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Beyond symbolic policy making: The Copenhagen School, migration, and the marked-unmarked analogue

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Abstract

This article problematizes the securitization of migration through symbolic policy discourse. Policy as discourse is not innocent. It creates not only instrumental outcomes, but can also signal deeply ideological and profound, symbolic meanings. This study discusses Germany's controversial ANKER Center policy as a form of such symbolic signaling. Distinguishing between negative and positive securitization, this article then brings into focus the non-linear, non-fixed, political, and social construction of these two forms of securitization in the context of migration. Framed in part by the author's ongoing field work with migrant organizations and volunteer groups in southern Germany, this article draws specific attention to a discursive marked-unmarked asymmetry. It then applies the sociologists' method of 'marking everything' as a strategy to 'write against' securitization's negative logic—toward a positive, more inclusive migration agenda.

Keywords: *securitization; containment; Germany; markedness; symbolic policy*

Introduction

Approximately one million migrants arrived in Europe by mid-2015, with many seeking asylum in Germany. One of the country's wealthiest and most conservative states, Bavaria in southern Germany, accounted for the second largest number of migrants, arriving nationwide. From employment, housing, social services, and in general the forging-out of communal and individual relationships, still today non-governmental organizations (NGOs) continue to play vital roles in all aspects of migrants' lives in Germany. Migration advocates and volunteers in and around Munich—either as part of loosely organized, so-called Helper Circles *(Helferkreise)* or more formally recognized groups such as Caritas, the Münchner and Bayerischer Flüchtlingsrat, Refugio, or Bellevue di Monaco, for example—continue to support a wide spectrum of migrants (young adults, families with children, unaccompanied minors, single men or women, elderly migrants, migrants with disabilities, etc.) with their individual needs and circumstances.

This article finds the often *uncritical*, solely negative-logic imbued securitization assumptions in the context of migration—premised on othering, exceptionalism and threat logics—problematic. Uncritical here is understood as critique's limitations to more fully capturing what progress, for example, toward a specific issue such as integration actually means. *Uncritical critique* such as the presumed fixedness of securitization as always *negative* remains unhelpful as it explains little about the comprehensiveness or sustainability of problem-solving solutions, for example (Sjoberg, 2019: 82). Roe (2012) in 'Is securitization a negative concept' concluded how securitization asserts such a negative position because of its non-democratic, exceptional practices and its reproduced, friend/foe binaries. However, as a

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growing body of scholarship also points out (Paterson & Karyotis, 2020; Nyman, 2016; Hoogensen Gjørv, 2012), *negatively securitizing* a group of people, for example—solely through a self-other/inside-outside identity group lens—does not "have to be so" (Paterson & Karyotis, 2020: 2). Understanding securitization *truly critically* then can tease out nuances and degrees. It, for one, can provide a more complete normative understanding about the value of security and securitization, one which asserts meaning beyond the commonly assumed, *original* paradox: that for one to feel safe, someone else needs to feel unsafe.

Securitization stands out—specifically in migration scholarship—as inherently static. This article uses the 'positive' and 'negative' modifiers to add more layers—and precision. A more precise, complete yet variable understanding of securitization includes what securitization *also* can represent: certainty, mobility, and protection, a *positive*, self-determining condition or effect; how securitization can *positively* translate to improving people's everyday lives. Semantically distinguishing between negative and positive securitization, for example, then highlights the non-linear, non-fixed, social and often political, fluid construction of the securitization concept. Similar to the usage of 'counter-securitization' (Paterson & Karyotis, 2020), the modifier 'positive' serves "to contest the original securitization" (Paterson & Karyotis, 2020: 17). Whether this includes protecting minority rights (Roe, 2004) or safeguarding Great Britain's tolerance and "proud history as a welcoming nation" (Paterson & Karyotis, 2020: 11), positive acts of securitization and their outcomes have been previously articulated. This article builds on this body of research.

Securitization is often seen as top-down, elite, or state-activated. This study, however, is also different in its focus on non-state actors—on the meso-level. A meso-level analysis refers to the analytical level between macro (structural, top-down, large scale, and broader processes by an elite such as the state) and micro (small scale, bottom-up interactions by individuals). By discussing Germany's controversial ANKER Center policy—ANKER is the acronym for Arrival, Decision, and Return; *Ankunft, Entscheidung, Rückführung*—the meso-level specifically draws attention to the social organization of a community through volunteer associations, citizen groups, and NGOs in the state of Bavaria in southern Germany. ANKER Centers are oversized mass deportation facilities for *all* newly arriving, non-European Union (EU) migrants. They are designed to streamline asylum procedures and decision-making processes (Seehofer, 2018). Bavaria led the implementation of the ANKER Center policy in Germany in 2018. By early 2021, these centers have, however, expanded to other regions of the country (Federal Republic of Germany Ministry of Migration und Refugees, 2021). This article's observations contextually draw on ongoing field work with local Helper Circles in semi-rural counties south of Munich and Caritas Freising in the north, for example. Primary sources and data consist, for the most part, of original government and official NGO records, including reports by ANKER-WATCH. ANKER-WATCH is a sub-group initially organized by the Münchner and Bayerischer Flüchtlingsrat, one of Bavaria's most vocal migrant rights organizations supported by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. As a watch-dog network, ANKER-WATCH closely monitors Bavaria's ANKER Centers, provides transparency, accountability, and publicizes violations. This article's theoretical discussion sees these volunteer groups and NGOs as *positive* securitization actors.

This article also tries to deconstruct a growing sense of *integration urgency*. Activists and volunteers consistently re-emphasized that "integration needs to happen *now*" (Hirschauer, 2018). Against the political backdrop of an increasing neo-assimilationism in Germany

(Schönwälder & Triadafilopoulos, 2016: 368) such *integration now urgency* reflects, in part, a percolating frustration specifically toward migration housing policies. Since 2015, activists and volunteers supported migrants, for the main part, to navigate the many layers of bureaucracy: assisting them with asylum applications, legal aid, job searches, and welfare aid. Such support also translated to more peripheral, but also critical, everyday life mechanics: work or school transportation, childcare or homework supervision, or the design of after-school programs, for example. Today, however, housing stands out as a persistent, key failure.

Thousands of migrants' lives—regardless of their legal statuses—have remained immobile and segregated from their immediate environments. From early on, German migrant housing policies have strictly regulated where migrants can live, who was allowed to move out, and who received permits *(Auszugerlaubnis*) to leave the emergency or temporary housing settings, for example. Still today, the federal government, and by extension regional, state, and local administrations, tightly control—often through a maze of shifting and changing regulations (Federal Republic of Germany Ministry of Migration und Refugees, 2021)—if migrants rent apartments or single-family homes, join and move-in with relatives in other parts of Germany, or Europe. Even recognized refugees—migrants whose asylum applications have been granted, but who rely on social welfare, for example—face a 'residence obligation' (*Wohnsitzauflage*) and are prohibited to move for at least three years outside of the state (*Bundesland*) of their asylum procedures (Federal Republic of Germany AufenthG, 2020). Bavaria passed even stricter, mobility-controlling regulations. Migrants' freedom of movement in Bavaria is limited to a particular administrative or rural district (SVR, 2017). Additionally, many migrants continue to struggle finding work or are still not allowed to work, struggle to commute to professional work development training or language classes, or are unable to locate and/or afford legal aid to advance or appeal their asylum claims, for example. In Germany today, migrants continue to be kept in real or perceived "infrastructures of containment" (Lisle and Johnson, 2019: 20). These infrastructures—such as the ANKER Centers—undermine a people-centric *integration in the now* agenda, one which would immediately place migrants as active members and self-determined agents into communities and as such avoid normalizing and institutionalizing the *othering* through segregation.

This study is also suspect of the often neutralized tenets, constructed around migration policy as discourse. Policy as discourse is not innocent. It can signal profoundly consequential, symbolic meanings. Symbolic signaling then arrests a powerful public effect (Vollmer, 2011: 333) for a specific audience while accounting for few, if any instrumental policy outcomes. This study discusses Germany's ANKER Center policy as such a form of symbolic policy. First implemented in August 2018, these centers advance few, tangible policy outcomes, if at all, yet only visually and physically reiterate the negative securitization of migrants through the re-produced othering, segregation, and isolation. The concept of ANKER Centers is, in fact, counter-productive to any efforts of self-determined, progressive integration since the facilities only continue to signal a distinct inside and outside bordering. Such elite, negative securitization framing only normalizes a fixed identity of migrants instead of advancing a non-binary, pluralistic public understanding of migrants and migration.

In addition, the main ANKER Centers in Bavaria oversee between 18 to 21 sub-ANKER sites, so-called *Dependancen*. Dependancen are large, former and now converted emergency housing facilities. They employ the same ANKER containment and deportation functions, but are lacking essential resources and administrative infrastructures such as specialized

medical care, mental health, childcare, legal aid, education for children of different school ages, and generally, basic human services (ANKER-WATCH, 2019). The often remote locations of the ANKER sites outside of city and village centers—usually clearly fenced off—reiterate their *othering* characters, and additionally only exacerbate the lack of coordinated services. Furthermore, the ANKER main and sub-sites are often converted, former military bases such as the ANKER facility Fürstenfeldbruck, southwest of Munich. Fürstenfeldbruck is a former World War II air force base, resembling a distinctly militarized architecture with entry checkpoints, towers, and barbwire fencing around its premises. In August 2019, violent altercations between migrants, local law enforcement, and the center's private security personnel in Fürstenfeldbruck made national headlines (Merkur, 2019). The initial cause of the clash was the regular evening rollcall managed by the private security staff. However, it is much more so an indicator of the growing frustrations among migrants with Bavaria's containment policy. Additionally, in spring 2020 in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, many of the ANKER sites have aggravated severe health insecurities for migrants. Social distancing in the centers' communal bathrooms, kitchens, and residential areas remains nearly impossible. Entire ANKER Centers were put under quarantine, additional fencing built, and more private security personnel hired (ANKER-WATCH, 2020). In April 2020, 109 of the 600 residents of the ANKER Center Geldersheim in northern Bavaria tested positive for COVID-19. The center was known in spring 2020 as being under an 'endless quarantine'- a never-ending quarantine (ANKER-WATCH, 2020).

To unpack the prominence of negative securitization as *othering*, this study borrows tools from sociology. These analytical tools draw attention to the dominate, exclusionary, negative securitization as a form of *social markedness* (Brekhus, 1998: 35) and invisible, positive, inclusive securitization as the *socially unmarked*. The marked-unmarked dichotomy then helps to unpack how securitization remains predominantly *marked* through its negative logics. The *'marking everything'* method then (Scott, 2018) (Brekhus, 1998: 45) illustrates how the negative security fixedness can be more sustainably challenged. 'Marking everything'—the deliberate shift to highlight *both*, the *marked* and *unmarked* representations of positive and negative securitization—then gives visibility to *both* within the broader migration security discourse.

The article proceeds as follows: It will first define securitization and security principles, symbolic policy making, and social markedness-unmarkedness. It will then secondly discuss the ANKER Centers and sub-facilities as symbolic policy making and negative securitization. Thirdly, it will utilize the *'marking everything'* method as a discursive strategy out of the negative security impasse. This article will use migrants and migration as inclusive and non-deterministic terms. It will only occasionally refer to recognized refugees, for example, but does not want to distinguish between forced, irregular or regular migration or migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, or immigrants because it recognizes these terms as profoundly imbued with power. These distinctions and their powers are arbitrary constructs. They constantly shift and change, depending on national or regional rules, social attitudes—and politics (Crawley and Skleparis, 2018).

Points of departure

Traditionally, the Copenhagen School's securitization theory—the analysis of acts of securitization—follows specific logics. Generally, it contends for a referent object or an issue (such as migration or migrants), for example, to be lifted out of the political sphere into the security realm. This elevating ('security move') is usually achieved through a distinct speaking of security ('speech act'). Similar to symbolic policy making, the speech act constructs and signals a specific security/threat logic, or othering. Symbolic policy making, for example, disguises ineffective governance (Vollmer, 2011) by shifting attention to 'cosmetic adjustments' or ad hoc policy alternates, imagined as effective. In a similar fashion, securitization resembles such a social construct. Securitization's illocutionary (performatively), intersubjective interplay between audience and securitization actors (such as speaking between the subjects) then legitimizes the move of a referent object out of the political into areas of security. These 'discursive processes' (Balzacq, 2005) imagine threats, visibilities, and invisibilities, allow for issues or referent objects to enter or exit security. They construct exceptionalism, exclusion, and urgency. They '*other*.' They politically manufacture (Aradau, 2004) vulnerabilities and power hierarchies as one needs "to be made dangerous so that others be made secure" (Aradau, 2004: 399). This paradoxical logic—securitization's traditional, negative version reiterated by, for example, practitioners of security such as military, police, or border control (Floyd, 2015: 126)—is seen as undesirable, to be avoided, or at least to be minimized. It is also often understood as performed by or between elites only.

A second-generation securitization theory, however, interprets securitization as more complex. It is seen as a realm of fluidity, of ever-evolving and adaptive inconsistencies through space and time. Securitization then creates intersections and overlapping legacies. Acts of securitization do not display distinct beginnings or ends (Donnelly & Steele, 2019). Instead, second-generation securitization theory broadens the logics of security (what security is and does) to a more "empirically and politically open conception" (Hansen, 2015: 231), oppose to "mainstream security" (220)**,** securitization's classic form (225) or its "standard view" (Balzacq & Léonard, 2013: 76). It is distinctly context dependent. It is differently experienced within different political communities, framed by different values and conditions (McDonald, 2015; Doty, 1998; Wolfers, 1952). Security and securitization are social constructs (McDonald, 2015: 167) filled with competing security and insecurity practices. This competition, however, only tends to reiterate the paradoxical asymmetry: on the one hand, security *is* understood through a less rigid, inclusive, constructivist epistemology (how does one know and recognize security as safety and agency; how does one feel, see, sense it as protecting specific positive values and certainty). On the other hand, security remains locked in an assumed realist ontology, its very primal, negative quality (what security is understood to be e.g. the state's role, borders, protection, control, territory etc.), its deterministic character (Balzacq, 2015: xi).

The projection of anxiety, threat, and fear of the audience (citizens) toward the '*other*' (migrants) —the "distinction between dangerous and non-dangerous, risky and non-risky bodies" (Aradau, 2016: 565)—has long been understood as part of political realism. Securitization's negative logic then only reproduced the potential 'horror' (Huysmans, 1998) citizens feel. 'Othering' expresses the very real possibility of death through 'the other,' "the passage to the limit" (Huysmans, 1998: 587). Anxieties and insecurities about state identity, borders, culture, race, whiteness, and national authenticity fuel anticipations about "the worst

kind of certainty: dead certainty" (Appadurai, 1999: 322). ANKER Centers as infrastructures of containment only continue to retell these narratives of anxious anticipations.

In the context of migration then, securitization theory is often either seen through its negative fixedness (migrants and/or migration as a danger) (Togral Koca, 2019; Vollmer, 2017; Aradau, 2016; Maarten den Hijer, 2016) *or* through de-securitization's politicization. De-securitization—the 'unmaking of securitization' (Huysmans, 1998) —implies the return of the (negatively securitized) referent object to political processes: contestation, bargaining, and negotiation (Weaver, 2003: 10). Desecuritization is understood as a way out of securitization's negative logic. Yet, the concept and its impact also remain under-explored—and problematic. For one, de-securitization does actually not *always already* mean politicization. It is not *always already* securitization's presumed "constitutive and equally political outside" (Hansen, 2012: 531), but can also become an empty category (Hansen, 2012). It can leave an issue or a referent object completely unaddressed—and silence it. Additionally, de-securitization's return to 'normal politics' or 'politicization' is also contested since it is unclear what exactly defines 'normal politics' or 'politicization.' In the context of migration, for example, it would imply a deeply racialized 'politics as usual' (Howell & Richter-Montpetit, 2020). The semantic distinction of negative and positive securitization provides an alternative interpretation to de-securitization.

Nuanced and modified forms of securitization—such as positive, just, or counter-securitization, moves or counter-moves—are still relatively under-researched concepts. In 2004, Paul Roe pointed out how minority rights, for example, are *securitized* to keep these rights intact. Protecting minority rights then, for one, resembles positive securitization. It safeguards values outside of securitization's traditional, very primal application of force or violence, for example. Rita Floyd developed the concept of *just securitization* in the context of environmental policies. Floyd sees security itself as value-empty, but argues how securitization can be judged through the values of its consequences. They then can be assessed as morally right or wrong—if one prioritizes "human wellbeing as the highest value" (Floyd, 2010: 193). Floyd also favors the positive outcomes of securitization as "faster, better" (Floyd, 2007: 342) and more efficient compared to desecuritization's politicization. In 2013, a Scandinavian case study highlighted how *security communities* are inclusively held together through the celebration of diversity and difference (Browning & Joenniemi, 2013). Broader security value debates—whether or not security can assert both, positive or negative perspectives, and act complementary or in competition with each other—have also been furthered by Hoogensen Gjørv in 2012 and Nyman in 2016, for example. These debates interrogated security's ethics and recognized active, *positive* multi-participants compared to unitary, *negative* state actors (Hoogensen Gjørv, 2012: 843). Research also differentiated between analytical and normative frameworks, analytically drawing on positive/negative liberty and peace: negative security as the absence of threat versus positive security as safety beyond sheer survival, for example. Normative lenses unpacked specifically securitization through subjective value judgments. Depending on a subject's positionality, negative security is framed as "*bad* and to be avoided, while positive security is *desirable*" (Nyman, 2016: 838). In 2020, by applying the term *counter-securitization* to resist negative securitization, the UK case study underscored how the British identity framed around tolerance served as a positive safeguard. "It is our extraordinary and illegitimate response to the perceived migration challenges that is alarming, not migration itself" (Paterson & Karyotis,

2020: 12). Decades earlier, security as human emancipation (Booth, 1991) or as the expression and maintenance of 'just, core values' through agency, collective trust, and enabling (McSweeney, 1999) laid the groundwork for more prolific approaches.

Similar to securitization, symbolic policymaking is also a powerful, social construct. It projects a distinct demonstrative effect and arrests a certain *staged* publicity. It is not based on actual policy intention, implementation, or outcome, but on the public's policy *perception*. Policy and policy making through a specific discourse then—similar to securitization—become uniquely performative. They take on symbolic power. This study interprets discourse as an illocutionary form of performative mediation (Wodak & Meyer, 2009: 21) between speech (such as policy) and the construction of its symbolic meaning. Policy discourses (plural) as such mediations then in a Foucauldian-sense are "socially constructed ways of knowing some aspect of reality" (Leeuwen, 2009: 144). They become 'facts,' socially imagined (Taylor, 2004: 23).

Symbolic policy making, for one, is based on the differentiation between "instrumental and expressive forms of political intervention" (Slaven & Boswell, 2019: 1479). Policy as an instrumental form tries *to steer* a target population's (citizens) expectations, behaviors, or effects toward certain goals or directions. Policy as an instrumental operation then directs *action* toward concrete policy objectives. It is considered very *action* oriented. In comparison, policy as an expressive (or symbolic) form of government (political) intervention stands out through *signaling*. Through symbolic signaling, an executive, for example, communicates to an audience (such as citizens) its commitment to specific values and goals. Symbolic policy making signals a faithfulness "to the audience rather than to affect the object of intervention" (Slaven and Boswell, 2019: 1479). Symbolic policy making in its expressive form through negative securitization then, for example, "uses substitutes to address substantive policy problems" (Feist, 1994: 51). A policy becomes a superficial action rather than a substantive measure to achieve specific, stated goals. Often interpreted as all 'talk and decisions,' it is speech and narrative-dependent rather than action-focused. It is a form of "manipulation" (Slaven and Boswell, 2019: 1479).

Germany's current ANKER Center policy is such a symbolic policy. Through the dominance of negative securitization, these ANKER Centers signal containment, a slowness, or sense of non-movement. While they are actually spaces where and "when systems fail" (Gill, Caletrio, and Mason, 2011: 313), they express the perception of state control and policy resolution. Concurrently, however, positive securitization—through meso-level activism, multi-actor engagement, including tangible action such as de-centralized housing reform projects, for example—is projecting a sense of progress, 'action' instead of 'talk.' Positive securitization then placed into the *integration now* framework, for example, asserts an immediate, positive moving-forward as seen in the everyday improvements in migrants' self-determined, daily lives. While *negative* securitization highlights the negative, top-down social imaginaries as profound insecurities, for example, *positive* securitization then resembles the people-centric, *positive* perception of security as individual agency, and inclusive, inter-subjective recognition.

In trying to show the disproportionate power given to symbolic policy making and securitization's negative, assumed fixedness, this article utilizes sociologists' concept of *social markedness* (Scott, 2018; Brekhus, 1998) as a tool of analysis. Markedness as a theory was first introduced in the 1930s by linguistics Nikolaj Trubetzkoy and Roman Jakobsen (Trubetzkoy,

1972). Through the study of lexical pairs (man/woman), for example, they argued how one part of the pair is elucidated (man=humankind) while the other remains distinctly non-articulated (woman). Departing from a purely linguistic application, *social markedness* then refers to the cognitive and societal practice of "perceiving one side of a contrast while ignoring the other side as epistemologically unproblematic" (Brekhus, 1996). Similar to Émile Durkheim's separation of the sacred and the profane, for example, social markedness and unmarkedness help to analyze the perceptive, cognitive asymmetry of *social* realities. The heightened pronunciation of the marked (unusual, extraordinary, contrasts) as the extreme stands out versus the unmarked (usual, ordinary, mundane), which remains generic.

Markedness, for example, includes not only the basic, binary outline with a top and bottom level (good/bad). It also includes trinary versions where the top and the bottom are both marked as social extreme poles while the center—layered and diverse—remain unmarked as socially generic. Simply put in the context of migration, for example, migrants in post-2015 Germany are either marked through the distinct 'political refugee/deservedness' *or* 'economic migrant/bogus asylum' social imaginaries. Migrants become 'sinners or saints,' for example. Yet, their actual, multilayered, complex identities, needs, and circumstances as complex human beings—moving from the generic center outward—remain unnamed and unseen. Social imaginaries become 'fact'—the factual 'other'—through the reproduction of such distinct markedness. Social imaginaries then, for example, are only reiterated by being marked as "socially extreme […] while those that are regarded socially neutral remain unmarked (or taken for granted)" (Brekhus, 1998: 35). Markedness is also emphasized through frequency, for example. Where the frequency of markedness is very low such as the low number of bogus asylum applications, "the intensity of the markedness" is accentuated (37). This distinction, amplifying and paying disproportionally more attention to the extreme, *marking* only the outlier—the unusual or different versus taking the assumed usual, mundane and unexceptional for granted—is helpful when trying to understand how negative securitization through migration policy discourse has so consistently generated "asymmetries and radical otherness" (Rytter 2018, 3), for example. Progressive, positive securitization, and inclusive security—also equally evident—continue to receive little political and social salience.

Sociologists' markedness is achieved through a figuratively coloring whereby "an entire marked category is represented by its most colorful, stereotypical image" (Brekhus, 1998: 37). Specifically, today's various social digital platforms and algorithms, for example, accelerate, if not supercharge, and routinize this kind of coloring, marking the outlier as an understood representation of the whole. It marks negative securitization as the danger. Violence committed by migrants, for example, then are not understood as episodic, but "appear endemic" (37). Progress, on the other hand, as positive securitization toward a broader public understanding "of social processes and possibilities" in supporting the rights of "the world's most vulnerable" (Nunes, 2015: 144) remain the unmarked. The unintentional augmentation or reinforcement of certain categorized generalization become "epistemological ghettos" (Brekhus, 1998: 38). They in turn only unintentionally reiterate public multitudes of regimes of truth(s).

A 'marking everything'—the deliberate shift to unbracketing the dominant, overrepresentation of negative securitization—then, at the very least, gives equal visibility to the "unremarked elements of routine public interactions" (Brekhus, 1998: 46). 'Marking everything,' however, does not suggest the merely inverting of the unmarked or reversing the

marked. This would only re-create yet another asymmetry. Instead the marking everything means a deliberate, analytical and normative cross-cutting. It is the conscious, everyday marking of *both*, "the empirically novel and the empirically mundane" (Brekhus, 1998: 38). Marking everything then aims to pay close attention to the "multiple mental vistas" (Brubaker, 2012: 45-47) from which people view, understand, evaluate and interact with each other's lives and communities more completely.

Markedness and ANKER centers

The negative securitization of migration in Germany as the *marked* has endured throughout generations of migration practices. Whether this historically involved the Prussian expulsion of unwanted Polish workers at the end of the 19th century (Hahamovitch, 2003) or Germany's decades of excluding 'guest worker' families from social mobility through citizenship rights, the de facto immobility of migrants' lives remained pervasively intact. The ANKER Centers and their sub-facilities today stand out as current examples of Germany's seemingly constant retreat to permanent temporality as migration policy.

Bavaria's ANKER Centers and their sub-sites conceptually emerged as early as in 2015 by gradually converting transition and emergency shelters into streamlined mass facilities. Initially, the transformed shelters accommodated migrants from so-called 'safe countries.' Later, they were retailored for migrants with 'poor asylum perspectives' (ANKER-WATCH, 2019). Today, every newly arriving, non-EU migrant in Bavaria is assigned to these ANKER facilities (ANKER-WATCH, 2019). While in 2018, ANKER Centers were mainly located in Bavaria, today they have reached other parts of Germany. Increasingly, the government is lauding these centers as model asylum processes sites (Federal Republic of Germany Ministry of Migration und Refugees, 2021). The 2021 government report, for example, highlighted how the length of asylum procedures is reduced to an average of 148 days in ANKER Centers compared to 227 days in other migrant housing facilities (29). The main ANKER Centers nationwide, for example, also process asylum applications by five days and appeals by nine days faster. Also, migrants, whose asylum applications have been rejected, voluntarily opted by an average of 37 days *earlier* for self-deportation (*freiwillige Rückkehrentscheidung*) in ANKER Centers than in regular residential settings (14, 15).

Migrant advocacy groups, however, such as the Münchner Flüchtlingsrat, Bayerischer Flüchtlingsrat, or Justiz Watch, for example, have consistently exposed the structural conditions, failures, and human cost underpinning these efficiencies: the center's inadequate legal guidance, ad hoc judicial expediency, abbreviated deportation hearings, prolonged stays of parents with children, segregated locations, crammed accommodations, and the general absence of basic human services (ANKER-WATCH, 2019) (Bavarian Legislature, 2019).

In particular in the 18 – 21 sub-facilities, migrants have less, if at all, access to legal aid, legal guidance, and to medical specialists (such as pediatricians, psychiatrists, and gynecologists). In Bavaria, the administrative offices of the Federal Migration and Refugee Ministry are only available at the main ANKER Centers, but not at the sub-facilities (ANKER-WATCH, 2019). Additionally, migrants are legally prohibited to work for the first nine month. ANKER residents are not allowed to cook their own food (food they are accustomed to), prohibited to use electric water kettles in their rooms, and live in often overcrowded conditions (rooms with four to eight beds) with roommates from different countries and often completely different socio-ethnic backgrounds. Additionally, the geographical isolation of these centers

constantly impedes, for example, on migrants' transportation to social services offices, and generally makes every day, basic social interactions between migrants, advocates, and mentors logistically cumbersome. ANKER sites are usually also far from supermarkets, dental offices, libraries, and main public transportation hubs. They also lack close-by playgrounds for children, neighborhood community rooms and centers for young adults, and commonly-owned spaces where encounters between migrants and German citizens could more organically evolve. In September 2019, during public hearings organized by NGOs, migrants testified about the truncated deportation hearings, lack of legal assistance and guidance, lack of medical care, privacy, age-differentiated schooling and tutoring for children. The hearings also disclosed incidences of violence, including sexual violence by the centers' private security personnel (ANKER-WATCH, 2020). In December 2020, ANKER-WATCH continued to expose the deeply racist and sexist attitudes of some of the private security staff toward migrants (ANKER-WATCH, 2021)

In addition, in 2020 mental health experts warned of a growing mental health crisis inside the facilities, specifically for parents with children (Deutsches Ärzteblatt, 2020). Since 2018, NGOs and migrant rights activists have frequently asked the Bavarian government for the centers' immediate closures (Münchner Flüchlingsrat, 2019). In spring 2020, NGOs filed several lawsuits, again demanding the immediate terminations of the ANKER sites due to increasing COVID-19 outbreaks.

ANKER Centers and their sub-facilities signify symbolic policy making and negative securitization as they contain migrants' lives (the assumed threat) rather than providing instrumental solutions. They signal othering, immobility, segregation, and containment—to both, citizens (the audience) and migrants (the 'objects' of intervention) (Slaven and Boswell, 2019: 1477). They press migrants into indefinite immobility that degrades human self-value, recognition, and respect. Symbolic policy marks migration and migrants as threats and removes them from sight. As a symbolic policy, ANKER facilities signal *action*, yet only conceal their actual *inaction* and their inability to affect tangible outcomes. Instead of a people-centric, productive, and non-othering migration policy—an inclusive living-together based on an *integration now* agenda that immediately places migrants within communities *prior to* permanent settlements—rules and practices of containment continue on.

"Integration needs to happen *now*!" and marking everything

Since 2018, migration advocacy NGOs and watch-dog networks such as ANKER-WATCH have called out the symbolic policy making of ANKER Center as harmful and counter-productive to Germany's broader migration and integration goals. These efforts—'writing against' othering, segregation, and immobility—however, have remained mostly unmarked and invisible. The marking everything as a strategy would challenge this invisibility. If sustainable integration—an inclusive, pluralistic and self-determined living together—ought to be realized, integration has to start *in the now*. It cannot be deferred and begin *after* migrants have been repeatedly pressed for months (or years) into becoming *the other* through negative securitization and symbolic policy making. The long lasting, symbolic policy damage of the ANKER Centers is too great. As Stuart Hall demonstrated, the production of othering—'the hegemonic and discursive types of power' through imagery, knowledge, and representation, for example—is circular: it harms "those 'subjected' *to it*" (Stuart Hall, 2000: 263), *and* the subjects *of* power. It harms society as a whole.

Scholarship has long highlighted how housing—the sense of place—is critically important for migrants to "understand themselves as active agents in their everyday lives" (Weidinger & Kordel, 2020: 2). ANKER Centers' isolation of migrants from their immediate environments signals non-agency, exclusion, and non-recognition. Therefore, NGOs as positive securitization actors foremost strive for the closure of all ANKER Center sites nationwide. However, as mentioned previously, marking everything does not simply mean inverting the unmarked or reversing the marked. Instead, the marking everything strategy as an analytical tool means a deliberate, everyday marking of *both*, negative and positive securitization. It would then at least give equal visibility and prominence, for example, to ANKER Center's mass facilities—*and* NGOs' alternative housing projects. These alternate projects do not segregate migrants, for example, but rather immediately after arrival embed them in existing communities such as the de-centralized housing units by the Bellevue di Monaco, a non-profit organization in central Munich (Bellevue di Monaco, 2018). Marking everything provides audiences then with the 'multiple mental vistas' from which to view—and evaluate—complex issues such as migration and integration. Marking everything also gives visibility to NGOs advocacy across interest groups (including political actors such as the Bavarian Green Party, for example) to assign rent-controlled single-family homes, and apartments to migrants and migrant families. Marking everything in the context of an *integration now* agenda could facilitate over time a deeper, public understanding how politicians and the media, for example, have flattened integration into a *self-other* lens. It would draw attention to how symbolic policy has repeatedly utilized same, failed models to produce same, failed outcomes—while new, people-centered social imaginaries and innovative policies premised on an *integration now* framework are actually necessary. The marking everything strategy is a conscious 'writing against' othering: against deferred integration and against the internal bordering effects of ANKER facilities.

Besides focusing on the housing sector, the marking everything strategy could also expand to a broader spectrum. Marking everything could build on the strides made through new labor policy reforms as positive securitization, for example, advocated for years by NGOs. Due to consistent grassroots and meso-level activism, by 2019 the German government enacted two migration reform packages, a skilled labor immigration law (*Fachkräftezuwanderungsgesetz)* and a work-permission-based migration law (*Beschäftigungsduldungsgesetz)*. Each expanded on the rights of employed or studying migrants to apply for permanent legal status in Germany. These reform packages built on already existing job skill training programs for migrants, broadened the range of accepted foreign school diplomas, added to the number of language course offerings and increased higher education financial aid for migrants (Federal Republic Germany, 2019). Marking everything could also give broader, mainstream visibility to Germany's long controversial civic and 'integration' courses (Federal Republic Germany, 2017). These required courses, on the one hand, signal to the citizen audience, for example, how the government initiates concrete efforts 'to integrate migrants.' Little is said, however, how these courses are grounded, for one, in the deeply troubling, racialized (white) notion of German Leading Culture (*Deutsche Leitkulture*).

Concluding remarks: 'Writing against othering'

This article's theoretical discussion aimed to draw attention to how both—negative *and* positive securitization—exist in migration discourse. It problematized the negative fixedness of securitization through symbolic policy making and highlighted an asymmetry between the

marked, negative securitization and the *unmarked*, positive securitization. By interrogating this asymmetry, it applied the '*marking everything*' method. As illustrated, marking everything then gives positive securitization at least its equal space. Marking everything challenges the linear assumptions, surrounding the negative securitization of migrants, for example, by also "ornamenting of the interior-types" (Brekhus, 1998: 46), a filling of the fissures between the extreme binary poles. It shows how progressive migration reforms—propagated on the meso-level—also equally exist and how they can advance a more effective, immediate *integration in the now* agenda. Framing securitization as positive or negative as proposed, however, also introduces multiple caveats. What are negative securitization's benefits and values—on the meso-level? For whom, for which gains—and in which context? And how do they operate?

It is also clear that *marking everything*'s 'filling of the gaps' will always remain incomplete and deficient. Marking everything as a strategy though illustrates—at the very least—how NGOs as positive securitization actors on the meso-level can resist and challenge symbolic policy and negative securitization. As such, they *act* against the reproduction of the *othering* and advocate for an immediate, people-centered *integration in the now*. Calling out negative securitization and symbolic policy making provides an opening for positive securitization to claim equal visibility and voice, to be seen and heard. It highlights instrumental policy making, reform, and action advocated on the meso-level. By challenging symbolic policy signaling, 'marking everything' then can contribute to more complete, more fully understood, inclusive social imaginaries of people, living self-determined, diverse, and free, mobile lives—*with* each other.

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