Πανεπιστήμιο Πελοποννήσου

Σχολή Κοινωνικών και Πολιτικών Επιστημών

Τμήμα Πολιτικής Επιστήμης και Διεθνών Σχέσεων

Πρόγραμμα Μεταπτυχιακών Σπουδών

ΠΜΣ «Μεσογειακές Σπουδές»

Η ασφαλειοποίηση της συριακής κρίσης προσφύγων στο Λίβανο:

Μια κρίσιμη προοπτική

Teo F. Tavares Machado

Κόρινθος, Ιανουάριος 2018

University of Peloponnese

Faculty of Social and Political Sciences

Department of Political Studies and International Relations

Master Program in

«Mediterranean Studies»

The Securitization of the Syrian Refugee Crisis in Lebanon:

A critical perspective

Teo F. Tavares Machado

Corinth, January 2018

Acknowledgments

I would like firstly to express my gratitude to my supervisor, Professor Marina Eleftheriadou - for all the guidance. Without her assistance the realization of this master's dissertation work, would had not been possible.

I have also to thank my grandmother - for her endless prayers; my mother & father – for the constant and infinite support; and, my sister – for her academic camaraderie.

Finally, I would like to thank the portrait of Louis-Ferdinand Céline hung on the wall of my room – at each attempt of desistance, he always whispered – "do not fear; it is nothing more than *a journey to the end of the night.*"

Dedication

I dedicate this master's dissertation paper to every single human being which is struggling against the bureaucratic machinery of our societies.

Η τιτλοποίηση της συριακής κρίσης προσφύγων στο Λίβανο:
Μια κρίσιμη προοπτική

Σημαντικοί Όροι: Συρία, Λίβανος, πρόσφυγες, Ασφαλειοποίηση

Περίληψη

Μέσα από τη θεωρία του Barry Buzan, του Ole Weaver και άλλων μελών της Σχολής σκέψης της Κοπεγχάγης, αυτή η εργασία μελετά την διαδικασία ασφαλειοποίησης (securitization) της Συριακής προσφυγικής κρίσης στον Λίβανο και την περιφέρεια του από το 2011 ως το 2015.

Αυτή η μελέτη θα τονίσει δημόσιες δηλώσεις μελών της κυβέρνησης του Λιβάνου που αφορούν την Συριακή προσφυγική κρίση στο πέρασμα του χρόνου, τον αντίκτυπο τους στην κοινή γνώμη και πως αυτή η διαδικασία επιτρέπει σε κάποιο βαθμό την νομιμοποίηση και την εφαρμογή συγκεκριμένων πολιτικών της Λιβανέζικης κυβέρνησης για τους Σύριους πρόσφυγες.

Επιπλέον, θα είναι δυνατόν να επιβεβαιωθεί πως το κράτος του Λιβάνου χειρίστηκε την εισροή Σύριων προσφύγων με δύο διαφορετικούς τρόπους. Η πρώτη φάση, από το 2011 εώς το 2013, χαρακτηρίζεται από μία ανθρωπιστική προσέγγιση. Με την συνέχιση του εμφύλιου πολέμου στη Συρία και την επακόλουθη διεύρυνση της Συριακής ανθρωπιστικής κρίσης, το κράτος του Λιβάνου άλλαξε τον λόγο του για το ζήτημα, καθώς περισσότεροι Σύριοι ζητούσαν καταφύγιο στο Λίβανο. Κατά τη διάρκεια αυτής της δεύτερης περιόδου από το 2013 εως το 2014 θα ξεκινήσει και η διαδικασία της ασφαλειοποίησης. Αυτή η διαδικασία θα τερματιστεί με ένα επίσημο νομοσχέδιο για την ασφάλεια τον Ιανουάριο του 2015, όταν το κράτος του Λιβάνου θα κλείσει επισήμως τα σύνορα του στους Σύριους πρόσφυγες.

The Securitization of the Syrian Refugee Crisis in Lebanon:

A critical perspective

Abstract

Through the lenses of Barry Buzan and Ole Weaver & other members of the Copenhagen School of thought, this thesis studies the *securitization process* of the Syrian Refugee Crisis in Lebanon and its contours, from 2011, until 2015.

Thus, this study will empathize public statements delivered by Lebanese government personnel addressing the Syrian refugee crisis over time; how those representations will resonate among the public opinion; and to an extend, how this process will permit the legitimization and implementation of specific policies towards Syrian refugees by the Lebanese government.

Furthermore, it will be possible to verify that the Lebanese State managed the Syrian refugee influx in two different manners. The first phase, form 2011, until 2013, is characterized by a humanitarian approach. With the continuity of the civil war in Syria and the consequent dilatation of the Syrian humanitarian crisis, the Lebanese State switched its discourse towards the issue, while more Syrian national where seeking for refuge in Lebanon. In the course of this second period; from 2013 until 2014; it will begin the securitization process. This process will end with a formal *security act* by January 2015, when the Lebanese State will close officially its borders to Syrian refugees.

ΥΠΕΥΘΥΝΗ ΔΗΛΩΣΗ

Με την παρούσα δήλωση:

1. Δηλώνω ρητά και ανεπιφύλακτα ότι η διπλωματική εργασία που σας καταθέτω αποτελεί προϊόν δικής μου πνευματικής προσπάθειας, δεν παραβιάζει τα δικαιώματα τρίτων μερών και ακολουθεί τα διεθνώς αναγνωρισμένα πρότυπα επιστημονικής συγγραφής, τηρώντας πιστά την ακαδημαϊκή δεοντολογία.

2. Οι απόψεις που εκφράζονται αποτελούν αποκλειστικά ευθύνη του/ης συγγραφέα/ως και ο/η επιβλέπων/ουσα, οι εξεταστές, το Τμήμα και το Πανεπιστήμιο Πελοποννήσου δεν υιοθετούν κατ' ανάγκη τις εκφραζόμενες απόψεις ούτε φέρουν οποιαδήποτε ευθύνη για τυχόν λάθη και παραλείψεις.

Ο/Η δηλών/ούσα

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(Υπογραφή)

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"In the darkest region of the political field the condemned man represents the symmetrical, inverted figure of the king."

— Michel Foucault, in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*

1. Introduction

Since the beginning of the first clashes, in March 2011[1], carried among Syrian oppositional factions and Syrian government forces, initial tensions fast turn into a disastrous civil war. One of the main consequences of the Syrian conflict is the large number of forced displaced people who emerged in consequence. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, by the end of 2016 existed 12 million (UNHCR 2017) displaced people from Syria. This critical record triggered consequently a large humanitarian crisis, considered by the UNHCR as the "*Worst man-made disaster since World War II*" (Egeland 2017).

The countries bordering Syria, started soon to receive an uncountable influx of civilians fleeing the conflict. According to the Amnesty international, in 2016, Turkey, Jordan, Iraq, Egypt and Lebanon where hosting altogether 4.8 million of forced displaced Syrians (AI 2017).

Thus, and due to its geographic location, Lebanon revealed to stand as one of the main destinations for Syrian refugees. With a population numbering 6,229,794 individuals (World Fact Book, CIA 2017), the Lebanese government estimates that since 2011, 1,5 Syrians reached for security among Lebanese borders (UNHCR 2015). This demographic income transformed Lebanon into the country with the largest refugee population per capita in the world (UNHCR 2015).

In other hand, Lebanon is characterized by its own fragilities. The small country[2] possesses a historical register of chronical ethno-religious tensions[3] occurring frequently among its 18 religious groups[4]. Another factor to have in consideration, is the existence of a comprehensive[5] community of Palestinians[6] refugees. The ethno diversity inhabiting

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[1] In March, 2011 the first clashes between pro-government forces and anti-government factions took place in Syria. The sequence of protests against President Bashar al-Assad can be perceived as continuity of the *Arab Uprisings*, who erupted in 2009 among Northern African Arab countries and spoil over other Arab nations in the Middle East (Stack, Zoepf 2011).

[2] Total area of 10,400 square kilometres (World Fact Book, CIA 2017).

[3] The Lebanese Civil-War, fought between 1975 and 1989, can be taken as the most brutal of the examples of intra-Lebanese type of conflicts. The Taif Agreement at the end of 1989, will set the beginning of the peace process, reached in 1990, with the official end of the hostilities (Itany, Fathallah 2013).

[4] In Lebanon, the 18 religious sects are composed by Muslims who represent 52% of the total population (27% Sunni and 27 % Shia); Christians account 40,5 % (21% Maronite Christian, 8% Greek Orthodox, 5% Greek Catholic and 6,5 % other Christian minor sects), Druze 5,6 %, and other minorities composed by Jews, Baha'is, Buddhists, Hindus and Mormons (World Fact Book, CIA 2017).

[5] According to the UNHCR, in 2015, 313,000 Palestinians refugees where registered inside Lebanon.

[6] In 1948, whit the beginning of the Israeli-Arab conflict and the following declaration of independence of Israel, Palestinians started to flee the territory seeking refuge in Lebanon – this exodus is known among

the country, is a determinant factor who has to be considered while analysing the Syrian refugee crisis in Lebanon and its dynamics. Previous historical experiences faced by Lebanon while managing refugee crisis; such as the already mentioned Palestinian case; influence the nature and positions of the Lebanese government towards its refugee population.

At the beginning of the first part of this paper, a historical background will be set in order to comprehend, the relations among Lebanese people and its refugees. The consequences caused by the large income of refugee population, will as well be underlined, since it will afterwards permit to understand the pressures triggered among the Lebanese socio-economic infrastructures and political sphere. This exercise will provide diverse indicators who will permit to understand the subsequent shaping and re-shaping of the imaginary of the *refugee* along the Lebanese State discourse, and how it will be perceived in the public speech.

Thereafter, the second half of this thesis will focus on the "securitization" process of the Syrian refugee crisis issue. Following the "Securitization Theory" criteria, the correlation between *perceptions-discourse-policies* will be set, in order to understand; 1) how the Lebanese Government *perceives* the Syrian refugees over time, 2) how those *perceptions* had frame the *public debate* and, 3) how the representations used to address the refugees, will influence the selection of political measures and approaches of the State, towards the management of the Syrian refugee influx issue.

By using this theoretical approach, it will be possible to understand that the Lebanese State used "speech acts" as a tool of power, in order to create a social construction towards its audience, describing the Syrian refugee presence as an existential threat to its integrity, thus requiring extraordinary measures of demographic contention. This process, will allow the Lebanese State to transform the Syrian refugee influx, from a "*politicised*" issue into a "*security*" matter. Nevertheless, it will be denoted how the State skipped form a humanitarian behaviour, into a hostile approach, as soon as the number of displaced Syrians start to rise, stressing the State' integrity and well-function.

Palestinians and Arab communities as *Nakba* (meaning, disgrace in Arab language) - *Nakba* can be considered the mark stone of Palestinian refugee presence inside Lebanese borders (Pappe 2008).

2. Objective and Research Question

2.1. Objective

By employing the "securitization theory", the objective of this thesis is to study how the Lebanese Government framed over time its refugee agenda concerning the Syrian refugee crisis, from 2012 until the beginning of 2015.

2.2. Research Question

How has the Lebanese State formulated over time, its political framework towards the Syrian refugees in Lebanon?

2.3. Sub questions

How has the Lebanese State perceived the influx of Syrian refugees?

How has the Lebanese State represented trough speech acts, the Syrian refugees in the public debate?

How have those representations influenced the selection and further legitimization, of concrete State policies towards the Syrian refugee influx?

3. Methodological Framework

The research method used to accomplish this qualitative study, was mostly based on library research and secondary data analysis. Official data and reports gathered form UNHCR was revisited. Additionally, academic bibliography on the subject was selected as source of analysis as well. Similarly, relevant literature gathered from specialized think-thanks focused on the MENA region, such as, the International Crisis Group and the Center for Middle Eastern Studies were considered likewise. Given the nature of the

subject studied along this thesis, newspapers and news articles will be as well underlined, since they provide statement samples delivered by political members of the Lebanese Government addressing the Syrian refugee crisis issue.

3.1. Limitations and Restrictions

During the research work who perceived the preparation of this study, tree main limitations were faced: 1) texts written in Arabic had to be excluded, since I have no domain over the language. This factor revelled to be a serious constraint, specially while analysing data coming from Lebanese State agencies. 2) Academic literature linking Securitization and Migration, is mostly elaborated according a Euro-centred scope focusing mostly the relations between south-north migration dynamics. Although, it was interesting to verify that those conceptualizations do not differ largely from the ones observed within the Syrian refugee influx in Lebanon, who constitutes an example of south-south migration 3) one of the main purposes of this thesis was to deepen the study of the actors who are involved into the securitization process, by crossing over the "narrowness" of the "security theory" framework, as described by Mat Macdonald (2008). However, it revealed to be very difficult to gather public statements addressed by the several Lebanese political party leaders, local politicians and other official regional actors, from each sectarian group (Sunni, Shia, Christian and Druze). This restriction limited the study of the thesis to a State-level analysis, when in fact, it would had been academically more challenging to investigate the representations among each ethno-religious group' towards the Syrian refugee population, and how the total sum of those sectarian representations would furthermore, influence the general perception of the State, as a whole. Unfortunately, such a deepened analysis had to be abandoned in order to not compromise the conclusion of this study.

4. Theoretical Framework

4.1. Securitization Theory

The Copenhagen school of security studies was set by Barry Buzan in 1983 with the edition of "*People, States and Fear*" (Buzan, Weaver, de Wilde 1998: vii). The main objective of the author, was to range a broader number of fields of security analysis, beyond the restrictive military-approach of the Classical Security Complex Theory school of thought (Buzan, Weaver, de Wilde 1988: 16). Other authors, such as, Ole Weaver and Jaap de Wilde, engaged in the construction of the theoretical framework, contributing thereafter for the foundation of the so called Copenhagen School. Its members, influenced by concepts drawn from constructivism, post-modernism and realism (Buzan, Weaver, de Wilde 1998: 2), wanted to abandon the classical scope of analysis, which emphasised along the securitization process, *States,* as main *actors*, and military moves, as *threats*, (Buzan, Weaver, de Wilde 1998: 15). It was clear for this group of academics, that the post-cold war period was transforming the international political system, and the necessity to find a theoretical alternative, who could address security on a wider context, was needed for a more accurate comprehension of the changing political paradigm registered worldwide (Buzan, Weaver, de Wilde 1998: 43).

Along with this line, the edition of "*Security: A New Framework for Analysis*" (1998), set the theoretical apparatus for the Security Analysis. This theoretical framework, which established besides the *military* sector of analysis; as foreseen by the traditionalist approach; other four types of security threats; *political*, *social*, *economic*, and *environmental*; were added to the sector of analysis (Buzan, Weaver, de Wilde 1998: 21-23). Another upgrade offered by the Copenhagen School' approach, is related with the definition and perception of "*existential threat*". The traditionalists perceived *threat* as being "objective" – what is *effectively* a *threat*; or as "subjective" – what *can be* considered as a *threat*. In the other hand, the Copenhagen School of thought, focus rather its analysis on the *process of securitization*. Thus, the academics associated with securitization theory complex, claim that *threats* are created through *speech acts,* used by *actors* with power decision, who trough *discourse*, securitize a particular *object*, by creating a favourable *social construction* of the *referent object*, in order to be perceived as an *existential threat*. As presented by Buzan, Weaver and Wilde:

"Securitization Studies aims to gain an increasingly precise understanding on who securitizes on what issue (threats), for whom (referent object)" (Buzan, Weaver, de Wilde 1998: 25).

"*Security*" is "*the move that takes politics beyond the established rules of the game and frames the issue either as a special kind of politics or as above politics*" (Buzan, Weaver, de Wilde 1998: 23), therefore, "*security is about survival[7]*" (Buzan, Weaver, de Wilde 1998: 21).

Tough, the three type of *units* involving the sectors of *critical security studies* analyses, as framed by the above mentioned authors, are:

> *"1. Referent Objects: things that are seen to be existentially threatened and that have legitimate claim to survival;*
> *2. Securitizing actors: actor who securitize issues by declaring something – a referent object – existentially threatened;*
> *3. Functional Actor: actor who affect the dynamics of a sector. Whiteout being the referent object or the actor calling for security on behalf of the referent object"*
>
> *(Buzan, Weaver, de Wilde 1998: 36)*

As it regards the securitization process, a specific issue, passes through three acts; 1) *non-policization* of the issue, 2) *policization* of the issue, and, 3) *securitization* of the issue. Respectively; 1) the *securitizing actor* does not address the issue, 2) the *securitizing actor* starts to address the issue in the public debate, in order to transform the issue in an *existential threat* 3) the *securitizing actor* implements extraordinary measures towards the *existential threat*, in order to maintain its integrity (Buzan, Weaver, de Wilde 1998: 25).

Nevertheless, it is important to notice that the acceptance of the *audience*, is of major importance during the *securitization process* of the *referent object*, since it will allow or not; with its acceptance; the securitization of the *object*, as proposed by the *securitizing actor* (Buzan, Weaver, de Wilde 1998: 25).

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[7] *Survival*, for the State is related to its integrity, and for the Society, the preservation of its identity (Buzan, Weaver, de Wilde 1998: 36).

Thus, the *securitization move*, will end into a *security act*; meaning the final and specific form of politics selected, in order to address the *existential threat* and, consequently securitize the *referent object*.

Although, the authors, argue that the securitization of an issue is not the correct solution. Firstly, due to the political circumstances and objectives, that always carry the selection of a particular set of political measures, and secondly, due to the inability of the securitizing actor to deal with the issue within a political approach, in opposition of the extraordinary measures of action, required with the security approach. In alternative, "*Desecuritization*" should be addressed by opposition; as set by the authors:

"*Desecuritization is the optimal long-range option*" (Buzan, Weaver, de Wilde 1998: 29), meaning "to move the threats out of the threat-defense sequence and into the ordinary public sphere" (Buzan, Weaver, de Wilde 1998: 29)."

In conclusion, and drawing the parallel between the case-study which concerns the analysis of this thesis, and the above explained theoretical framework, it will be set:
The Lebanese State as *securitizing actor*, the State' integrity as *referent object*, the Syrian refugee influx as *existential threat*, and the Lebanese society as *functional actor/audience*.
In this conditions, the study of the Syrian refugee crisis in Lebanon will be analysed during its whole evolution as a process; from the intimal *non-politicized* phase, passing through the *policization* of the issue, and by the end, testifying in which circumstances consisted the *security actions* taken by the Lebanese State in framing the Syrian refugee issue.

5. Historical Background

5.1. From the French Mandate to the National Pact of 1945

In the aftermath of the First World War Lebanon became a French mandate under the League of Nations decision in 1920. In 1926, The French authority reformulated the *Greater Lebanon* in the *Lebanese Republic*, and in March of the same year, the first

Lebanese Constitution was promulgated. During the initial period of the mandate, France used the existing sectarian divisions in order to reinforce its colonial presence in Lebanon, by enhancing politically the Christian sects in favour of the remaining religious groups. Despite of the social division felt, Lebanon' first constitution had a secular nature and did not refer to Lebanon as conssecional State (Salamey 2014: 27). Also under the French Mandate, "Lebanon witnessed its one and only population census in 1932" (Faour 2007: 909). Thus, the census revealed, 28,8% of Christian Maronites, 22.4% Sunni and 19.6% Shi'a (Faour 2007: 909). Consequently, a power-sharing system based on the census results was established, in advantage for the Christian Maronite, that through its demographic weight could hold more seats in the public administration. In 1943, Lebanon proclaimed its independence. After an agreement among the leaders of the several religious sects, the *National Pact* was established. This verbal agreement will use the same power-sharing system based on the 1932 census results. Thus, the three main sects, gained access to the three most important political positions in the State: Christian Maronite', hold the Presidential seat; the Sunni Muslims own the Prime Minister seat; and the Speaker of Parliament position, is reserved for the Shia Muslim sect (Salamey 2014: 29) The ratio of the political power sharing was set in a 6:5 ratio, in favour of the Christian Maronite over the Muslim sect (combining Sunni and Shia) (Farou 2007: 910).

5.2. From the Palestinian Refugees crisis to the pre-Civil War tensions

In 1948, with the declaration of the State of Israel, Palestinians started to flee into Lebanon. The large income of Palestinian migrants and refugees, additionally to the emigration of the Lebanese Christian population, altered the Lebanese ethnoreligious balance and demographic composition. During this period, the Muslim community increased and in comparison, the Christian Maronite community faced a reduction of population. From 1960 until 1970, tensions started to rise among the religious groups regarding disagreements towards the power system ratio. The Muslim community, especially the Shia sect, believed that the census results of 1932 was outdated, considering the recent demographic alterations that the country experienced (Salamey 2014: 33-35). In Despite of the Muslim pressure, the Maronite sect maintained its dominance in the Lebanese political positions. In the other hand, the Shia community was the sect more

neglected and marginalized by the Lebanese deep sectarian division. The Arab-Israeli conflict in 67', and the consequent change of the Palestinian Liberation Organization headquarters, from Jordan to Lebanon, will add additional pressure to the Lebanese stability. Such internal and external factors will increase the divisions among Christians and Muslims, creating thereafter the conditions for the outbreak of the Lebanese Civil War, in 1975 (Salamey 2014: 34-35).

5.3. The Lebanese Civil War: 1975 – 1990

In 1975 started a civil war among a coalition of Christian groups against the joint forces of the PLO, left-wing Druze and Muslim militias (Global Security Organisation 2017). The main causes who led to the Lebanese Civil War are directly related with the change of Lebanon' demographic balance and the rise of Palestinian power since the PLO move from Jordan to Lebanon. International and regional changes of political paradigm also influenced the Lebanese conflict. The bi-polarisation of the world during the Cold-War and the rise of Arab-nationalism militancy and anti-west sentiment in the MENA region, will influence the ideological affiliations of the Lebanese ethno-religious groups fighting during the Civil War (Salamey 2014: 51). In 1976, former Lebanese President Suleiman Franghieh, requested Syria' military intervention in the conflict (Salamey 2014: 97), initially, to prevent a Christian defeat (Global Security Organisation 2017). Syria' military and political influence in Lebanon increased during the Civil War; ending just in 2005 with the withdraw of Syrian troops from Lebanon. (Salamey 2014: 97).

Lebanon's stability would be again influenced by external actors. In 1978, with the attempt to attack and extinguish the PLO, Israel performed an unsuccessful military invasion of Lebanon. Even so, in March of 1982, Israel invade again Lebanon (Global Security Organisation 2017). After the Israeli occupation of the Southern Lebanese region, until the Litani river. The radicalization of the Shia community in the southern part of the country began during this period. The clashes between Israeli forces and the PLO, in the southern part of Lebanon, favoured the rise of Shia radicalization. In this context, the AMAL group was established. This Shia militia group, fought against Israeli occupation forces, as well as against the PLO, which AMAL accused to provoke the Israeli territorial occupation. Although, the AMAL forces negotiate a peace process with the Israeli troops. Thus, Hezbollah militia group was founded, as a more radical Shia

faction in order to face Israeli presence on the southern part of Lebanon. Consequently, AMAL and Hezbollah started so to antagonize against each other, transforming the rivalry into a fight for the Shia leadership, in southern Lebanon.

Likewise, in 1982, the United Nations deployed 4000 troops in Southern Lebanon, in an attempt to ensure the total withdrawal of the Israeli troops, and to help the Lebanese Government establish its sovereignty and its borders, as those recognized by the international community (Global Security Organisation 2017).

By the end of the 80's, and after almost 15 years of civil war, first steps for a future peace arrangement were taken. The decline of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the end of the Cold War, as regional and international conjuncture, also beneficiate the conditions for the arrangement of the Taef Agreement. Signed in Saudi Arabia on 22 October 1989, and ratified by the Lebanese Parliament on 5 November 1989, Taef Agreement institute the principle of coexistence among Lebanon's different ethnoreligious groups. In this order, the configuration of the political power sharing system between Christians and Muslims was reset, skipping from the former 6:5 ratio, to an equal 1:1 (Salamey 2014: 55). In order regain Lebanon's territorial and political sovereignty, the Taef Agreement also framed the Syrian military withdraw from Lebanon.

The gradual political stabilization of Lebanon lead, in 1992 to the first parliamentary elections in the country since the civil war (Norton 2007: 97-100). Following the Taif Accord, south Lebanon remained the one area of active fighting (Global Security Organisation 2017).

5.4. The Israeli withdraw and Syrian withdraw

Following the end of the civil war, the Southern part of Lebanon remained under Israeli occupation. During this period Hezbollah gain popularity over the AMAL group in what regard the fight against Israeli occupation forces. In order to avoid conflict escalation and preserve the continuity of Lebanon's stability, the United Nations, deployed an interim force (UNIFL) to assure the total Israeli withdraw from Lebanese territory. Consequently, the Israeli withdraw from Lebanon on May 2000 (Global Security Organisation 2017). Following the Israeli retreat from Lebanon, the Lebanese Government decided to attribute the control of its southern region to Hezbollah (Global Security Organisation 2017).

As said before, the Taef Agreement of 1989, addressed the Syrian occupation. The signatory parties, agreed that Syria would start its withdraw process, abandoning Lebanese territory within the next two years. However, Syria did not respect the contract clause and kept its military presence in Lebanon. The Syrian influence over Lebanon continued since the political Lebanese elite was favourable to Syria's interests (Global Security Organisation 2017). For instance, by 2003, Syria had 20,000 troops positioned in north of Lebanon, Beqaa Valley region and along the Beirut-Damascus highway (Global Security Organisation 2017).

On February 2005, at the height of political contestation against Syria's influence, former Prime Minister, Rafik Hariri is assassinated. Along with Hariri, 22 people lost their lives in the bomb attack (Global Security Organisation 2017). Hariri, was an important Sunni leader, and one of the main anti-Syria opposition figures. After his death, political tensions raised and the Lebanese political groups break into a pro-Syrian faction, and an anti-Syrian faction. On 14 March 2005, one month after Hariri's death, a large number of people gathered in the streets of Beirut. The protesters demanded autonomy from foreign influences, Syrian military withdraw and explanations regarding Rafik Hariri's assassination (Global Security Organisation 2017). Following the wave of protests and the rise of Syrian presence discontentment, the anti-Syria coalition won the 2005 parliamentary elections – the "Cedar Revolution".

The internal Lebanese political conjecture as well as pressures from the international community, led on 26 April 2005, to the Syrian military withdraw from Lebanon (Global Security Organisation 2017).

One year after, on March 2006, two large manifestations were hold in Beirut. The first, set on March 8th – represented the pro-Syrian faction and was headed by Hezbollah and other Shia parties. 6 days after, on 14 March, a counter-manifestation gathered to pay tribute to Hariri. In opposition to the March 8 movement, the 14 March movement, was anti-Syrian, composed by Christians and Sunni parties, and lead the Future Movement party. These two main political coalitions continued to antagonize and furthermore, tensions between both factions grow.

In 2006, Hezbollah clashes along the southern border with Israel forces prepared the way for the next row of political tensions in Lebanon. Thus, with the continuity of the confrontations involving Hezbollah, Israel and other Shia groups, contributed for the outbreak of the 2006 Lebanese War. The war last from July until August, and ended with the intervention of the UN addressing the UN Security Council Resolution 1701 and

Israel's consequent withdraw from Lebanon's Southern border (Global Security Organisation 2017).

Although, clashes among the different sectarian groups prevailed and the Lebanese political stability continued to deteriorate. On 23 November 2007, the mandate of former President Emile Lahoud expired. The inability of political agreement among the 14 March and 8March movements inhibit the possibility of new elections leading to a political vacuum in the Lebanese Government. Therefore, in order to avoid the gradual deterioration of the Lebanese ethno-political relations, rival political leaders invited by Qatar, gathered in Doha on May 2008. The Doha Agreement, prepared new parliamentary elections, and re-established political stability by bringing the two main political factions together. In sequence of the Doha Agreement, General Michel Suleiman, former army commander, is elected Lebanese President, on 25 May 2008 (Global Security Organisation 2017).

5.5. Lebanon, the 2010 Arab Uprisings and The Civil War in Syria

At the beginning of the Arab Uprisings[8], Lebanon did not face internal uproars as the ones who were spreading in North African and furthermore in the Middle Eastern countries. As Rupert Sutton underlines in his article, *Lebanon's Arab Spring: The Cedar Revolution Nine Years On,* in the case of Lebanon, the "Arab Uprising" occurred five years before, in 2005. The set of events who take place during the Cedar Revolution period; as described on the previous chapter; can be tough compared with the cases of the 2010 Arab Uprisings (Sutton 2014: 97-98).

However, from the start of the uprisings in Syria, in the spring of 2011, Lebanon became the first destination for Syrians escaping both, President Bashar al-Assad' regime and military service in the Syrian army (Arfeh 2017). During the first months following the

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[8] The Arab Uprisings, also denominated as *Arab Spring,* were a set of civil protests, non-violent manifestations in North Africa and the Middle East, in which in some of the countries, evolved into violent riots, coup d'état, or into military and humanitarian crisis, as the case of Libya, Syria or Yemen. The wave of political contestation towards authoritarian regimes, economic struggle, and political repression, began in Tunisia on 17 December 2010, and on 29 December 2010, Algeria was the first country experiencing the spread of the protest-wave initiated in Tunes. Egypt (25 January 2011), Syria (26 January 2011), Yemen (27 January 2011), and Libya (17 February 2011), for instance, experienced similar situations of social and political turmoil (BBC News 2016).

beginning of the Syrian conflict, the influx of refugees was considerably low. For instance, at the end of 2011 there were only 5,000 Syrian refugees registered within UNHCR in Lebanon. The continuity of the hostilities in Syria and the consequent growing number of displaced people produced by the conflict, increased the number of Syrian refugee registrations in Lebanon by 175,000 (2012), and at the starting of 2013, 800,000 Syrian refugee official registrations where hold by the UNCHR in Lebanon (Kelley 2017: 85).

Besides the refugee influx, the Syrian conflict produced reactions within immediate consequences in other Lebanese spheres. Despite the fact that the Lebanese successive Governments had adopted since the start of the Civil War in Syria, a neutral position towards the Syrian conflict, each Lebanese sectarian group had token its side: Sunnis start to support the Syrian opposition, while Shiites, and notably Hezbollah, were supporting President Bashar al-Assad regime's side. Likewise, the poorly monitored Lebanese-Syrian border, allowed the entrance of Lebanese Islamists into Syria, and contributed for rise of illicit activities, such as firearms smuggling from Lebanon into Syria (International Crisis Group 2012: 2-3).

The fact that the Lebanese government did not had a specific response plan for the management of the large demographic influx in the country, it was the Lebanese Municipal authorities who manage exclusively the income of Syrian refugees in their local communities during the first months of 2011. This fact proved to be a cause of restraint for the UNHCR in what regarded the implementation of support programs. The complex ethno-sectarian system of local governance, made the negotiation process with the international actors difficult to address, since the competition for local leadership between rival ethno-groups caused limitations while establishing agreements regarding refugee management (Kelley 2017: 84-85).

Chapter I

1.1. Introduction

This chapter will examine how the Lebanese State perceived the arrival of the first wave of Syrian refugees, considering the period ranging from mid-2012 to late-2013. For this

purpose, official statements by Lebanese state members addressing the Syrian refugee issue, will be presented and examined. In this order, it will be possible to comprehend how the State' narratives in relation to the Syrian refugee community living in Lebanon changed over time, and how those framings will affect the positioning of the State and its response towards the issue.

Thus, it will be possible to confer that initially the State represented the refugees fleeing from Syria as "brothers", welcoming them soldierly.

However, the "humanitarian approach", characterized by its political disassociation, would not last. As soon as the influx of Syrian individuals expand and the conflict in Syria aggravates, the State would start to rise traditional security concerns. Along the next chapter, the relations between the Syrian refugee presence and Lebanese internal fragilities will be explored. In this way, it will be studied how the initial Humanitarian approach supported by the State, quickly shifted into the policization of the refugee crisis issue.

1.2. First representations of the Syrian refugees in the Lebanese State discourse

On April 24 2012, Minister of Social Affairs, Wael Abu Faour, declared to the journalists after a session with Ninette Kelley, UNCHR representative, and Prime Minister Najib Mikati, were the Syrian Refugee influx issue was addressed (The Lebanese Centre for Human Rights 2012):

"*The issue of the Syrian refugees in Lebanon is a humanitarian and non-political situation […]. It is not in our interests to drop the issue of Syrian refugees. Lebanon will not fail to fulfil its duties toward the refugees without politicizing this subject, or interfering in Syrian internal affairs.*"

By considering the statement above, it is possible to verify immediately two characteristics that the State is in will to underline.

The first aspect is related with the type of frame that the State is promoting towards the Syrian people fleeing the conflict. The second characteristic possible to attest in the statement, is the concern by the Lebanese government to maintain its political distance towards Syria's internal affairs, by no-politicizing the refugee issue in Lebanon.

Thus, the Lebanese concerns related to the Syrian Civil War and its side-effects, were focused on ensuring the continuity of political independency from its government and political parties towards the happenings in Syria. The Baabda Declaration, negotiated in 2010 and put into practice in 2011, can be perceived as an example of the Lebanese political parties' determination, to maintain a political environment of neutrality towards external forces or conflicts, which could furthermore destabilize Lebanon' fragile sectarian balances.

However, it is important to mention that even if during the initial period of 2012, the Lebanese government did try to stand apart politically, by opposition, internally, Lebanon would assist to a March 14 vs. March 8 Alliance's rivalry (Janmyr 2017: 448), with both political branches using the Syrian refugee issue as a political argument (International Crisis Group 2012: 8). From 2011 until 2013, Lebanon would know two different governments (Kelley 2017: 84). Furthermore, on February 2014, with Prime Minister Tammam Salam forming new government, and the end of President Michel Suleiman' term, both March 14 Alliance and March 8 Alliance, would establish that decisions related with the management of the refugee crisis, would have to be taken contentiously among the different parts (Kelley 2017: 84). Even so, this measure revealed to have minimal effect in practice, since the major political factions continued to use the Syrian refugee issue as pretext for its own political disputes.

In this context, the decision-making process for the arrangement of effective measures and its further implementation, to address the Syrian refugees, had always been taken in retard or inefficiently (Kelley 2017: 85).

In the other hand, regarding the Humanitarian Approach promoted by the Lebanese government at the beginning of 2012, as seen before, it is important to highlight two factors which contributed for the warm welcome offered by Lebanon and the Lebanese to the Syrian refugees.

Firstly, as seen previously on the Historical Background chapters, both Lebanon and Syria are bound by economic, cultural, historic and political ties. The 1993 bilateral agreement established by Lebanon and Syria for Economic and Social Cooperation and Coordination[9] can be taken as example (International Labour Organization 2014: 15).

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[9] The above mentioned agreement, signed in 1993 between Lebanon and Syria, allows nationals of the two parties to reside, work and exercise economic activities in both countries.

This agreement prevailed during the initial period of the Syrian Refugee influx (2011), until the end of 2013.Thus, during this period the Lebanese state applied an "open border" policy towards Syrian nationals (International Labour Organization 2014: 15).

Secondly, the principle of "Good Neighbourliness among Arab countries". As explained on Maja Janmyr' article, the concept involving the "Good Neighbourliness among Arab countries", is used by the Lebanese government as one of its arguments to justify the non-ratification of the 1951 Convention on Refugees and the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees[10] (Janmyr 2014: 441). On the authors perspective, the word "refugee"[11] is considered derogatory among Arab cultures, though, the ratification of those international conventions would bring such denomination into use. Therefore, the usage of "refugee" by the Lebanese state to refer to citizens from neighbouring countries "would find itself in positions that could violate the good neighbour principle" (Janmyr 2014: 460). Consequently, the etic and moral code associated along the argument of "Good Neighbourliness among Arab countries", can be perceived as a reason for the welcoming of Syrian Refugees. Besides, it can also stand as a main factor for the representation of the Syrian nationals, as people in need of aid and support.

However, as it will be analysed on the next-sub chapter, the Lebanese state would not support much longer the "humanitarian" approach, as identified during the first months of Syrian refuges arrival in Lebanon.

At this stage (April 2012), when the statement by Lebanon's Minister of Social Affairs came to public arena, Lebanon had 18,000 Syrian refugees registered within the UNHCR (UNHCR 2014). By the end of the same year (December 2012), the number had raised to 112,545 people (UNHCR 2014), and four months later, on April 2013 – one year after Minister Wael Abu Faour' statement, the number of Syrian refugees in Lebanon sky-rocket by 356,000 registered individuals (UNHCR 2014). As it will possible to attest henceforth, the relation between the increasing number of Syrian individuals fleeing to Lebanon, and the positioning of the State regarding the issue, is strictly linked. Therefore,

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[10] The UN 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, and the UN 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, "are the two primary international legal instruments that provide for the protection of the world's refugees" (Janmyr 2014: 439).

[11] In order to maintain its political neutrality towards the Syrian Civil War and the Syrian Refugee Crisis, the Lebanese government enforced the term "'displaced persons' ('nazihoun') rather than 'refugees' ('lajioun')". The labelling of Syrian refugees is so bewildered, that international actors create its own terminology to refer to the Syrians who came in Lebanon after March 2011 - "*de facto refugees*" (Janmyr 2014: 460).

the State will perceive, represent and frame its agenda, based on the enlargement of its Syrian refugee population trough time.

1.3. The "policicization" of the refugee issue

If during the first months of civil war in Syria, the Lebanese state was portraying the refugees exclusively as "brothers", by the end of 2012, the patterns on the State' discourse towards Syrian refugees would start to change. The humanitarian approach in which the State addressed the issue initially, welcoming soldierly Syrian nationals, gained an apprehensive exposure. As the following statements will permit to confirm, although the State had maintained its representations of solidary commitment, in the other hand, it would as well, start to hybridize its representations, by adding elements of concern towards the presence of Syrian refugees in Lebanon.

As it will be possible to analyse afterwards, by the end of 2012, start of 2013, is the period in which the Lebanese government would began to politicize the Syrian refugee issue. The worsening of the conflict in Syria, which in turn, had multiply the number of Syrians arriving in Lebanon, would start to be perceived as a matter of concern for the Lebanese authorities'.

On December 2012, Lebanon had registered 129,106 refugees (WTO 2012: 12) from Syria within its borders. With the influx growing sharply, the Lebanese state, had started to realize forthcoming consequences, which eventually could threaten the chronical fragility of the State' infrastructures, institutions and its multi-sectarian society.

Prime Minister Najib Mikati, addressed, on December 2012, the Syrian refugee crisis issue in the following way:

"*The Cabinet is committed to its humanitarian duty (toward refugees) but the increasing numbers require a new approach to the issue, taking into consideration the potential period of the refugee' stay in Lebanon.*" (Mikati 2012)

In the statement above, it is noticeable that the Lebanese cabinet is expressing its concerns in relation to two new realities; 1) the number of Syrians refugees arriving in Lebanon is increasing drastically, and 2) it is impossible to predict the end of the conflict in Syria, in order to foresee an eventual departure of Syrian refugees living in Lebanon.

Besides, the State is as well expressing its idea that "*a new approach*" is required for the management of the refugee issue; meaning that the "humanitarian" approach was not efficient and, alternative frameworks have to be set, in order to address the Syrian refugee crisis issue.

At this this moment, with the incapacity of the State to respond positively to the large influx of refugees, the Lebanese government will politicize the refugee crisis issue. Along the official Sate' discourse, it would be possible to verify the usage of new keynotes, which underline a series of hypothetical threats, who can eventually emerge due to the demographic pressure caused by the Syrian refugees within the Lebanese socio-economic infrastructures.

Consequently, with the policization of Syrian refugee crisis issue, the image of the refugee' along the State' official discourse, would meet changes as well. In this sense, new forms of adjectival ratings would be used by the State to referee to the Syrian refugee community living in Lebanon. As it will be possible to verify thereafter, the Syrians had started to be portrait as a "heavy" presence, capable to destabilize negatively the country' on its most various domains.

For instance, on 11 March 2013, President Suleiman would comment the Syrian refugee issue on the following way:

"*Those numbers are more than the capacity of any country to bear. It's not just a matter of material help and relief - the geographic and demographic capacity is saturated and the problems resulting from this massive number affect us socially, economically and on security.*" (Nakhoul, Stott 2013)

As mentioned before, it is possible to identify among the lines of the previous statement, that the Lebanese State is referring to the Syrian refuges as an unbearable presence, which the Country is not able to support. In addition, the State is also projecting eventual baneful effects on Lebanon' society and economy, "*resulting from this massive number*" of Syrian refuges. Therefore, for the first time, the State is mentioning its security concerns regarding its Syrian refugee population.

Moreover, the patterns observed on the speech above, would continue to be a presence on the Lebanese state' discourse.

1.4. Reasons behind the Securitization approach

The reasons why the State had been shifting its approach towards the Syrian refugee population, are related to the pressure felt on the socio-economic sectors, who would consequently affect the Lebanese overall political sphere. However, it is important to consider that the Lebanese State has its responsibilities, since it has addressed improperly the influx of refugees from the earl beginning of the arrival of Syrian in the country (Kelley 2017: 84). The absence of a serious political agenda, able to minimize the negative consequences of such a large influx of people, revealed to be disastrous. (ICG 2013: 5)

In economic terms, for example, the decision of the State in the no-creation of refugee camps (Kelley 2017: 84) would affect the price of house renting, which had rise considerably. In other hand, the imprecise policies towards the legal status of the Syrian nationals (Kelley 2017: 87), would affect the job-market. Syrian refugees would engage in the informal economy due to their incapacity to access to working-permits. In consequence the salaries offered droped, once that it would be much cheaper for an employer to hire an illegal worker (ILO 2012: 15). Also, Syrian refugees search for shelter mostly in predominant Sunny areas; such as Northern Lebanon and the Eastern region of the Bekaa valley. In accordance, those regions represent the most economically undeveloped areas in Lebanon. This fact would lead to a deterioration of the living conditions of both refugees and Lebanese nationals, which already faced detriourous living conditions in their local communities (ICG 2013: 9).

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and Lebanese nationals, wich already face detriourous living conditions in their local communities (ICG 2013: 9).

Regarding the social reasons who led to a policization of the Syrian refugee crisis issue by the Lebanese government, the relation is mostly associated to the fragile sectarian balance of the country. Considering that 95% of the Syrian refugees in Lebanon are Sunni Muslims (ICG 2013: 3), the rest of the ethno-religious groups start to perceive the new demographic arrangement brought with the Syrian refuges influx, as being negative for the sectarian balance of the Country (International Alert 2017: 4).

Politically, the conflict in Syria polarized the Lebanese political scene on a sectarian level (ICG 2013: 9). In addition to the traditional friction between, March 14 Alliance, and March 8 Alliance, which is intensifying, internal rivalries among the Alliance's political parties had emerged. For instance, on 25th March 2013, Prime Minister, Najib Mikati, resigned after an internal March 8 dispute, with Hezbollah over the parliamentary election planning (Bassam 2013). Also, intra-sectarian dynamics, particularly among the Sunni communities would rise (al-Masri 2015: 18).

Thus, during the 24th Arab Summit, President Michel Suleiman, would seek for support among its Arab partners. Whit the numbers of Syrian refugees arriving in Lebanon increasing drastically, President Suleiman would request "Arab unity and joint work", in order to set a common political agenda, capable to relieve Lebanon's "burden", which the Country is inept to manage solely (Arab League 24th Summit, March 23 2013). By this occasion, Lebanon's President would state:

 "*The number of Syrian refugees has surged and it is now equivalent to one quarter of Lebanon's population. Although the Lebanese state has decided not to close the border, the situations indicate that the security problems will increase and this requires a serious discussion in order to find a solution to this aggravating problem in a country based on delicate checks and balances*" (Naharnet Newsdesk 2013).

By analysing the statement, it is understandable that the Lebanese government is 1) overrating the Syrian refugee numbers – according to the UN daily statistics report, on 29 March 2013, UNHCR had registered 252,983 Syrians, with additional 145,495 individuals waiting for registration (UNHCR 29 March 2013); and 2) is foreseeing hypothetical increasing on "*security problems*". Therefore, by establishing a direct

relation between the refugee population grow, and a speculative worsening on security issues, the Lebanese government is perceiving the necessity to proceed for a "*serious discussion*" in order to protect its "*delicate checks and balances*". Nevertheless, the mentioning of the decision to maintain the borders open, can be perceived as last nuance of humanitarian approach on the Lebanese discourse towards its Syrian refugee population.

At this moment, it is possible to testify that the Lebanese government politicized the Syrian refugee question, and it is paving the way for its securitization.

1.5. Conclusion

During the period from 2011 to 2013, the Lebanese state used predominantly the "Humanitarian" frame for the addressing of the Syrian refugee crisis issue. However, with the escalating influx of Syrian refugees, the State started to add traditional security concerns to its discourse. The incapability by the State to address the crisis properly, associated with the continuous refugee flux, would lead the Lebanese government to set possible threats which could destabilize internally Lebanon' political, economic and sectarian balances. Although, it is possible to verify through the Lebanese official discourse, that the major menace identified by the State is related to the huge number of refugees, and not to the fact that they are coming into Lebanon per se.

According to the Security complex theory, as presented by the Copenhagen School, it is provable that the Lebanese government politicize the issue, as soon as 'it started to portrait the Syrian refugee population as being a "burden" for the country' infrastructures, as well as, a possible threat for its sectarian integrity. The 24th Arab Summit, in which the Lebanese stated seek for support among its Arab partners for the management of the refugee crisis, can be perceived as the culmination point of the policization process of the issue by the Lebanese government (Dionigi, 2016: 13). Nevertheless, it is important to mention that at this stage, the Lebanese state had been initiating the securitization process. The references to national security and stability had started to be repeated constantly among the State discourse, relating the Syrian refugee presence in the Country to the worsening of Lebanon' wellness.

Chapter II

2.1. Introduction

As it was possible to examine on the previous chapter, by the end of 2013, the Lebanese government had already switched its approach towards the refugee presence. The "Humanitarian" approach, identified during the first months of Syrian refugee entrances, soon advanced into the "policization" of the issue. To the extent that, the Lebanese state began to portrait the refugees no longer as "brothers", but as a "burden", impossible to handle. Consequently, the State started, as well, to correlate the Syrian refugee presence with security concerns. Initiating in this way, the securitization process of the issue.

Thus, the following chapter will explore the main causes and contours who lead to the securitization of the refugee issue. As well as in what exactly would consist the security move and furthermore, the securitization act, performed by the Lebanese state towards the Syrian refugees by the end of 2014, start of 2015.

Announcements by Lebanese official personnel would continue to be used for the understanding of the State' representations of Syrian refugees in the country. Moreover, also statements by Lebanese citizens would be considered – since the role of the audience is of major importance along the securitization process.

2.2. Second Representations

At the beginning of 2014, whit the worsening of the civil war in Syria, the number of Syrian refugees in Lebanon was estimated in a total of 903, 695 individuals, registered or awaiting registration within the UNCHR (UNHCR Lebanon, January 2014). Concurrently, during the previous months, Lebanon faced a political deadlock: after the resignation of former Prime Minister Mitaki, on March 2013, new elected Prime Minister Tammam Saeb Salam, just could put his cabinet in function on February 2014 (Diogini 2016: 11). The absence of an operative executive, together with the absence of political will for the management of the crisis, left a vacuum (Dionigi 2016: 12), which coincided with the largest influx period of Syrian refugee' entry in Lebanon.

However, the new Government appeared to be more determined in the addressing of the issue than his predecessor. The prime example of the new Government' approach towards the Syrian refugee population, would consist on the creation of a Crisis Cell, entering into force on October 2014, under the direction of the Minister of Social Affairs, Rashid Derbas (Building, Street and El Baida. 2015: 2). This measure would stand as the "first official comprehensive policy position on Syrian displacement" (Mansour 2017: 5).

Likewise, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, in order to relocate the Syrian refugee population, would be responsible to explore the possibility of establishing safe zones in Syria (Dionigi 2016: 13). By the time that the Crisis Cell was created, Gebran Bassil "expressed his commitment to greater engagement, in particular to reducing the total number of Syrians in Lebanon" (UNHCR Lebanon 2014: 2). The pledge of the new-formed Lebanese executive, illustrates its strong inclination to address the Syrian refugee crisis, as any other former Lebanese government had done until now.

Furthermore, three more arguments would appear recurrently along the State' discourse: 1) demand of foreign support, both monetary and in terms of refugee population sharing, as apparent solution for the crisis management; 2) necessity to restrain the refugee influx by any means necessary, and 3) consider a possible departure by the refugee population back into Syria.

As it is possible to understand, the 24th Arab Summit rise high hopes among the Lebanese state' expectations, since it is believed by the Government that it is the only viable alternative for the addressing of the refugee crisis management. The same can be said about the UNHCR' meeting, hold in Switzerland on 3 September 2013[12].Although, as it will be possible to analyse on the next subchapter, international aid would come insufficiently.

For instance, on January 2014, before finish its term, Prime Minister Mitaki in a newsletter column to "The Telegraph", mentioned:

"*Lebanon is going through a critical time […] unless world leaders meeting in Kuwait and Geneva back up their promises of assistance with action, the country risks losing the ability to sustain its humanitarian aid to displaced Syrians*" (Mikati 2014).

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[12] Meeting head by UN High Commissioner for Refugees, António Guterres and a group of Ministers representing respectively, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Turkey. The parties agreed on the establishment of a working group in order to cope with the Syrian refugee crisis commonly (Dobbs, Edwards 2013).

It is evident among the previous statement that Lebanese government is establishing a relation of dependency, declaring that the continuity of the support provided to the Syrians refugee in Lebanon, is now depended on an eventual release of international aid. In the other hand, references to the condition of the refugees, as human beings in need to be supported, is no longer discernible on the State discourse. By this time, as it is possible to observe, the Lebanese government is only concerned on the promotion of the idea, that the refugee crisis evolved "critically" in Lebanon, and insofar, the State has lost its ability to cope with refugee crisis issue, depending consequently on the foreign support by international partners and donors.

The features identified along Prime Minister Mitaki's speech would continue to intensify during the government of Prime Minister Salam, as it will be possible to understand afterwards.

During the curse of spring time, the number of Syrian refugees' in Lebanon had reached 1 million of individuals by May 2014 (Dionigi 2016: 13), leading the Government "to more vocally express concerns about the influx (UNHCR 2015: 2)". As it is possible to verify on the next comment, by the Foreign Affairs Minister, Geran Bassil, the Government is more concerned than ever in what regards the large number of Syrians arriving into Lebanon, along the first months of 2014:

"*The influx of Syrian refugees must be stopped, and they must be redistributed among all Arab countries and they must be returned to their homes as part of a comprehensive political solution.*" (Kholaif 2014)

On the above statement, once again, it become prominent the total absence of solidary references towards the Syrian refugees. In opposition, the State' continues to construct its narratives in turn of the withholding of the refugee influx. Notorious, but not surprising, is also the State' insistence on the resettlement of Syrian refugees among other Arab states or into Syria itself. Moreover, the positioning of the State demonstrates clearly that it is no further in will to deal with the crisis issue by its own responsibility.

More Politically correct, but not least explicit, is Prime Minister Tammam Salam' statement, also delivered on March 2014:

"The government will work on taking the necessary measures to address the issue of Syrian refugees whose numbers exceed the country's capacity to deal with, in order to contain the security, political, social and economic repercussion of their temporary presence in Lebanon. The government will call upon the international community and the Arab world to assume their responsibilities in helping fulfil its ethical and humanitarian obligation and at the same time facilitate their return to their homes" (Dionigi 2016: 12-13).

Along Prime Minister Salam' declaration, it is patent that the top priority of the State is at this moment, to ensure the Country' "*security*" as well as, to contain "*political, social and economic repercussions*", caused by the growing presence of Syrian refugees among its structures. In addition, the Government continues to insist that the country' capacity is overloaded, surpassing the State' capabilities. Therefore, if needed, it would proceed for "*necessary measures*", in order to deal with the refugee crisis issue.

In this respect, one can start to set correlations between the Security Complex Theory' framework and the Prime Minister' declaration. By overlaying Buzan' & Co theory, it is verifiable that:

The State, as *securitizing actor*, is promoting extraordinary measures towards the *existential threat*, in this case the Syrian refugee population, in order to guarantee and maintain its security and socio-economic balance; in other words – its own integrity. In any case, the next subchapter will address those interactions with more incidence, at the time when the Crisis Cell would become operable, in October 2014..

Thus, in what concerns the first half of 2014, and subsequently, the period in which coincides whit the initial phase of the securitization process' final period, the Lebanese State representations towards the Syrian refugees are presented.

It is understandable at this point, that the State is, 1) prompt to share refugee hosting responsibilities with its international partners, 2) find financial support among international donors, 3) standing firmly on the idea of a refugee influx block and, 4) posterior resettlement of the refugee population out of Lebanon.

Nevertheless, it is also necessary though to consider the position of the Lebanese civil society towards the issue. As set by the Barry Buzan' theory, the role of the *audience*; the Lebanese civil society, in this case; is of great importance. As explained along the

Theoretical Framework' chapter, the *securitizing actor* will need the acceptance of the audience, in order to implement extraordinary security measures towards the *existential threat*, in order to conserve its sovereignty and dominance. In this sense, it is necessary to understand how the Lebanese society perceives by now, the Syrian refugee presence in the country.

2.3. Lebanese Public Perceptions

As set by the Barry Buzan' theory, the role of the *audience*; the Lebanese civil society, in this case; is of great importance. As explained along the Theoretical Framework' chapter, the *securitizing actor* will need the acceptance of the *audience*, in order to implement extraordinary security measures towards the existential threat, in order to conserve its sovereignty and dominance. In this sense, it is necessary to understand how the Lebanese society perceives by now, the Syrian refugee presence in the country.

It is well known that the hospitality of the Lebanese people began to wane over time, especially after May 2014, when the Syrian refugee influx reached its highlight (International Alert 2015: 3). However, during the Summer of the same year, two occurrences revealed to galvanize the growing negative perception of the Lebanese collective imaginary towards the Syrian refugees.

First, in June 2014, Bashar Al-Assad' regime set presidential elections, and Syrian nationals living abroad were also allowed to vote. A rumour spread among the Syrian refugees, that by voting, they would have their passport stamped by the Syrian regime, facilitating afterwards their possible return back to Syria (Dionigi 2016: 14). In consequence, thousands of Syrians gathered in the streets of Beirut expressing their support for Basher al-Assad, surprising Lebanese people with the dimension of their presence and with the facility which they could be politically mobilized. It is reported that after this event, the popular opinion regarding Syrian refugees was that they "cannot stay" any longer in Lebanon (Dionigi 2016: 14).

In the other hand, the clashes in Arsal, between the Islamic State and the Lebanese Army on August 2014, unleash a wave of "*increasing violence by private citizens against Syrians*" (HRW 2014). Thereafter, kidnappings between groups were reported, as well as

other type of violent actions, such as, attacks on informal settlements, especially on the Bekaa valley region (Building, Street, El Baida 2015: 6).

Accordingly, a survey conducted by the Lebanese Center for Policy Research and the International Alert, reported that 51% of the respondents considered the Syrian presences as a threat to the Lebanese sectarian balance (International Alert 2015: 4). The survey also mention that security concerns had started to grow among the Lebanese society on the outcome of the events in Arsal (International Alert 2015: 4-5). For instance, it is mentioned that respondents expressed their fear towards the possibility that radical groups could use the refugee presence to infiltrate in hosting communities and refugee unofficial settlements (International Alert: 4). It has also been reported that the Syrian refugee presence was being used as an argument among the Sunni and Shi'a mainstream discourse, for "settle unresolved conflicts among Lebanese communities" (International Alert 2015: 5).

In this sense, the clashes in Arsal and the Beirut gathering during the Syrian Presidential elections revealed to be a turning point, not only for the public perception of the Syrian refugees, but also for the Lebanese state, who would start to tighten restrictive policies towards Syrian nationals as security measures by the start of October 2014 (Dionigi 2016: 15).

2.4. Securitization Move and Securitization Act

As seen previously, the Lebanese Government expected that support would arrive come from the International Community in order to ease Lebanese' responsibilities towards the Syrian refugee management (Fakhoury 2017: 691). However, this fact did not happen. As the International Amnesty reported, "*world leaders are failing to offer protection to Syria's most vulnerable refugees with catastrophic consequences*" (International Amnesty 2014).

In fact, the Lebanese Arab partners from the Gulf, "*have not offered to take a single refugee from Syria*" (International Amnesty 2014). The same can be said by the European Union, which only resettled 0.17% of refugees until 2014 (International Amnesty 2014). The lack of international support had not just affected Lebanon, but also the remaining host countries; Jordan, Turkey, Egypt and Iraq; which are coping at that time whit 95% of Syria's refugees (International Amnesty 2014). Notwithstanding, it is curious to denote

that Lebanon, which is not a signatory country of the 1952 Refugee Convention, hosts more refugees than, for instance, EU' state-members, which are all signatory of diverse refugee and Human rights protocols.

In what regards international funding and economic support, Lebanon would receive more financial aid in the year of 2015, than it had received between 2012-14 altogether (Mansour 2017: 7). This fact reveals the insufficient assistance that the international community had unlocked over time, for the assistance of the Syrian refugee crisis management in Lebanon. Also, it can exemplify the State' frustration and disbelieve towards foreign aid. In addition, the relation between the State authorities and international actors had been difficult (Fakhoury 2017: 691). For instance, in order to avoid Lebanese state' corruption, who is considered to have a bad record on funnelling foreign aid, the international community prefers to rely on selected partners rather than on governmental institutions. In consequence, this strategy revealed to jeopardise the State' authority. (Fakhoury 2017: 691-692).

During the Summer 2014, Syrian militant groups and the Lebanese Army continued to engage in regular clashes along the border. In consequence, concerns regarding conflict spillovers, refugee militarization (Fakhoury 2017: 686), and rise of Salafism among refugee settlements (Dionigi 2016: 15) had started to be perceived by the Lebanese state as serious threats to its security. In this sense, also Municipal actors began to implement informal security measures towards Syrian refugees, such as, gathering restrictions (Fakhoury 2017: 687) and curfews (HRW 2014). Thus, the Lebanese Government in June 2014 would issue a policy statement articulating the following goals: "*1) deny access to Syrians coming from areas which are not contiguous to Lebanon; 2) review the status of refugees and remove refugee status from those who are in Lebanon for economic reasons or who have travelled back to Syria since arriving in Lebanon; 3) promote the establishment of camps inside Syria or in the no-man's land between the two countries*" (UNHCR 2015: 3).

In this sequence, one of the firsts steps that the Lebanese government adopted for the implementation of its new policy, was to order the UNHCR to review the cases of registered Syrian refugees who had gone to Syria and returned to back into Lebanon, after 1 June 2014 (UNHCR 2015: 3-4). From August to September 2014, border restrictions started to be imposed towards Syrian nationals, "save for exceptional cases" (UNHCR 2015: 4).

In October 2014, the Crisis Cell presented a Policy Paper which was unanimously approved by the Government. With the employment of the Policy Paper, the Lebanese government aimed to enforce border restrictions policies towards Syrian nationals, as well as, prepare a set of new measures for the Syrian refugee crisis management, entering into force at the start of 2015. (Dionigi 2016: 15).

Thus, the one-page Policy Paper consisted basically in the articulation of 3 main objectives: "*1) Reduce the numbers of refugees by, among other, stopping refugees' entry into Lebanon (except for unpredicted exceptional humanitarian cases) and encouraging Syrian refugees to return to their country or other countries by all possible means.; 2) Ensure security though the implementation of security measures including requiring municipalities to keep a census of refugees and the strengthening of municipal policing, and 3) Ease the burden by preventing Syrians from working unlawfully, ensuring humanitarian assistance benefits refugees and vulnerable host communities equally and securing direct funding to state institutions through the Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF) and through special programs to develop the Lebanese economy.*" (UNHCR 2015: 3).

Simultaneously, on October 28, during the Berlin Conference on the Syrian Refugee Situation, the Lebanese government would announce to the remaining participants, a new arrangement for its border policy management, by affirming that Lebanon is not an asylum country, neither a final destination for refugees (Dionigi 2016: 15). The Lebanese government would also call for the resettlement of Syrian refugees based in Lebanon, as a moral duty of the international community in what consist responsibility sharing over the Syrian refugee crisis issue (Fakhoury 2017: 687).

At this time, is possible to understand that the Lebanese executive is determined to restrain the refugee influx by employing special measures towards the Syrian refugee' population. The State does no longer considered the Syrian refugee issue as a human crisis neither as a burden. The refugee crisis is by now considered as but as a "national disaster". As Prime Minister Tammam Salam would state on 23 September 2014, during the Sixty-ninth Session of the United Nations General:

"*This huge number of displaced people is weighing enormously on the Lebanese infrastructure that is already suffering from structural problems […]. This reality is, for us, a national disaster.*" (Salam 2014: 6)

Along Prime Minister Salam' declaration, it is verifiable that the Lebanese government is no longer concerned on the humanitarian nature of the Syrian refugee crisis. In opposition, the executive continues to underline the harmful effects and pressures triggered by the Syrian refugee presence over the State' structures. In last instance, the Syrian refugees are portrayed as "national disaster", which the Lebanese government is not capable to cope with any longer.

Accordingly, on 23 October 2014, also Information Minister Ramzu Jreij, would express clearly the intentions of the Lebanese government' towards its Syrian refugee population, declaring:

 "*Syrian refugees already in Lebanon will be encouraged to leave to their countries, or to other countries, by all means.*" [Jreij 2014]

As it is possible to verify, the Lebanese government, is by now, actively engaged in the implementation of border restrictions; in order to stop the refugee influx into Lebanon; as well as, it is decided to relocate Syria refugees already established in the country, "by all means".

Therefore, the Policy Paper and the new set of security policies towards the Syrian refugees reflects obviously that the Lebanese state considered that it had done more than expected in what regards the refugee crisis. Thereafter, law enforcement and legislation would be implemented with the objective to limit the refugee flow in the country and to reduce the numbers of UNHCR registered Syrian refugees (Diogini 2016: 16).

As Information Minister Joreige would state during a parliamentary session, on 30 October 2017:

"*No more refugees will be allowed to cross the border except for extreme humanitarian cases*" (Montgomery 2014).

In fact, after 31 December, all Syrians who wish to enter in Lebanon need to require the purpose of their visit. Comparatively with the previous State' policy, which granted a six months' period stay who could be renewed, the new regulations provide a shorter period, ranging from 24 hours to 6 months, depending on the travel purpose presented (UNHCR

2015: 3-4). Consequently, with the implementation of new restriction measurers, the registration of refugees in Lebanon would reduced significantly. For instance, comparing the last quarter of 2014 with the month of January 2014, the UNHCR registered a decreasing of 78% in what regards registration requests (UNHCR 2015: 3).

In this way, from 5 January 2015 on, the Lebanese Government effectively limit the ability of Syrians to enter in Lebanon (Diogini 2016: 16). The open-door policy provided towards Syrian refugees, would be substituted by special regulation which would result on a decrease of Syrians crossing into Lebanon. (Diogini 2016: 26).

2. 5. Conclusion

Along this chapter is was possible to testify in which manner the Lebanese state framed its security policy towards the Syrian refugee crisis issue. As seen previously, the government start to describe the Syrian refugees, primarily as "burden" to its capacities, and gradually, securitization references start to appear along the State discourse. The main reasons who lead to the securitization of the refugee crisis are related to 1) the huge number of refugees fleeing into Lebanon during mid-2013 and beginning of 2014; 2) security concerns regarding spillover effects of the Syrian conflict into Lebanese territory, and 3) insufficiency of international aid and support. This three factors, in addition to the Lebanese popular perceptions of the refugees, who also started to deteriorate, would consecutively allow the State, to implement border-crossing restrictions by during the Summer of 2014. Since then, security measures had been enforced and implemented gradually along the second half of 2014, inhibiting though, the entrance or stay, of Syrian nationals in Lebanon. Therefore, the new set of special measures to complement the LCRP, would culminate with the official enclosure of the Lebanese borders for Syrian nationals.

By establishing correlations between the case-study and the Securitization Theory framework, one can comprehend that the *securitization move* towards the Syrian refugees, began during the summer 2014. During this period, the public debate framed over the Syrian refugee presence shifted from "burden", to "national disaster", and security concerns started to be used, in order to describe the Syrian presence in the country. Therefore, Syrian nationals also started to be perceived by the Lebanese public as an

existential threat to their security, sectarian balance and wellbeing. In consequence, the State would implement extraordinary measures towards the Syrian refugees, in order to maintain its status quo and integrity. In this sense, the final *security act* can be identified during the start of 2015, when in January, the Lebanese Government would officially close its borders to refugees coming from Syrian.

7. Final Remarks

The objective of this study has been to understand in which extend the Lebanese government had framed and reframed the Syrian refugee crisis issue over time.

By analysing statements delivered by official Lebanese personnel, it has been shown that the refugee presence in the country has been portrait differently by the Government.

During the initial phase, from 2011- mid-2013, the Lebanese Government tried to maintain a certain political distance over the refugee issue, fearing possible negative repercussions among its sectarian society. At this time, Syrian refugees were portrait as "brothers", and the government kept a strictly "humanitarian approach" towards the issue. This fact leads to a total absence of political measures in order to cope with the refugee influx, which was growing as fast as the conflict in Syria deteriorated. The "open-border" policy applied by the Lebanese state, revelled to be disastrous. Since it did not permit an accurate intervention, in order to prevent possible side-effects, triggered by the large influx of Syrian nationals among the fragile Lebanese structures.

Therefore, during the second period, going from mid-2013 until the start of 2015, the State would shift its position towards the Syrian refugee presence. In a first moment, the State would describe the refugees as an unbearable "burden" for the Country, which is impossible to sustain. References to the State' integrity and capacity, would appear regularly among the official discourse, substituting the previous humanitarian representations, which the Government was using beforehand, for the description of the Syrian refugee population. The turning point would come during 2014, by the time when Syrian refugees in Lebanon had reached 1 million of registered individuals. In addition, the lack of international support and occurrences regarding inter-border conflict situations would lead the State to proceed towards the securitization of the refugee issue.

Simultaneously, the Government had created a Crisis Cell with the aim to address the refugee influx. In consequence, Syrian refugee would face restrictions in order to access

into Lebanese soil. Since the Winter 2014, policy measures enforcing refugee influx restrictions tighten. Finally, by January 2015, the State had closed its borders to Syrian nationals, as an ultimate security act.

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