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**Securitization of “the
foreigner” in Australian
television**

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1. Introduction

During the past few decades, issues of migration have received considerable public attention in Australia (Babacan, 2008, p. 44). Immigrants and especially asylum seekers have primarily been presented as a matter of national security (see Bleiker, Campbell, Hutchison, & Nicholson, 2013; Devetak, 2004; Gale, 2004; McDonald, 2011). In 2001, a Senate inquiry revealed a directive by the Australian Department of Defence that was aimed to ensure that no “humanising” images of asylum seekers were taken (Bleiker et al., 2013, p. 412). Similarly, the latest anti-immigration campaign by the Department of Immigration and Border Protection, uses a militaristic language to deter asylum seekers from coming to Australia (Laughland, 2014).

The Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP) also cooperates with the private television network *Seven Network* to produce the reality TV-show *Border Security: Australia's Frontline*. The show follows DIBP officers in their daily tasks at several Australian airports and depicts them in their interactions with passengers who just arrived to Australia. Most usually, this involves story lines, in which crimes or other offences committed by foreign passengers are uncovered through the work of the DIBP. The show, which is produced in its fifteenth season, attracts high ratings of 1-2 million viewers per episode, which corresponds to 4-8% of the Australian population (OzTAM, 2015).

Applying the Copenhagen School’s theory of Securitization (see Buzan, Wæver, & De Wilde, 1998), the objective of this paper is to assess whether or not *Border Security: Australia's Frontline* securitizes foreigners. In order to answer this research question the paper evaluates, in how far the show fulfils the requirements of successful securitization. The paper will therefore examine, (1), whether the show represents Australia as endangered or as a “referent object” of security, (2), whether it is portraying foreigners as an “immediate threat” to Australia, (3), whether the Department of Immigration and Border Protection is depicted as an “extraordinary [counter]measure” to this threat, and (4), whether the show is able to legitimise the use of “extraordinary measures” (Buzan et al., 1998, pp. 21-48).

While Securitization theory, has usually focused on *linguistic* constructions of threats, this paper focuses on a *visual* constructions of threats. It thus incorporates the works of scholars of “visual securitization” (see Hansen, 2011b; Heck & Schlag, 2012) and those following the “aesthetic turn” (Bleiker, 2001) or “popcultural turn” (Weldes, 2003) in International

Relations. Scholars of visual securitization have thus far mostly been concerned with the analysis of still images such as cartoons (Hansen, 2011a), drawings (Aradau & Hill, 2013) or photographs (Möller, 2007). In that sense the analysis of a reality TV show is, to my knowledge, a novelty to Securitization theory.

In order to answer the research question, I employ a qualitative content analysis of a randomised sample of 7 episodes of *Border Security: Australia's Frontline*. The analysis was structured around a category system of 40 categories (see Appendix A).

As section four of this paper shows, the research question could be confirmed. I could illustrate how the programme constructs Australia as environmentally (through imported pests and viruses), economically (e.g. through credit card fraud), and socially (through mass immigration) threatened. Furthermore, I identified five elements the show uses to construct foreigners as an immediate threat. Those are first, an overrepresentation of criminal foreigners, second, a dramatization of criminal acts, third, wrongly accusing foreigners of crimes, fourth, “othering” foreigners and fifth, intertextual references to films and shows about crime. Finally, I pointed out how the dramaturgical structure of the show helps to construct the Department of Immigration and Border Protection as an extraordinary countermeasure and how its actions are rendered commonsensical.

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. In the next section, I will give an overview over the theory of Securitization, before I turn to the specificities of visual securitization and film theory. In the third section, I will explain the methods of data collection and data analysis that were employed to answer the research question. In the fourth section, I will present the results of the analysis before a conclusion is drawn in section five.

2. Theory

The theory of Securitization (see Buzan et al., 1998), which is part of the so-called “Copenhagen School”, is especially well suited to analyse the role a TV show might play in the realm of international security studies. This is because of the theory’s acknowledgement that our understanding of *security* is not based on *objective* nor *subjective* notions of what a threat is and what it is not (Buzan & Hansen, 2009, p. 34). The Copenhagen School rather proposes an intersubjective approach to the study of security, in which threats as well as the threatened are constructed through discourse and do not rest on a single subjective perspective let alone an objective evaluation (Buzan et al., 1998, pp. 30-31). A discourse then, “refers to a group of statements which structure the way a thing is thought” (Rose, 2007, p. 142). This allows us, to analyse any statement within this “group of statements” and to look into the ways it shapes our understanding of *reality*. In securitization theory, these statements are referred to as “speech acts” (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 26). Speech acts can then take the form of a political speech but also of an election manifesto, a magazine cover or precisely that of a TV show.

Securitization theory therefore played an important role in “widening” the agenda of Security Studies (Buzan & Hansen, 2009, p. 212; Williams, 2003, p. 513) and moved it beyond “narrow” approaches that focused on exclusively military issues (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 2). It is however important to note, that securitization theory, as laid out in its initial stage, has its limitations itself and not all of the above mentioned speech acts receive equal attention. In fact, the theory has been criticized for its narrow focus on linguistic forms of securitization, which prevents the analysis of visual materials like those of magazine covers or TV shows (Heck & Schlag, 2012; McDonald, 2008, p. 568; Möller, 2007, p. 180; Williams, 2003, p. 512).

In order to answer the research question properly, it is therefore necessary to incorporate the works following the “aesthetic turn” (Bleiker, 2001) or “popcultural turn” (Grayson, Davies, & Philpott, 2009; Weldes, 2003) within IR into this paper. Especially publications on visual securitization (Hansen, 2011b) provide important refinements to Securitization theory and shall be discussed later in this chapter.

Scholars concerned with visual securitization have usually been looking at still images like cartoons (Hansen, 2011a), drawings (Aradau & Hill, 2013) or photographs (Möller, 2007). In

order to fully grasp the particularity of visual securitization through moving images a further discussion of film theoretical approaches is needed. Here I will especially examine the work of Heck & Schlag (2016), who provide a useful framework to analyse the narratives within film or television programmes. A discussion of Grant's (1992) research on television portrayals of crime, finally offers useful insights into some of the usual narratives employed by TV shows similar to *Border Security: Australia's Frontline*.

The remainder of the theoretical section of this paper will now first take a closer look at the theory of Securitization in its initial stage and especially describe the elements needed for successful securitization. I will then turn to the specificity of visual securitization before a discussion of film theoretical approaches and narratives in crime television shows follows.

2.1 Securitization

According to the Copenhagen School “security is about survival” (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 21). More precisely, it is about the presentation of an issue as an “existential threat”, which endangers a certain “referent object”. In the theory of Securitization, these referent objects are most usually the state, a government, a territory or a society (however, because of the theory's discursive approach, the range of possible referent objects is not limited to these examples). The immediacy of “existential threats” allows for “extraordinary measures” to handle those threats. Extraordinary measures can take various forms, but always “break the normal political rules of the game (e.g., in the form of secrecy, levying taxes or conscription, placing limitations on otherwise inviolable rights, or focusing society's energy and resources on a specific task)” (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 24). It is through this process, that the state legitimizes its use of force. Or in the words of Buzan et al. “by saying ‘security,’ a state representative declares an emergency condition, thus claiming a right to use whatever means are necessary to block a threatening development” (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 21).

In principle, any matter relevant to the public can either be nonpoliticized (the state is not dealing with the issue at all), politicized (the issue is dealt with in the usual procedures of public policy) or securitized (an issue is presented as an immediate threat, that requires extraordinary measures outside of usual procedures of public policy) (Buzan et al., 1998, pp. 23-24). Buzan et al. (1998, p. 29) and other scholars (Heck & Schlag, 2012, p. 894; Möller, 2007, p. 181) have criticized the process of securitization as undemocratic for it moves issues

out of public debate, silences oppositional voices and claims countermeasures have to be implemented immediately. It is therefore, that the research questions gains additional relevancy, as securitizing tendencies within *Border Security: Australia's Frontline* might have similar effects on the public discourse on immigration in Australia.

The nature of threats and referent objects can then vary greatly between different “sectors” of analysis. Buzan et al. (1998, pp. 22-23) identify five of those sectors. In the military sector threats usually endanger the state or the armed forces of a state. In the political sector it is the sovereignty or legitimacy of a polity that is threatened. In the economic sector firms, national economies or entire economic systems can be existentially threatened. The societal sector describes the survival of collective identities like nations or religions. And finally, there is the environmental sector, which is concerned with issues of climate change or the survival of species and habitats.

For the analysis of *Border Security: Australia's Frontline* as a “speech act” that possible securitizes foreigners, all of those five sectors could be relevant. Foreigners could be presented as criminals or possible terrorists, who pose a threat to the state’s armed forces or Australia’s sovereignty (military and political sector). They furthermore could be presented as posing a threat to Australia’s system of social welfare (economic sector). In terms of societal security, the TV show could present foreigners as inherently *different* and thus as a threat to the social composition of Australia. Last but not least, the show might even render foreigners as a threat to Australia’s environmental security, as they might bring pests, plant and animal diseases from overseas with them.

As previously stated, the legitimacy to exercise extraordinary countermeasures arises through the language of existential and immediate threats. IR scholars concerned with popular culture have described additional factors that help to create legitimacy for the use of force. Erickson (2008, p. 347) for example shows, how the use of modern technology in the TV shows *24* and *MI-5/Spooks* legitimises the work of intelligence services. This is particularly interesting, as it is airports, that increasingly rely on modern technologies (Schouten, 2014, p. 24) and a similar use of technology is depicted in *Border Security: Australia's Frontline*. For Erickson (2008, p. 347), the use of modern technology in these shows increases legitimacy, because it depicts intelligence services as more proficient to master technology than their potential enemies. I would like to add, that the use of modern technology increases legitimacy because

it adds a second layer to the decision-making processes of state authorities. It gives authorities the possibility to claim, that their decisions are not solely based on their own evaluation, but supported by the use of technology, which is generally held to be objective, fair and neutral.

A few notes should be made on the threshold to successful securitization. According to the Copenhagen School it is not enough to present “something as an existential threat to a referent object” (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 25). This would only constitute a “securitizing move” but not a case of securitization. The difference to successful securitization is that an audience needs to accept the proposals made within the securitizing move. This does not mean, that extraordinary measures have to be adopted, it only means that that the securitizing speech act created the necessary legitimacy to adopt such measures (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 25).

This thought is in line with the poststructuralist critique of causal models. Poststructuralists reject the notion that it is possible to measure the exact impact a speech act has on political developments (Bleiker, 2015, pp. 883-885; Hansen, 2015, pp. 274-275). They prefer to speak of “conditions of possibility” (Bleiker et al., 2013, p. 400) or “discursive causality” (Hansen, 2006, p. 26). According to poststructuralists, discourses shape what “can and cannot be thought” (Bleiker et al., 2013, p. 400) and thus lay the foundations for certain political positions, while blocking the establishment of others.

Since the threshold to successful securitization has been made clear, it can be useful to look into some of the “facilitating conditions” of securitization. Buzan et al. (1998, pp. 31-33) argue, that the chances for successful securitization depend on a number of internal and external factors. Internal factors describe whether or not the speech act follows “the grammar of security” and thus emphasises the individual elements needed to securitize an issue (construction of an existential threat, proposing emergency measures etc.). External factors are on the one hand concerned with the social position of the securitizing actor. A higher social position then results in a higher chance of successful securitization. On the other hand, external factors have to do with the past history of certain “threats”. If something has been constructed as threatening before, it will be easier to build up on those notions. Last but not least, it is the scale of the referent object that can facilitate or impede securitization. According to Buzan et al. (1998, pp. 36-37), medium-sized collectivities like states or nations have usually worked best as a referent object. They argue, that these collectivities more often

“engage in self-reinforcing rivalries with other limited collectivities, and [that] such interaction strengthens their ‘we’ feeling”.

So what can we say about facilitating conditions in the case of *Border Security: Australia's Frontline*? First of all, it is not a trivial matter to define the social position of the securitizing actor in this case. This is because it is unclear, who the securitizing actor actually is. On the one hand viewers most possibly acknowledge the fact that they see a TV show and thus, that it is *Seven Network*, one of the main television networks of the country that fulfils the role of a securitizing actor. On the other hand, viewers know that they see a “reality-show” and might identify with the depicted officials of the *Department of Immigration and Border Protection* (DIBP). It can thus be argued, that both of those entities fulfil the role of a securitizing actor. The social position of both actors is high. The DIBP is an official state authority and one of 18 Australian government departments. *Seven Network* continually ranks among the top-rated television networks in Australia with an audience share of around 25% in 2015 (OzTAM, 2015).

Second, foreigners and especially asylum seekers have long been criminalized in Australia’s public discourse (Babacan, 2008). Asylum seekers have been presented as a security issue (McDonald, 2011, p. 281) and “as the ‘illegal’, non-western, non-Christian Other” (Gale, 2004, p. 334). This is in line with Australia’s fears of being invaded by foreigners (Burke, 2008). McKay et al. (2012, pp. 115-116) furthermore show, that there is a widespread fear among the public that refugees threaten Australian identity and values. It is therefore safe to say, that foreigners, especially asylum seekers and refugees, have been portrayed as a threat before and that this facilitates further constructions of foreigners as a security issue.

Third, the referent object in this case can be Australia’s political, economic, societal or environmental security. Regardless of what sectors of security are especially emphasised, it is clear that “Australia” and thus a medium-sized collectivity serves as a referent object. This further facilitates a process of securitization.

To find out whether or not *Border Security: Australia's Frontline* is successfully securitizing the arrival of foreigners to Australia, one needs to define what successful securitization according to the Copenhagen School means. As stated above, successful securitization consists of (1) a securitizing actor, who (2) discursively constructs (by means of a speech act)

something as (3) an immediate threat, (4) that endangers a certain referent object. The speech act furthermore needs to (5) propose an emergency measure and (6) create adequate audience acceptance to legitimise such emergency measures (Buzan et al., 1998, pp. 21-25). If these elements can be found during the analysis of the TV show, one can speak of a case of Securitization and the hypothesis that *Border Security: Australia's Frontline* is securitizing the arrival of foreigners to Australia could be confirmed.

2.2 Specificity of visual securitization

There seems to be something that fundamentally differentiates visual communication from textual communication. Something that makes the visual more powerful than words (Bleiker, 2015, p. 875). Hansen (2014) exemplifies this by media outlets that often warn their audiences upon display of graphic images, whereas no such warnings exist at the beginning of written depictions of disturbing events. Mitchell, more poetically, asks why we “behave as if pictures were alive, as if works of art had minds of their own, as if images had a power to influence human beings, demanding things from us, persuading, seducing, and leading us astray?” (Mitchell, 2004, p. 7).

Applying these thoughts to the theory of Securitization, Hansen (2011b, pp. 55-58) argues, that visual securitization differs from purely linguistic securitization in three aspects: immediacy, circulability and ambiguity.

“Immediacy” relates to the fact that images more easily affect us emotionally. This is because images (but also reality shows) are perceived to be authentic portrayals of *reality* (see Aradau & Hill, 2013, pp. 377-378; Rose, 2007, p. 3). They do not make us aware of the fact, that visual depictions are just as much a mediated account of *reality* as are verbal depictions. Furthermore, we are more easily able to identify with people we see in pictures and thus are emotionally drawn into the picture (Bleiker et al., 2013, p. 406; Hansen, 2011b, p. 56).

“Circulability” has to do with the fact that changes in media technology have made the production and consumption of images much more accessible. Images or videos can easily be taken via smartphones and shared via social media platforms or messaging services. This allows for a democratisation of the “speech act” as even people with a relatively low social position can reach considerable audiences (Friis, 2015, p. 728; Hansen, 2011b, p. 57).

“Ambiguity” finally refers to the meaning of images, which might be interpreted differently, depending on the viewer’s knowledge of the “symbols, places, people, and events” (Hansen, 2011b, p. 58) depicted in it. This might lead to a situation, where an image might not be understood in the way a securitizing actor wants it to be understood. This lessens the potential of successful securitization through visual forms of communication. However, it should be noted, that in the case of a TV show this might be less of a concern. Whereas still images usually have limited options to establish a narrative and are not accompanied by verbal explanations, TV shows like *Border Security: Australia's Frontline* are able to make use of voice-over narration or other technical and symbolic means to tell and explain a story (Heck & Schlag, 2016, pp. 132-133).

Before discussing those means in more detail in the next section, I would like to briefly turn to the theory of intertextuality. As argued above, the meaning of images depends on the interpretations of the viewer and his or her pre-knowledge of certain “symbols, places, people, and events” (Hansen, 2011b, p. 58). Similarly, Campbell (2004, pp. 62-63) argues, that images are always “read within an historical, political and social context”. When we interpret images, or any form of texts (in the broad sense of literary theory), our interpretations are therefore dependant on the texts we have “read” before (Hansen, 2011b, p. 54). Thus one could say, that “any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations” or that texts are *intertextually* linked to each other (Kristeva, 1980, p. 66). This can be illustrated by the images of Bosnian prisoners that were taken during the Yugoslav wars. The pictures of undernourished prisoners behind razor wire fences brought back memories of the pictures of concentration camps of World War II. Since we know about the horrors of concentration camps, the meaning of those concentration camps might influence our interpretations of different, but similar pictures, like those of the Bosnian prisoners (Hansen, 2011b, p. 53). *Border Security: Australia's Frontline* that is filmed at various Australian airports provides another interesting example. Airports both serve as a symbol of economic globalization and of tight security procedures in the fear of terrorism (Schouten, 2014, pp. 23-24). Both of these symbolic meanings can then influence our interpretations of this TV show through an intertextual reference. Since economic globalization as well as terrorism is suited to construct foreigners as a threat, this might further facilitate a process of securitization.

2.3 Film theory and narratives

As briefly stated above, films or television programmes are able to make use of various techniques to establish a narrative. Before these techniques shall be discussed in more detail, it needs to be defined what the term *narrative* means. Schlag and Heck (2016, p. 132) define narratives in the four following steps: (1) Narratives are about actions, they require subjects that do or tell something; (2) narratives need to be told by someone, which means they always take a certain perspective; (3) narratives relate actions and events to each other; (4) since narratives need to be told by someone, they always have to focus on something, while leaving out something else. This is why they always reduce complexity.

It seems safe to say, that films or television programmes are able to establish narratives. They present us with subjects and their actions and take a certain perspective. Films furthermore relate subjects, actions and events to each other, for example temporally or spatially. And finally, their focus on something always comes at the cost of something else. (Heck & Schlag, 2016, pp. 132-133)

So what are the techniques used to establish narratives? According to Heck and Schlag (2016, pp. 132-135) films utilise voice-over narration or a range of technical and symbolic means or both to tell a story. Dialogues, the script, the looks of actors, their make-up and costumes help to push forward a story. Different camera angles, cuts and editing relate subjects, actions and events to each other. Background music or sound effects and visual overlays can furthermore be used to trigger emotions or to provide the viewer with additional information. Especially television programmes often use a title sequence at the beginning of each episode, which establishes the main characters and the tone of show.

Rose (2007, p. 10) furthermore points out, that thinking about the meaning of an image, or in this case a TV programme, “also involves thinking about how it positions [us], its viewer[s], in relation to it”. Grant (1992, p. 68) exemplifies this by her analysis of television portrayals of crime. She argues, that television programmes such as *Cops* put the viewer into the perspective of being innocent. Thus viewers will more easily support the use of force or even an unlawful treatment of suspects because they assume that they will not be affected by it.

In a content analysis of several American television crime programmes, Grant (1992) describes some of the narratives that can be found in these shows. Her insights can possibly

be used for the analysis of *Border Security: Australia's Frontline* and shall therefore be discussed in more detail.

First of all, she recognises a tendency to “decontextualize” crime (Grant, 1992, p. 58). This means that criminals and their actions are shown, however we never learn about the person behind the act. What led them to commit a crime? Issues of race, poverty, gender, and class that might provide answers, are not taken into account. This, according to Grant (1992, p. 58), leads to simplistic portrayals of crime that claim that it is obvious how criminals look like and what countermeasures should be taken. The lack of information on the background of criminals furthermore facilitates their portrayal of being a homogenous mass that is fundamentally *different* from *us*. This might play a role in the construction of an immediate threat in *Border Security: Australia's Frontline*, as people who are fundamentally different from us, can more easily be said to pose a threat.

The portrayal of “decontextualized” criminals as “bad guys” often is accompanied by a glorifying view on police officials (Grant, 1992, p. 59). Agents are always right (Van Veeren, 2009, p. 380) and effectively work within well-structured organisations (Erickson, 2008, p. 345). This helps to legitimise their actions, even if they sometimes have to break the law, in order to “get their job done” (Van Veeren, 2009, p. 380). For the case of *Border Security: Australia's Frontline*, it can be said that a glorifying portrayal of the officers of the *Department of Immigration and Border Protection* helps to legitimise their work and thus plays an important role in winning the acceptance of the audience.

As stated above, television programmes always focus on something, while leaving something else out. Crime shows naturally focus on crime, while leaving lawful behaviour out. This leads to an overrepresentation of criminal acts or in the words of Erickson (2008, p. 346), to a “normalisation” of the “unusual”. This facilitates the construction of an immediate threat, as threats are presented as ubiquitous and thus helps to legitimize extraordinary countermeasures.

Finally, it is worthwhile to further scrutinise the specificities of “reality-shows” such as *Border Security: Australia's Frontline*. Grant (1992, pp. 60-64) argues that these shows are “in fact much less realistic than many of their fictional counterparts”. This is for two reasons. First, reality shows are even more prone to “decontextualize” crime as they focus on the

perspective of the police. This means, there is no possibility, as in fictional works, to depict the background of a person and to put their crimes into perspective. Second, the presentation of events and actions claims to be objective and *real*, even though these shows, as fictional works, use technical and symbolic means to establish a narrative, such as editing, background music or voice-over narration. As these shows, more than other television programmes, claim to be authentic and realistic, they are more easily able to affect us emotionally and more easily work as a speech act in the sense of Securitization theory (see Aradau & Hill, 2013, pp. 377-378; Hansen, 2011b, pp. 55-56; Rose, 2007, p. 3).

3. Methodology

3.1 Data collection

Border Security: Australia's Frontline has been picked as the object of analysis for a number of reasons. According to Heck and Schlag (2016, p. 137) films (or in this case TV programmes) play an important role in shaping our understandings of political events, especially if they (1) claim to depict reality or (2) receive broad public attention. *Border Security: Australia's Frontline* fulfils both of those requirements. First, being a “reality show” it claims to take viewers “behind the scenes of Australia’s immigration, customs and quarantine departments” and to provide us with an “insight into the daily workings of thousands of officers who dedicate their lives to protecting Australia’s border” (SevenNetwork, 2016). Second, the show has received wide attention in Australia and around the globe. In Australia, the show premiered in 2004 and since then 190 episodes with a running time of approximately 30 minutes each have been aired. The show is a ratings hit and each episode approximately attracts 1-2 millions viewers, which corresponds to 4-8% of the Australian population (ScreenAustralia, 2016a, 2016b). The show has received considerable public attention, when it was criticised by human rights activists and viewers for a racist TV advertisement, containing the words “what’s wrong with Mr Wong” (Piotrowski, 2014). The show is also being broadcasted in various other countries, such as Germany (as *Achtung Zoll – Willkommen in Australien*), the United Kingdom (as *Nothing to Declare*), or Belgium (as *Border Security Australia*) (vtm, 2016). In Canada, a spin off of the show, titled *Border Security: Canada’s Frontline* first aired in 2012 (Wyld, 2014).

To produce the TV show, the Australian television network *Seven Network* cooperates with the Department of Immigration and Border Protection. In 2015 it became public, that episodes needs to be approved by the Department, which has the right to require the removal of any footage (Farrell, 2015). This provides an interesting case of a governmental body that supports a media company in return for the production of a TV show that is apt to legitimise their work (see Dodds, 2008, p. 230).

Another reason to pick this particular show as the object of analysis was presented in the theory section of this work. As stated, the show fulfils a number of “facilitating conditions”, which make a process of successful securitization through the shows portrayal of foreigners highly likely. Last but not least, most of the work on securitization has focused on linguistic

ways of constructing a threat. If forms of visual securitization have been taken into account, there has usually been a focus on still images. In that sense the analysis of a TV show is, to my knowledge, a novelty to Securitization theory.

Recent episodes of the show are available to be streamed online on *Seven Networks* streaming platform. In order to be able to analyse a broad number of episodes from different seasons, video-sharing platforms such as YouTube and Dailymotion were consulted.

Up until this day, 15 seasons with a total of 190 episodes of *Border Security: Australia's Frontline* have been aired on Australian television (SevenNetwork, 2016). As a full analysis of all episodes would go beyond the scope of this work, a sample of 7 episodes from 6 different seasons was drawn. To make sure that the episodes within the sample represent the general tendencies within the show, the sample was drawn randomly. The selected episodes are listed in table 1.

Season	Episode	Original air date
1	1	13 October 2004
1	8	1 December 2004
4	4	22 November 2006
8	15	13 December 2009
9	2	21 February 2010
11	5	6 March 2011
14	8	13 August 2014

Table 1: Episodes within the randomised sample

3.2 Data analysis

Rose (2007, pp. 13-26) distinguishes between three “sites” that constitute the meaning of an image (or in this case TV programme). Those are the site of the production, the site of the image, and the site of the audience.

To answer the research question, it is most useful to concentrate on the site of the image itself, although other aspects will not be overlooked completely. For example, the fact that the show is produced as a “reality-show” already contributes to its meaning. First, because these shows usually decontextualize crime, as they are not able to follow around all of their protagonists (Grant, 1992, pp. 60-63). Second, the circumstances of their production lead audiences to believe that what they see is *real*, which again influences the meaning of the show (*see*

Aradau & Hill, 2013, pp. 377-378; Rose, 2007, p. 3). The site of the audience will play an important role as well, as the process of securitization always requires the acceptance of an audience. However, the positivist logic of experiments or interviews that look into the effects these shows have on audiences are not in line with Securitization theory's notions of "conditions of possibility". I will thus use the conceptual framework of Hansen (2011b, p. 53) and concentrate on the "image itself [and] its immediate intertext".

To analyse the material a qualitative content analysis shall be employed. Central to this process is the definition of categories that provide the questions that shall be answered when analysing the material and increase the inter-subjectivity of the procedure (Mayring, 2014, p. 39). It is not a trivial process to define these categories and some even refer to it as "an art" (Krippendorff, 1980, p. 76). For the creation of the categories in this analysis a combination of an inductive and deductive approach has been used (see Heck & Schlag, 2016, p. 138; Mayring, 2014, p. 78). At first, a deductive approach was used and a number of categories have been defined with hindsight to the theoretical considerations of the theory section of this work. The resulting categories were then tested in a first coding process, after which an additional set of categories was added to the final category scheme.

The final category scheme (see Appendix A for a full overview) consists of formal categories as well as content categories. Formal categories, for example, collect data on the episode number and original air date of the analysed episode. Content categories then can be grouped in five categories. Those are, first, information on the depicted officer(s) of the Department of Immigration and Border Protection, such as their sex, ethnicity, clothing, language, actions, suspicions concerning a passenger, and through what means they uncovered a criminal act. Second, information on the passenger(s) under scrutiny, such as their nationality, sex, ethnicity, language, actions, feelings, committed crimes, and reasons to travel to Australia. Third, the techniques used to establish a narrative (Heck & Schlag, 2016, pp. 132-135), or the shows immediate intertext (Hansen, 2011b, p. 53), such as music, editing, voice-over narration and overlays and their meanings. Fourth, the elements of successful securitization, as laid out in the theory section of this work and in what sense they can be found within the analysed plot line. Last but not least, the central narrative of the plot line is summarized in a fifth category.

According to Akremi (2014, p. 890), films (or TV programmes) should be divided into meaningful sub-units in order to be analysed. For *Border Security: Australia's Frontline* these sub-units are the individual plot lines of each episode. All episodes of the show contain three to four of these plot lines that are generally unrelated to each other. They portray someone or something arriving to Australia and an officer or group of officers who check on them or it. All 22 plot lines from the episodes in the sample were then analysed using the category scheme presented above. The category scheme allows others to reconstruct the analysis and thus increases inter-subjectivity. However, it should be noted, that analysing a film or television programme is only to a limited degree a technical task and always requires the personal interpretation skills of the coder, as “[t]here is no dictionary to which you can turn to look up the meaning of a specific stylistic element” (Bordwell & Thompson, 1997; Heck & Schlag, 2016, p. 139).

4. Results

Is *Border Security: Australia's Frontline* a speech act in the sense of the Copenhagen School that securitizes foreigners? In order to confirm this research question, a number of conditions need to be fulfilled. It is those conditions along which this section will be structured. After a brief analysis of the show's title and dramaturgical structure, I will turn to the question of the "referent object" and clarify how Australia is constructed as the object in danger. Furthermore, I will examine through what means the show portrays foreigners (and particularly non-white foreigners), as an "immediate threat" to Australia, before I will describe how the programme represents the Department of Immigration and Border Protection as an "extraordinary" countermeasure to this threat. The aspects of legitimacy and "audience acceptance" will play a role in each of those sections, as I will point out the ways in which the show renders its conclusions commonsensical. Finally, it should be noted that many of the narratives and symbols within the show simultaneously contain two or more elements of successful securitization. In these cases, the symbol or narrative will be discussed within the section of its most dominant meaning. Secondary meanings of those symbols and narratives will then be briefly discussed as well, even though they technically belong to another section.

Before turning to these individual elements of successful securitization, a brief discussion of the show's title and dramaturgical structure helps to sum up the standard narrative of the show. The first two words "Border Security" already make clear that this is a show about security (of a border). Security then, is a two-sided concept about threats and the protection thereof. This is reflected in the two-sided dramaturgical concept the show uses. In every analysed plotline, there are protagonists, the officers of the Department and Immigration and Border Protection, and antagonists, the passengers arriving to Australia. The DIBP represents the side of protection, whereas the foreign passengers represent the side of threats. The dramaturgical structure of the show thus instantly sums up the main elements of successful securitization. There is an immediate threat (foreigners) that endangers a referent object (the place behind the border: Australia) that can only be stopped through emergency measures (work of the Department of Immigration and Border Protection).

The other half of the show's title "Australia's Frontline" is equally interesting. According to the Oxford Dictionary, a front line is "[t]he military line or part of an army that is closest to

the enemy” (Stevenson, 2010). The term “frontline” thus can be seen as an intertextual reference to war, even though it seems highly unsuitable to describe the situation at Australian airports in these terms. It works however, to construct everyone on the other side of this “frontline” as one of Australia’s enemies, and thus as an immediate threat to the referent object Australia.

4.1 Referent object

Within the theory of securitization, referent objects most usually take the form of a state, a government, a territory or a society (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 21). Analysing *Border Security: Australia's Frontline* it becomes clear, that it is primarily Australia’s environmental, economic, and societal security as well as the safety of its people that is constructed as endangered. In the following, a detailed discussion of the programme’s title sequence as well as of some of its plot lines will shed light onto how the show represents Australia as the referent object of security.

The beginning of each episode opens on a blank, black screen. Slowly the words “Thousands of men and women dedicate their lives to protecting Australia’s border” appear in capital letters on the screen. We thus instantly know who is protecting, and what they are protecting. In this case Australia’s *border* is particularly emphasised, although we do not yet learn, if the border needs to be protected solely for the sake of Australia’s territorial integrity or to prevent threats from coming into the country. The statement also says something about the importance of protecting the border. If “[t]housands of men and women dedicate their lives” to do it, it must be relevant. Furthermore, if “[t]housands” of people are needed to protect it, it truly must be in danger. The beginning of each episode therefore presents it as part of common sense, that Australia’s border is threatened.

A few seconds after the appearance of the aforementioned sentence, we are presented with a shot of Australia’s shape (see Figure 1). It appears in the centre of the screen and is enclosed by a circular object that seems to be heavy and out of metal. The arrangement is further strengthened by a number of bolts and we can still see their heads on the top of the circular metal plate. Then bright and capital letters appear across Australia’s shape and spell the word “Target”. This sequence works as a symbol to Australia’s endangered status. It is the “[t]arget” of someone or something, and thus needs heavy protection, as symbolised through

the metal plate. The metal plate furthermore can be seen as a symbol for a *defensive* use of force, rather than an *offensive* one. Even though some Border Protection officers do carry guns (Belot, 2016), those are not depicted next to Australia's shape. The difference between the two is, that defensive symbols might work better in legitimising the use of force as no one, but aggressors, are harmed.



Figure 1: Screenshot taken from the title sequence of *Border Security: Australia's Frontline*

Apart from the title sequence, Australia is constructed as being threatened in all analysed plot lines and episodes. As previously stated, the dramaturgical structure of the show that relies on protagonists (the Department of Immigration and Border Protection) and antagonists (foreigners arriving to Australia) plays an important role here. If a state authority takes the position of the ones who protect, it is obvious that the object of their protection is the country that pays them to do it. As I have established before, the title of the show serves as an equally strong argument to assume that Australia is constructed as a referent object of security.

These representations all have in common that they construct Australia as endangered. However, they do not define what aspect of Australia is in danger. In order to find out if it is the state, the nation, the economy, the society, the environment or a combination of those that is portrayed as a referent object, a closer examination of individual episodes and plot lines is helpful.

In some plot lines the referent object is clearly stated. This usually happens via voice-over narration or interviews, in which officers explain who or what could be harmed by the actions of the passengers or mail pieces under scrutiny.

An interesting example can be found in the fourth episode of season four. Here a female student from China is pulled aside by an officer. As it turns out, she has not declared any food. However, an x-ray of her bag indicates that she is bringing organic material to the country. Upon closer examination of her bags, the officer finds and confiscates several packages of pork. Voice-over narration sets in and we hear that “all meat products carry the risk of disease” (15min30sec). After that, the officer is being interviewed and makes the following statement: “Bringing in any meat into Australia poses a serious risk, because you only get one chance, with a virus, we get virus outbreaks, they can’t be contained, places like Japan or Taiwan that really do have very strict standards on their meat importation, we lose those markets, that could be billions of dollars” (15min34sec). In how far has this plot line constructed Australia as a referent object? First, the environmental security of Australia is emphasised. As we have learned, the passenger’s meat product could carry diseases and thus the country’s biodiversity (or even the health of the population) is threatened. Second, the officer ties this environmental risk to an economic risk, as Australia could lose the right to export their meat products to other countries and possibly loses “billions of dollars”. Similar plotlines of passengers bringing in food that could pose a risk to Australia’s biosecurity or economy have been found in all but one of the analysed episodes. In the first episode of season one (7min38sec), a couple from New York is shown trying to bring in prohibited fruits, in episode 15 of season 8 (7min20sec) a woman from Mauritius is arriving with an undeclared plant. In season 9, episode 2 (4min40sec) a plot line features a couple from Vietnam bringing in large amounts of vegetables and meat products. A passenger from China arrives with seaweed in his bags in season 11, episode 5 (8min50sec). Finally, in season 14, episode 8 a parcel from Malta with a shark head in it arrives. According to the narrator the head “carries great risks for Australia’s biosecurity” (16min28sec). It is those statements that clearly indicate that Australia’s environmental security is endangered. As we have established above, this environmental aspect, can sometimes also be tied to Australia’s economic security.

However, Australia is not only constructed as endangered from an environmental point of view and especially Australia’s economic security is emphasised in different ways as well. In

episode 5 of season 11, we witness a story that nicely points this out. A parcel containing a vacuum cleaner arrives from Malaysia and officers examine its x-ray image. They notice something is hidden inside the vacuum and decide to open it up. Within it, they find a large amount of fake and blank credit cards. We then hear the officer in charge, explaining what could be done with those cards: “There are well organized syndicates who have skimmers out in different retail stores perhaps [...] and the person behind the counter then swipes it [a credit card] through a skimmer steals your identity and they'll use that identity on a card like this and they'll probably just use it for a very short period of time, extract as much money as they can out of it” (20min07sec). The officer’s statement is put into perspective at the end of the plot line. A text overlay appears saying that “Credit card fraud costs approximately \$60 million annually in Australia” (20min52sec). In this plot line, the personal economic security of Australians is portrayed as a referent object of security. The end screen then also tells us something about possible macroeconomic damages to Australia. The plotline therefore can be seen as a clear case of constructing Australia as endangered. In season 14, episode 8, Australia’s economic security is emphasised through a different narrative. Here officers question a “Sudanese-born UK citizen” (3min40sec) who arrived for a 3-months holiday. They believe that his funds are not sufficient to cover his stay. Voice-over narration then tells us that immigration officers suspect “that he will have to work to support himself” (13min50sec). Here, two aspects of Australian Security are portrayed as endangered. First, Australia’s economy, as he would not pay taxes, as his tourist visa prevents him from being legally employed. Second, Australia’s rule of law is threatened, as he would break the law by working illicitly.

As established in the theory section, there is a long-standing fear that Australia becomes a victim of mass immigration and is “invaded” by foreigners, especially by those from Asia (Burke, 2008). This is reflected by two plot lines within the analysed sample. In season 8, episode 15 a young woman arrives via a flight from Singapore. She claims to be Korean, but refuses to talk to a Korean interpreter to proof her identity. Her passport is later found out to be counterfeit and that the woman is actually Chinese. Upon notice of being sent back to China, the woman starts crying. An officer comments on the case by saying that “this is a typical pattern of Chinese nationals using South Korean passports to come to Australia” (17min36sec). Her statement points out that Australia is indeed at risk of being overrun by Asian immigrants and that this is a “typical pattern”. Similarly in episode 8 of the first season, a young Korean woman arrives on a tourist visa at Sydney Airport. Officers suspect that her

funds will not cover her 4 four-week stay and that she might have to work in Australia. It later turns out that she intends to leave Korea and wants to stay in Australia. The passenger starts crying and states that “I left the country for this trip almost like a runaway and I don’t see any meaning in my life” (10min00sec). She continues to cry through the rest of the plot line and says that she came to Australia to “feel freedom” (20min26sec) and that she “can’t live there [Korea]”, as “Korea makes [her] crazy” (21min05sec). Both of these stories portray Asia (or China and South Korea in these cases) as a hopeless place that young people flee if they get the chance to. Those people want to “feel freedom” which apparently cannot be found in Asia, but in Australia. Australia is therefore portrayed as being at risk of mass immigration from those countries, as Asians would generally prefer living in Australia. The long-standing Australian fear of mass immigration from Asia (Burke, 2008), furthermore works as a facilitating condition to the process of securitization, because it is already held to be true that Australia is threatened by immigration.

Finally, it is the safety of the Australian people that can be seen as constructed as a referent object. Various episodes point out that criminals, drugs or drug dealers are arriving to Australia. Plot lines of this kind can be found in season 1, episode 8, where cocaine is found inside a parcel, or as well in the second episode of season 9. Here we are presented with a woman from Lebanon, who tried to bring 2200 vials of testosterone to Australia. In the same episode a passenger is sent back to the United States, because of previous convictions for the possession of cocaine. Finally, in season 4, episode 4, 4.5 kilos of pseudoephedrine, a substance used to produce methamphetamine, are found within a parcel from India. All of these plot lines share the notion, that both drugs and criminal passengers are dangerous. As all of them want to enter Australia, it is clear, that it is the country that is endangered by them. Australia is therefore once again constructed as the referent object of security.

All in all, it becomes clear that *Border Security: Australia's Frontline* constructs Australia as threatened. As I have shown, these constructions can already be seen through analysing the programme’s title and title sequence. The dramaturgical structure of the show that always relies on protagonists opposing antagonists again portrays Australia as threatened. In order to define what sectors of Australia’s security are especially emphasised a closer analysis of individual episodes and plotlines has been presented. Here, I could illustrate how the programme constructs Australia as environmentally (through imported pests and viruses), economically (e.g. through credit card fraud), and socially (through mass immigration)

threatened. Additionally, I described how the personal security of Australians is portrayed as endangered (through drugs and criminals).

4.2 Immediate threat

Does *Border Security: Australia's Frontline* construct foreigners as an immediate threat? The previous sections have already established that it is the show's dramaturgical structure that instantly portrays foreigners as a threat to Australia. In all but three of the 22 analysed plotlines, the opposing side to the officers of the DIBP are foreigners (14 plot lines) or parcels from outside Australia (5 plot lines). The only three exemptions are two foreign-born Australians (a Lebanese-born Australian in season 9, episode 2, and a Spanish-born Australian in season 8 episode 15) as well as a black Australian (season 11, episode 5). It is therefore very much possible, that those Australians are still held to be "foreign" by viewers with ethnic nationalist views. The programme equally portrayed black as well as Asian or white people as threatening. Although a focus on non-white passengers can be noticed (in 11 out of 17 plot lines that involve passengers, the passengers are not white).

In the following, I will illustrate what narratives and "technical and symbolic means" (Heck & Schlag, 2016, pp. 132-135) the show uses to construct foreigners as a threat. During the analysis of the programme, the following five elements have been identified. First, an overrepresentation of criminal foreigners, second, a dramatization of criminal acts, third, wrongly accusing foreigners of criminal acts, fourth, "othering" foreigners and fifth, intertextual references to films and shows about crime.

First, of the 22 analysed plot lines of the programme, 14 dealt with foreigners coming to Australia on a visa. In 8 of those plot lines, the visa has been cancelled, and the passengers were sent back, because they did not satisfy the Australian "character requirement" (DIBP, 2016a). In five of those plot lines, the visa was not cancelled, but passengers were fined for bringing undeclared food into the country. There was only one case, in which a foreign passenger was free to go after an officer's investigation (a Spanish man visiting his girlfriend in season 8, episode 5). Obviously, this portrayal of foreigners is not in line with reality. Statistics of the Department of Immigration and Border Protection show, that an average of 216 visas are cancelled per year (data from 2010-2015) because passenger's did not satisfy the character requirement (DIBP, 2016b). Given that approximately 7 million international

visitors arrive to Australia each year (ABS, 2016), it becomes clear that a visa cancellation upon arrival is extremely unlikely. Furthermore, five plot lines dealt with the arrival of a parcel to Australia. In all of those cases, drugs (season 1, episode 8 and season 4, episode 4), prohibited organic material (season 9, episode 2 and season 14, episode 8) or blank credit cards (season 11, episode 5) have been detected. This overrepresentation of criminal foreigners clearly helps to render commonsensical that the arrival of foreigners poses an immediate threat to Australia.

Second, in case criminal acts are uncovered, this is always done in a dramatizing way. An illustrative example can be found in a plot line from the second episode of the ninth season. Here, a woman arrives from Lebanon with several bags. Officers then discover that she is carrying vials of testosterone, which are hidden behind a false bottom in her bag. The woman claims that it was her brother who packed the bag, however in the end of the plot line, a text overlay tells us that she was found guilty and fined 10.000 Australian dollars. The show has dramatized this event in three ways. First, the story was not told in one consecutive segment within the episode, but in five individual segments of around 1-2 minutes. This has given producers the possibility to implement cliffhangers at the end of each segment. The individual segments end right after vials underneath the false bottom of her bag were discovered (7min30sec), after an officer identified the vials as steroids (11min40sec), and after an officer stated that there might be more in the rest of her luggage (18min10sec). The cliffhangers dramatize the event, as they prolong and it and constantly make the viewer wonder what else the passenger might have done. Second, the use of music works to dramatize the event further. All cliffhangers are accompanied by sound effects and background music that create a feeling of suspense and danger and could be said to resemble horror film music (for example 11min28sec). Finally, the camera frequently zooms in to a close up shot of the vials (11min49sec, 17min02sec, and 22min10sec). In combination with the plot line's background music, this once again creates an unsettling feeling and portrays the vials as extraordinarily threatening. Criminal foreigners are thus not only overrepresented, but their crimes are also made to appear more dangerous than they really might be, which again helps to construct foreigners as a threat to the country.

Third, even if the foreigners under scrutiny are innocent, this is usually only revealed at the very end of the plot line. Before that, we usually see three to six individual segments in which the foreigner is constantly suspected to be a criminal. To create this suspicions the show once

again uses unsettling background music and cliffhangers, but also voice over narration, shots of the passenger looking “nervous”, and interviews with the officers, in which they talk about their concerns. In season 8, episode 15, a young Spanish man arrives to the country to visit his girlfriend. The plot line starts with a distant shot of the passenger standing next to an officer at Sydney Airport, unsettling music immediately sets in and a voice-over tells us that “a man who is just flown in is acting very suspiciously and [that] his nervous behaviour is attracting a lot of unwanted attention” (2min22sec). In the following scene, the officer confirms the narrator’s evaluation by saying that “this young guy is very nervous” (2min31sec). Then, the passenger’s bag is swabbed to test for traces of narcotics. The trace detection machine starts to beep, unsettling music sets in and the camera zooms to a close up of the machine’s screen, where it reads: “Drugs Detected” (2min49sec). According to the narrator it is “a high reading of cocaine”, but the passenger claims that a friend used the bag before and probably had cocaine in it. Before a cut to another plot line of the episode, the narrator asks: “If the passenger is telling the truth, why is he so nervous?” (3min19sec). Six minutes later into the episode, the plot line of the Spanish man is resumed. Again, the narrator tells us that the passenger is “visibly anxious” (9min05sec). The officer agrees with the narrator and adds that he “would be highly anxious too, if [he] was carrying some cocaine”. As the officer examines the bags of the passenger, the voice-over narrator states that the “next couple of minutes will determine what happens to him [the passenger], and [that] it may not be the happy ending he was hoping for” (9min58sec). Then there is a cut to another story and finally the plot line comes to an end 10 minutes later into the episode. We see how officers x-ray the bags again, and as the “concealment could be a little more calculated” (narrator, 19min55sec) an officer conducts a frisk search of the passenger. Only then, the passenger is finally free to enter Australia. What is striking here is that the producers of the show knew the outcome of the plot line at the moment of editing the material. Nonetheless, they still decided to portray the foreigner as a criminal almost through the entire plot line. Similar plot lines can be found in season 11, episode 5, where a man arriving from Canada is wrongly accused of drug trafficking and people smuggling or as well in season 4, episode 4, where an US-citizen is wrongly suspected to carry drugs internally. All of these stories accuse foreigners of criminal acts and these suspicions are only taken back towards the very end of the plot line. Yet as Hansen states, even if an image (or story in this case) is revealed not to be true this “might not necessarily undermine the immediacy of the image” (2011b, p. 56) and it is highly doubtful if viewers are able to “forget” the speech act they just have witnessed because of a short revelation at the very end of it.

Fourth, as established in the theory section, a strong “we’ feeling” (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 37) of the referent object can facilitate securitization processes. This “we feeling” is precisely what is constructed when foreigners are portrayed as inherently *different* from Australians (see Campbell, 1998, pp. 73-90). Three patterns could be found, through which foreigners are portrayed as such. First, foreigners do not care about laws, but Australians do. Second, foreigners lie, but Australians do not. And finally, foreigners do not behave decently, but Australians do.

The first pattern is usually emphasised in plot lines that tell us about passengers who did not declare organic material, even if the Australian authorities made the process very accessible. In season 9, episode 2 the voice-over narration tells us that “travellers are given plenty of opportunity to declare”, which is followed by a shot of an Asian couple’s undeclared food (4min30sec). The officer confronts the passengers and asks: “so why didn’t you declare the goods?” (5min50sec). Similarly, in season 11, episode 5, an officer states that the passenger “really should have declared; there is no excuse” (16min00sec). In season 4, episode 4 an officer “must impress on them [the passengers], the importance of declaring everything” (9min20sec) and in the same episode a passenger card is shown, where it is “clearly stated” (14min52sec) that the food needs to be declared. All these stories are essentially about rule-abiding Australians, who have to explain the importance of the law to foreigners.

The second pattern, foreigners lie and Australians do not, is probably best illustrated by a plot line in season 1, episode 8. Here a South Korean woman arrives on a tourist visa, however her visa is about to be cancelled due to her limited funds. In a desperate attempt to still be allowed entry, she claims to be visiting someone in Australia. The voice-over narrator mockingly comments this by saying that “Miss Song has saved her best for last” (16min35sec). The officer, who “now think’s he’s heard it all” (narrator, 17min40sec) returns to his supervisor to discuss the case. He tells her that the passenger is “coming up with a new story” (17min45sec) and they conclude that “she was making that second story up” (18min15sec). Before filing the cancellation of her visa, the supervisor adds that “she [the passenger] might come up with a third story” (18min35sec). In this plot line, the passenger is portrayed as the lying counterpart to the honest officers, who are almost amused by the passenger’s attempts to hide the truth. Similar plot lines can be found in season 8, episode 15, where officers “discovered the truth behind her [the passenger] lies” (11min48sec) or in season 1, episode 1, where an officer feels “like he’s [the passenger] lying to me” (15min06sec). Another example is a plot line from season 9, episode 2. Here an officer seems upset because passengers did not

tell him the truth, “especially after not being honest with [him] the first time” (officer, 09min32sec).

Finally, foreigners are portrayed to behave indecently as opposed to Australians. In season 1, episode 1, a man from the US calls the officers “fascists” (00min43sec), taps his forehead at them (13min59sec) and says they are “very terrible, very no good” (16min10sec). Season 4, episode 4, presents us with an apparently drunk man from California, who states officers are “so full of shit” (01min35sec). Opposed to this, Australian officers are portrayed to be very professional and seem calm and collected in all analysed plot lines. This again works to construct foreigners as inherently different from Australians and thus further increases the potential of successful securitization.

Fifth, and finally, the show uses intertextual references to thrillers and crime movies. Most noticeable, this is the case when we hear what sound designers call a “telemetry” noise (Wickman, 2015). It is the beeping noise we hear, when text appears on screen. The show uses this sound effect at the beginning of its title sequence, but also during the text overlay at the end of its plot lines. The meaning of thrillers and crime movies, which essentially are about the struggle between good and bad, can then be transferred to what we believe to see, when watching *Border Security: Australia's Frontline* (see Hansen, 2011b, p. 55). It is this process, that instantly lets viewers know that they are about to see a TV show, in which the good ones fight the bad ones. And as I have explained in this section, *Border Security: Australia's Frontline* makes it clear, that the good ones are border security officers, and the bad ones are foreigners.

4.3 Emergency measure

Thus far, I have shown how *Border Security: Australia's Frontline* constructs Australia as threatened by foreigners. In order to complete the analysis, it is now important to look into the ways the show portrays the Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP) as an extraordinary countermeasure to those threats. The ways in which the title itself, the title sequence, and the dramaturgical structure of the show portray the DIBP as an extraordinary countermeasure are important, but have already been discussed and do not necessarily need to be repeated at this point. Instead, I would like to give an insight into additional ways through which the show constructs the DIBP as an extraordinary and legitimate countermeasure to the

threats posed by foreigners. This is done via two techniques, first, the show emphasises that the DIBP's work is important and that it successfully protects Australia, and second, the officers are portrayed as dedicated and well equipped, and their actions are always rendered commonsensical.

First, the show depicts the work of the DIBP as successful as well as important. The officers of the department are frequently shown to stop criminals from entering Australia. As I have indicated before, 8 out of 14 foreigners who arrived to Australia on a visa were refused entry. In these cases, the DIBP was able to find out that passengers were using counterfeit passports (season 1, episode 1 & season 8, episode 15), were planning to work despite of their tourist visa (season 1, episode 8 as well as season 11, episode 5 & season 14, episode 8), or had serious previous convictions (season 4, episode 4 & season 9, episode, 2). The programme also points out that the work of the officers is important. In season 1, episode 1 an officer kills a fruit fly that was brought in by passengers carrying undeclared fruits. The officer states that the "fly could get out into the Australian fruit-growing region and then actually lay some kind of larvae, potentially the cost is millions and millions of dollars" (16min45sec). Here the work of the officer is portrayed as saving the Australian economy. Similarly, in season 4, episode 4, a text overlay informs us, that officers have confiscated drugs worth 1.5 million dollars (13min55sec). Furthermore, in season 9, episode 2, voice-over narrations states, that a passenger was fined 10.000 dollars for importing illegal substances. These examples again portray the DIBP as successfully protecting Australia from serious threats.

Second, the officers of the DIBP are portrayed as dedicated and well equipped. Their dedication is emphasised in the beginning of each episode. Here, it reads that officers "dedicate their lives to protecting Australia's border". Their dedication is furthermore exemplified by a plot line in season 1, episode 8, where we are presented with an officer scanning parcels at Sydney Airport. He is introduced by saying: "I'm pushing these parcels all day and you just wait for that one parcel that's going to make your day [...], it's what brings me to work everyday just trying to find those drugs" (6min38sec). The officer later discovers a parcel containing cocaine. He smiles and states: "Now I feel like a winner, now we've got to grin because it's confirmed" (14min45sec).

The DIBP is furthermore portrayed to be well equipped and proficient in the use of modern technology. In season 1, episode 1, we see a sniffer dog searching for drugs (21min30sec), in season 8, episode 15, a microscope is used to detect a counterfeit passport (11min55sec), and

in the same episode a trace detector is used, to check for traces of narcotics in a passenger's bag (2min50sec). Trace detectors as well as x-ray machines appeared in all analysed plot lines. As I have established in the theory section, modern technology can be said to increase the legitimacy of the DIBP's work, because it adds a second "layer" to their decision making processes and renders them as more professional than their potential enemies (Erickson, 2008, p. 347).

Moreover, the actions taken by the DIBP are presented to be highly legitimate. This is emphasised by officers' portrayal as being fair and kind towards passengers, even if they might be criminals. In season 4, episode 4, a man, who previously insulted officers and is suspected to carry cocaine, claims not to feel well, and is immediately offered a glass of water (7min54sec). Later on, as his condition worsens, a first aid officer is called onto the scene and the man is transferred to a nearby hospital (16min28sec). Officers are also shown to care about passengers' emotional wellbeing and to be sensitive towards issues of poverty. In season 1, episode 8, a young woman from South Korea breaks down crying, as her visa is about to be cancelled. We then see a close up of a tissue box that was offered to her (10min25sec), and an officer is comforting her at the end of the plot line (20min54sec). Another officer states, that he has "a lot of sleepless nights" because he sometimes questions, if it was right to send someone "back to poverty" (20min40sec).

Another way of creating legitimacy is that the plot lines are told out of the DIBP's perspective only (see Grant, 1992, pp. 60-61). In season 1, episode 1, an officer even takes the role of a host, speaks directly into the camera, and informs us about the threats a suspicious passenger might pose to Australia (2min20sec). While watching the show, we never witness an officer making a mistake and the programme never criticises decisions made by an officer. This comes as no surprise as the DIBP has the right to approve all episodes and to request the removal of any footage before *Seven Network* is allowed to send the material (Farrell, 2015). This single perspectiveness is brought to an extreme in a plot line of season 14, episode 8. Here a man from the United Kingdom arrives on a tourist visa, but is suspected to come to Australia for work. The officer, who interviewed the passenger, therefore intends to cancel the visa. Before taking a final decision, she discusses the case with her supervisor. What follows is a 1-minute-long scene that could best be described by "agreeing with each other". The scene opens with the narrator emphasising, that the officers now go "through the facts of the case" (20min06sec), which immediately renders the officers' concerns about the passenger as

factually true. While the supervisor is listing some of the arguments to cancel the visa, the other officer agrees with every single argument by humming “uh-huh” or even by repeating the argument (“not enough money”). Then, they switch roles, the officer adds some more arguments to cancel the visa and the supervisor agrees by nodding and humming “uh-huh”. Finally, they conclude that the passenger’s story “just doesn’t make any sense” and the narrator tells us: “with absolutely nothing that suggests he is here for tourism, there is only one decision to make”. This scene works to render decisions made by the DIBP commonsensical as various views are presented, that all share the same conclusion.

Finally, the terminology used within the programme further legitimises the actions of the DIBP (see Bleiker et al., 2013, p. 400). “Pork” becomes a “prohibited item” (season 4, episode 4, 14min34sec) and passengers whose visa got cancelled are referred to as “unlawful non-citizen[s]” who naturally have to be “removed from Australia” (season 14, episode 8, 21min05sec).

4.4 Conditions of possibility and breaking free of rules

So far, I have established how *Border Security: Australia's Frontline* portrays Australia as threatened by foreigners, and how the Department of Immigration and Border Protection is constructed as an extraordinary countermeasure to those threats. In this chapter, I want to briefly discuss what political positions are made possible through a show like *Border Security: Australia's Frontline* (Bleiker et al., 2013). Heck and Schlag (2016, pp. 132-133) remind us, that films or television programmes always have to focus on something, while leaving out something else. As I have demonstrated above, *Border Security: Australia's Frontline* tells us about foreigners, who lie, who do not care about laws, and do not know how to behave. What we are not presented with is “the good foreigner”, the ones who arrive to Australia without bad intentions and possibly to the benefit of the country. This one-sided presentation of foreigners helps to legitimate policies that deter foreigners from coming to Australia and promotes the establishment of ever-tighter immigration laws (Betts, 2003, p. 169).

5. Conclusion

This paper has investigated the ways through which *Border Security: Australia's Frontline* securitizes foreigners. As I have shown, the programme's dramaturgical structure and individual plot lines work to construct Australia as existentially threatened by foreigners. Patterns of overrepresenting criminal foreigners, dramatizing their crimes, wrongly accusing foreigners of crimes, as well as portraying foreigners as inherently different from Australians and making intertextual references to crime movies are employed by the show to construct foreigners as an immediate threat. I could furthermore illustrate how the single-perspectiveness of the programme helps to glorify the officers of the Department of Immigration and Border Protection and how the show portrays officers' work as a legitimate "extraordinary countermeasure".

Moreover, this paper has made a contribution to recent works within International Relations that follow a "visual turn" (Bleiker, 2001) and are interested into the ways pop culture shapes our understandings of political processes (see Erickson, 2008; Van Veeren, 2009). The work furthermore contributed to the research on political institutions that turn to the media industry in order to influence public perceptions of threats and protection (Dodds, 2008, p. 230). Finally, the study meets the demands of scholars who advocate the incorporation of film theory into IR (Heck & Schlag, 2016, p. 135) and is, to my knowledge, the first paper to employ Securitization theory in the analysis of a reality TV show.

In the end, "we must ask ourselves why these shows are so popular and inquire as to how they might influence our perceptions and understandings of security and world politics" (Van Veeren, 2009, p. 384). It might be highly entertaining to watch "good ones" successfully fighting "bad ones", however, we should not forget that in the case of *Border Security: Australia's Frontline*, we are not entertained by actors, but by the fate of real people. As this show successfully helps to legitimise a widespread fear of and hostility towards immigrants (Babacan, 2008; Burke, 2008), the question really is, if television programmes like these are not a bigger threat to countries than foreigners ever could be.

6. Literature

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7. Appendix

7.1 Appendix A: Framework used during the qualitative content analysis

I. Formal categories	
1.	ID
2.	Season
3.	Episode
4.	Original air date
5.	Plot line
6.	Location
II. Content categories	
II.1 Protagonist: Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP)	
7.	Nationality
8.	Age
9.	Sex
10.	Ethnicity
11.	Clothing
12.	Used technology
13.	Language
14.	Actions
15.	Feelings
16.	Voiced suspicions
17.	How were criminal acts uncovered?
18.	Did the officer know what a criminal looks like? see Grant (1992, p. 63)
II.2 Antagonist: Passenger under scrutiny	
19.	Nationality
20.	Age
21.	Sex
22.	Ethnicity
23.	Clothing
24.	Used technology
25.	Language
26.	Actions
27.	Feelings
28.	Reason to travel to Australia
29.	Criminal act?
30.	Contextualization of the crime? see Grant (1992, p. 58)
II.3 Technical and symbolic means see Heck & Schlag (2016, pp. 132-135)	
31.	Music
32.	Editing
33.	Voice-over narration
34.	Text overlay
II.4 Elements of successful securitization see Buzan et. al (1998, pp. 21-48)	
35.	Referent object
36.	Immediate threat
37.	Emergency measure
38.	Breaking free of rules
39.	Audience acceptance
II.5 Central narrative	
40.	Summary of the central narrative