more as a threat to nation-statehood, while Germany sees it as a threat to state security.

Similarities: 1) the issue of immigration in both countries has become an object of debate between representatives of the extreme right and the left wing. While the left-wing representatives, for example, the Greens, propose a democratic solution to migration, the right-wing radicals or ultra-nationalists are in favor of introducing strict policies and practices regarding migration, especially against Muslims who are not compatible with Europe, and this wing has been widely supported by the public in recent decades. is supported.

2) in both countries, crime, socio-economic problems, cultural threat and terrorism are being interpreted or imagined in the form of words similar to or complementary to migration and immigration.

3) in both countries, the "Islamic factor" is becoming an object of limiting migration. This serves the development of the concept of "intercultural conflict".

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