Imaginaries of sovereignty
Visualizing the loss of control

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"The night that Germany lost control." This headline on the cover of the German weekly DIE ZEIT was published in fall 2016 on the 2015 border opening anniversary when German chancellor Angela Merkel had decided to allow Syrian and other refugees into the country. DIE ZEIT situates its visual and linguistic narrative within a discursive framework that echoes far-right and right-wing populist discourses in the way it instrumentalizes images, metaphors, and visual imaginaries of Others and relates them to imaginations of control and sovereignty. Drawing upon a closed reading of DIE ZEIT's title page, the article seeks to elaborate on the broader relation of images, imaginaries, and emotional practices of border transgression and the invocation of the border in media and political discourse on refugees in Germany. It explores how the cover epitomizes, alludes to, and at the same time fosters a growing unease of large parts of the German liberal middle-class concerning the "refugee crisis".

Introduction

"The night that Germany lost control." This headline on the cover of the German weekly DIE ZEIT was published in fall 2016 on the anniversary of the so-called "border opening" in September 2015. One year earlier, German chancellor Angela Merkel had decided to allow Syrian and other refugees into the country. They had been camping for days under unfortunate circumstances at Keleti train station in Budapest before they decided to march over the highway towards Austria. Merkel had negotiated with Austrian chan-

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cellor Faymann that Austria would allow refugees to cross Austria towards the German border. Merkel had said her famous words, "Wir schaffen das/ we can do this" already on 31 August 2015.

Figure 1: Title page DIE ZEIT Nr. 35/2016

Germany and Austria saw unprecedented waves of solidarity towards the refugees at the Vienna and Munich train stations and locally in small towns, cities, and villages in many European countries (Sandberg 2020). The initial wave of solidarity and sympathy towards the refugees was paralleled by an upsurge in populism, violence, and attacks on refugee shelters and asylum-seekers' homes. Germany is not an exception as many other European countries experienced an increase in right-wing populist and far-right parties and movements. In the aftermath of the "summer of migration", right-wing populists argued that Merkel's decision to suspend the Dublin agreement led to an uncontrolled influx of undocumented migrants, that Viktor Orbán had blackmailed the country, that Merkel had made the country vulnerable to terrorists, that German bureaucracies were not ready or equipped to deal with such high numbers, and finally, that there was the problem of culture. Their Islamic belief and traditions would make the refugees incompatible with German Christian mainstream society; they would pose both a physical and cultural threat to their host society, particularly for "our" women and girls. The night of New Year's Eve in Cologne (Arendt/Brosius/Hauck 2017) exacerbated the refugee Other's framing as an object of fear. In this increasingly heated atmosphere of 2016, DIE ZEIT takes a look back at the

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suspension of the Dublin agreement, commonly termed "border opening," and Merkel's famous words, "We can do this!" Many, DIE ZEIT claims in its cover article, say that in this very moment "Germany lost control" and that it only regained this control in December 2015, as allegedly was secretly admitted by informants from within the Merkel administration.

In this article[1], I provide a close reading of DIE ZEIT's front page to elaborate on the broader relation of imagery, imaginaries, and emotional practices of border transgression and the invocation of the border in media and political discourse on refugees. Since these late summer days of 2015, both the German-Austrian and the Austrian-Hungarian border had become focal points of social imagination. At the same time, they became "empty signifiers" (Laclau/Mouffe 1985)—temporarily fixed but permanently contested and ready to be filled with the most diverse and contrasting meanings under conditions of continuous power struggle.

Borders play a pivotal role in the imaginary of control that is at stake here. Shortly after the first arrivals, Germany introduced border controls on 13 September 2015 at the internal Schengen border to Austria. European internal Schengen borders had almost disappeared from public attention; their practical relevance had become more and more insignificant due to increased cross-border activities and networks, unobstructed by border controls and checks. Borderwork (Cooper/Rumford 2012) was mainly directed not towards exclusion and bulkheading of the neighbor but towards cooperation and networking, aiming at making the border almost invisible, even imperceptible, for legal border-crossers.

In fall 2015, those taken-for-granted certainties changed abruptly with the reinstatement of border controls. They conveyed a clear message: first, that the nation-state was (still) powerful and protective, and second, that it was under threat. The national border, this was meant to signal, returns at a time of crisis. It stages a performance of power, control, and sovereignty beyond its actual relevance as a barrier for cross-border crime. When DIE ZEIT reports "The night that Germany lost control", it establishes a direct seman-

1 An early draft of this article was presented at the workshop "Kulturwissenschaftliche Perspektiven auf Devianz, Kriminalität und Sicherheit" at ISGV Dresden in September 2018. I am indebted to the workshop participants, and Katharina Eisch-Angus in particular, for valuable comments and advice. Also, I wish to thank Guido Tiemann for his comments and help in streamlining the article. Finally, I want to thank the anonymous reviewer whose advice significantly improved the article's argument.

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tic link between the "opened" national border, migration, and control over a state territory. This narrative inextricably links imaginaries of control and state sovereignty to borders and the border function's invocation. Simultaneously, it reinforces the boundary between the national Self and the refugee or migrant Other, whose intrusion signals a violation of the border and an attack on the sovereign nation-state. I argue that DIE ZEIT situates its narrative within a discursive framework that echoes far-right and right-wing populist discourses (Wodak 2015) in the way it instrumentalizes images, metaphors, and visual imaginaries of Others and relates them to imaginations of control and sovereignty.

The article proceeds as follows: First, I take the border-control-nexus as a point of departure to analyze how both are linked to the social imaginary of sovereignty, how this imaginary is produced and perpetuated, and how it contributes to the "doing" of national identity and the nation state's performativity as a "home" and a trusted "safe haven" whose borders hold a security promise. I provide a close reading of the visual narrative on DIE ZEIT's cover in the next step. I explore how the front page emphasizes an alleged "loss of control" threatening this "home" linked to affective bordering practices. Thereby, I wish to attend to the subtle and subliminal emotional practices that impact actors' feelings towards the location of Self and Other and how they practice national belonging and externalizing the Other.

I argue that it is arranged in a security meta-frame, which epitomizes an imaginary loss of control and an imminent threat to national safety and security. This framing overrides the cover image's situatedness in Christian iconography, which would otherwise establish a moral obligation towards the refugees. The article concludes with an exploration of how the cover epitomizes, alludes to, and at the same time fosters a growing unease of large parts of the German liberal middle-class concerning the "refugee crisis".

Control and borders

To desire security and safety is an anthropological constant. Insecurity and uncertainty can be destructive for human beings; security and safety are pivotal for personal, psychological, and social development. The first and primary security community on a micro-scale is the core family who enjoys specific legal protection, often at the expense of the security/safety of its

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most vulnerable members. On the societal and political level, it is the state's responsibility to keep its members safe. This is both a social contract and a promise[2]. In fact, the security promise is a crucial element of the social contract in which citizens cede power to the state. As such, it is also an essential pillar of state sovereignty. Following Max Weber's famous definition, state sovereignty means that a state has the monopoly over the legitimate use of force, maintains the social order within a given territory over a given population, and guards its borders (Weber 2005 [1921]: 1043). Thus, borders are integral to the security/safety promise. Likewise, national sovereignty conveys a sense of security and reinforces the nation-state's affective dimension.

National identity and national belonging happen on the symbolic level of the "imagined community" (Anderson 1991) but are also practiced, embodied, and emotionally rooted. Nation-states represent "homes" to "their" people who can claim their membership, e.g., through citizenship. Walters coined the concept of "domopolitics," i.e., governmental practices that make the nation-state appear like a home. Domopolitics are defined as "the governance and construction of the nation as a domestic or 'homely' space to be secured through practices of filtering, classification, and surveillance" (Darling 2013: 1786; Walters 2004). As such, these practices are inextricably linked to borders. Imaginaries of the state as a "home" or a "safe haven" are, however, in practice misleading and highly ambivalent, as safety for the privileged majority often entails insecurity and exclusion of those at the margins of society (Balibar 2015).

Borders, boundaries, and bordering practices are integral to and constitutive for the perception and imagination of the nation-state as a home and the definition and exclusion of the Other. My perspective on borders is based on the following assumptions: First, Borders do something; they have agency. They make a difference, and they create social spaces, obstacles, classifications, and opportunities. The border function and infrastructure are potent devices. Second, borders are also objects of agency; they are invoked, imagined, and have symbolic meaning. They are an essential part of social imaginaries and processes of selfing and othering. The imagination of the border function and infrastructure is powerful. As Bendixsen argues, "borders are constructed, reproduced and contested by a variety of actors, using

2 On the concept of promise, see Färber 2019.

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techniques, institutions, laws, policies and social interactions at different scales" (Bendixsen 2016: 536).

The national border is pivotal for the imagination of the sovereign nation-state because it promises security. National borders and border controls provide an idea of stability and reliability. They mediate trust not only in state institutions but in an idea of national belonging and national power in a world of neatly divided Westphalian nation-states. Ironically, as Wendy Brown states, national borders are increasingly hyperbolically emphasized in a world where national sovereignty and the practical importance of borders are waning:

> "This theatricalized and spectacularized performance of sovereign power at aspirational or actual national borders brings into relief nation-state sovereignty's theological remainder. If walls do not actually accomplish the interdiction fueling and legitimating them, if they perversely institutionalize the contested and degraded status of the boundaries they limn, they nevertheless stage both sovereign jurisdiction and an aura of sovereign power and awe. Walls thus bear the irony of being mute, material, and prosaic, yet potentially generative of theological awe largely unrelated to their quotidian functions or failures." (Brown 2010: 26)

My contribution takes the link between borders and control and the symbolic, even theological dimension of the border as a point of departure to analyze the subtle and affective ways of "doing" the sovereign nation and excluding the Other through discursive and visual means.

The loss of control

"The night that Germany lost control." Below this headline is a subheadline: "What happened on the 4th of September 2015? Which intentions, mishaps, and misunderstandings lead to hundreds of thousands of refugees entering the country? A protocol." In these lines, DIE ZEIT insinuates that a suspension of the Dublin agreement and the influx of refugees are equivalent to a loss of sovereignty over the German national territory and state. Moreover, the "border opening" happened under tremendous pressure and somewhat accidentally; it did not occur intentionally and in a rational and controlled

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way. Therefore, the argument goes, it is a sign of bad government. DIE ZEIT joins the ranks of those who claim that the so-called "border-opening" led to an uncontrolled influx of unknown, i.e., not classified/classifiable and potentially harmful people into the country.

The cover sparked my interest because it is marked by internal tension and epitomizes societal and political frictions, which since 2015 worked their way from the margins of right-wing extremism to the center of the German middle-class. DIE ZEIT addresses the liberal upper-middle-class and prides itself on its intellectual stance. Therefore, the article was received with surprise and anger, as it ran counter to the coverage of many left-wing mainstream media in 2015/2016. Funke and Nakschbandi (2017) report that the title "The night that Germany lost control" was also fiercely contested by DIE ZEIT's editorial staff, as it was considered an ingratiation with right-wing populists by evoking a myth of defeat, even the abandonment of the magazine's own identity. The front page is both symptom of and actanct in a broader context where the German upper-middle-class struggles to define its relation to the political (far-)right-wing.

Numerous scholars have analyzed discursive constructions and representations of refugees and migrants as unwanted Others in different settings (for a wide range of contexts, see Fürsich 2010; Khosravinik 2010; Powell 2011; Friese 2017). Language is a powerful instrument, and imagery exerts an additional affective effect beyond the rational and the rationalizable. The consequences of narratives and imagery do not remain in the linguistic domain but have very practical repercussions. The visual representation of refugees is an integral component of how the refugee Other is created and perpetuated. In this contribution, I focus on the front page's affective dimension by including the headlines, the cover image, and the cover's overall composition. I argue that to uncover securitizing processes' affective dimension, scholarly analysis needs to attend to the subtle and less obvious influences such as those provided through visualizations and visual imageries.

To a certain degree, reading an image is idiosyncratic yet at the same time informed by and situated in a broader historical context and what might be termed 'seeing rules' and viewing habits. We interpret images against the background of our socialization, upbringing, and the discourses that surround us. A photograph in a newspaper is not neutral or documentary, but it is itself a "message" (Barthes 1977: 15). Photographers arrange and compose their image and provide an interpretation of reality, a representation, a sym-

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bol that represents something else. Neither they nor news magazines such as DIE ZEIT who use these images can determine a specific and exclusive reading of the picture; they can suggest a dominant preferred reading for the viewer/reader to evaluate. The following section looks at how DIE ZEIT arranges image and text on its front page to elicit a preferred reading.

First, the front page is dominated by a strong visual imaginary. The cover image interacts with the headline "The night…"; both reciprocally constitute each other. It is evident that the message of the text and the content of the image belong together. At first glance, the cover image stands in stark contrast to the text's message. There is no noticeable loss of control in the picture, no raging masses.

Second, the protagonists and the setting. The photograph itself shows a group of five, presumably a family: two women wearing headscarves and a bearded man pushing a baby buggy with two toddlers. The picture shows the family in a delocalized border zone, neither here nor there. They are on a highway, walking on the emergency lane. A large truck drives by; it is an inhospitable and surreal environment. We know nothing about them, but we can guess that they are on their way to the German border. It is dark; the scenery is bathed in dim red light.

Third, interaction. The adults do not look at the camera. We cannot see their faces; they do not look us in the eye. Their lack of interaction with the viewer is irritating. They move before us as by-standers and observers; they are in a hurry, they walk quickly. The look in their eyes is directed straight ahead, with their eyes firmly fixed on the goal. However, they do not seem happy and hopeful but exhausted and demoralized. In their socio-psychological analysis of images of refugees in Australian media outlets, Bleiker et al. (2013) argue that portrait pictures showing only one person who looks directly into the camera elicit the most compassion in the observer. Photos of groups, on the contrary, create an emotional distance between the observer and the subject. This empathy effect decreases with every additional person in the picture and the persons' direction of view (see Bleiker et al. 2013: 404). The pattern is even effective when children are part of the image (cf. Schober 2021). As a result, DIE ZEIT's cover image is unlikely to engender compassion or sympathy in the observer, as it features five persons in the picture, and none of them looks at the camera. By making their lives, personalities, and fates exchangeable through media representation, they are deprived of their subjectivities and rendered almost invisible. In her book *Precarious Life*,

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Judith Butler discusses the kinds of lives that are visible in public life, the "publicly acknowledged field of appearance." She claims: "Those who remain faceless or whose faces are presented to us as so many symbols of evil, authorize us to become senseless before those lives we have eradicated, and whose grievability is indefinitely postponed" (Butler 2004: XVIII).

Four, the colors. The image has been visibly post-edited; colors have been enhanced or altered, and contrast increased to achieve a striking effect. The family is bathed in a red, dim light; the children's faces remain dark; they are not recognizable. The women wear headscarves, the archetypical marker of difference and focal point of "culture clashes" in Germany and "the West" more generally (Özcan 2013). The headscarves appear dark red as well. Psychological effects and cultural-historical symbolism of the red color lie beyond this article's scope, yet suffice to say that the color red is also associated with imaginaries of power, violence, seduction, and danger. The family embodies a looming threat and should not be trusted.

There are other colors in the image: The woman's jacket on the left forms a bright yellow spot of color. It is not a cheerful yellow, yet it stands out in the specific way the title page is assembled. The jacket's yellow is reflected in two other instances. First, part of the subheadline is written in yellow: "What happened on 4 September 2015?" An apparent link between the female refugee with the yellow jacket and the big question mark is thus established—what happened, and how could it come that far? Second, there is a yellow box on the right side of the title page with a police cap on top. It informs about an article in DIE ZEIT's dossier: "Attention, attention, this is the police! Officials talk about their everyday life: emergency calls, burglaries—and suddenly also terror". This box and the article it features are not related to the title story about refugees and Germany's "loss of control." However, it establishes a visual connection via the yellow color and the picture's framing by the police cap. Together with the phrase "and suddenly also terror," these features suggest a specific and biased reading of the title page. The yellow elements on the front page interact, creating a direct link between otherwise independent stories: the everyday life of policing terror and other crime, and the refugees who irregularly cross the border.

Put in a broader context, this image differs considerably from the mainly positive visual narrative which dominated German liberal mainstream media in the immediate aftermath of the "summer of migration." Until then, pictures of refugees prevailed who arrived at daylight and sunshine at Ger-

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man and Austrian train stations. They were shown as being relieved, happy, thankful, often filled with incredulous amazement, and overwhelmed by the enthusiastic welcome and helpfulness which was bestowed on them. The family on the cover of DIE ZEIT does not come at daylight, but it is a dark night, and it is chilly; one of the women has a blanket wrapped around her shoulders against the cold. They are tired, exhausted, desperate yet determined. While the image thwarts DIE ZEIT readers' viewing habits by deviating from "welcome culture" iconography, it also differs significantly from negative depictions of refugees. As mentioned before, the image does not show an actual loss of control or anarchy at the border. The family itself represents no obvious security threat to "Us", but it symbolizes a what-if, a looming potentiality.

To summarize: Judging from its composition and its location on the title page, the cover image is not intended to elicit empathy among DIE ZEIT's readers. It serves to amplify the message of the article it accompanies: the temporary loss of control and sovereignty due to the "border opening" and the influx of refugees. While a press image underlining an article's message is not news in itself, the next section broadens the scope to consider the image's ambiguity within a fragile and contingent context.

The holy family effect

Images are polyvalent and ambiguous; they can be filled with different meanings, but their range of preferred interpretations is also contingent upon historically transmitted ideas and imaginations. Like any image, visual representations of refugees are not neutral, depicting an objective truth. Our reading and interpretation of images build upon existing knowledge. Centuries of art and cultural history have shaped our viewing habits and have taught us, even subconsciously, how to recognize the stranger, the refugee, the migrant as cultural figurations. Contemporary media draw upon this world of images and use it for their storylines or their political agenda. The depiction of refugees, thus, follows specific iconographic rules: "photographic portrayals of refugees are, in our day, extremely abundant. Most readers have probably seen such photographs, and most of us have a strong visual sense of what 'a refugee' looks like" (Malkki 1995: 9, quoted in Wright 2002).

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The refugee and the forced migrant have many precedents in Western art history. Terence Wright argues that, Christian iconography is an essential source of contemporary media representations of refugees. He claims "that refugee images not only have their roots in Christian iconography, but that images perpetuating this visual tradition are reproduced and broadcast instinctively—possibly having a subliminal effect on the viewer" (Wright 2002: 54). Wright distinguishes four categories of images with biblical origins, among them the Holy Family's flight into Egypt, where the link to the visual representation of the refugee is often made explicit (Wright 2002: 57). The Holy Family is a prominent motif of political art protesting migration policies. In 2005, street artist Banksy famously (and allegedly) painted a "Christmas Card" where Joseph's and the pregnant Mary's journey is strangely interrupted by the wall separating Israel and the West Bank. The "Christmas Card" uses explicit biblical references which anyone with a basic knowledge of Christianity can recognize and classify, as Fischer claims: "The anti-barrier message is clear, but it can function only by way of cultural memory: Without knowledge of the Nativity story, the image means nothing [...]" (Fischer 2014: 149).

The biblical meta-story elevates mundane activities to the level of grand narratives. Thereby, it also posits them within a moral and ethical framework. Wright suggests that "we may consider the iconography of the visual image in the West as belonging to a wider set of moral codes and conventions" (Wright 2002: 54), including a moral obligation to feel and to react. Consequently, a refugee family walking on the highway in 2015 recalls the biblical story of the Holy Family that seeks refuge but is refused and sent away, finally ending up in a stable. We know how the biblical story continues, and we also recognize the moral obligation that arises from it. The Holy Family tale teaches us a lesson about charity, solidarity, about helping and protecting the weak and the poor. It is an outstanding example for the assumption that "an image has the potential to induce the viewer to relate it to a visual tradition of much greater length than the immediate news setting" (Wright 2002: 59). But why are we as readers less likely to be inclined, or even prevented, from interpreting the image as a visual metaphor of the Holy Family—and to draw the appropriate conclusions?

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The unease oft the middle classes

Readers of DIE ZEIT are educated; they are expected to recognize the biblical metaphor. Yet, the front page does not convey a message of charity and solidarity, but the opposite. To get the article's message across, DIE ZEIT must ensure that the family is not interpreted as a metaphor of the Holy Family seeking refuge. DIE ZEIT is not a sensation-seeking tabloid that would bomb its readers with stereotypical images of threatening intruders or faceless mass migration moving in on "us," of "dehumanizing visual patterns [which] directly feed into the politics of fear […]" (Bleiker et al. 2013: 399). Readers of DIE ZEIT would be somewhat repulsed by blunt tabloid-like imagery. As outlined the image is polyvalent and ambivalent. In conclusion, I identify elements that account for the image's "security" reading epitomizing the border-control nexus.

First, the link between refugees and a loss of control and sovereignty is rendered quasi-natural through the way it is embedded into an overarching interpretative framework. I argue with Vida Bajc (2011) that the cover image is placed within a "security meta-frame". For Bajc, a security meta-frame provides a framework for interpretation as a security threat that dominates all other possible frames. Alternative readings are ruled out or become less likely. If the image itself can be subjected to ambivalent readings, the security meta frame provided by both the police cap in the yellow box and the headline "The night that Germany lost control" establishes a dominant reading: This group of refugees calls upon the reader to interpret it in terms of an irregular border-crossing; their intrusion results from political failure. The image of the moving family foreshadows Germany's imminent loss of control. They are both harbingers and actors of this loss of control.

Second, the image's inherent ambivalence makes the family a "public icon" epitomizing what Mitchell (2015) terms the "historical uncanny". By adapting the literary and aesthetic concept of the uncanny as "the genre of ambiguity par excellence" (Mitchell 2015: 195) to factual historical events, he seeks to understand the ambiguity, insecurity, and uncertainty that accompany "an event that is collectively understood to mark a turning point or significant moment in a historical period" (Mitchell 2015: 196). The picture of the family, published one year after the "border opening", echoes its ambivalent reading in the aftermath of the historical event of 2015. It embodies uncertainty regarding questions of trust in leadership, (lack of) good governance,

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hospitality, and hostility, and an uncanny feeling that "we" should have seen this (literally) coming towards "us".

Third, images are intended to produce an affective effect. The cover image's appellative function urges us to react and to feel in a certain way, which is linked to its status as an icon of the uncanny. It is in this affective effect where the bordering practice of externalizing the refugee Other becomes salient. When refugees appear as a source of insecurity, as potential risks threatening "our home", it becomes almost impossible to empathize with them. Flam and Doerr claim that "those who generate specific visuals or texts expect their viewers to feel or at least be already familiar with or, alternatively, wish to impose specific feeling rules or an emotional regime on their viewers" (Flam/Doerr 2015: 229; cf. Hochschild 1979). On the front page, such an emotional regime is established. It marks the family as an object of fear. Yet, it is not a fear of the Other itself, but the emotional regime moves the focus from "them" to "us" and on what their intrusion might bring for "us".

The family is not threatening in itself, but as a messenger of the loss of control, they "remind us, irritatingly, infuriatingly and horrifyingly, of the (incurable?) vulnerability of our own position and of the endemic fragility of our hard-won well-being" (Bauman 2016: 16). Instead of reproducing the Christian narrative of charity and humanitarianism, DIE ZEIT's cover foreshadows a very different ending for the family that differs diametrically from the biblical narration. Moreover, the focus moves to "us", to "our home"; it is not on their plight. DIE ZEIT releases the observer from any moral obligation to empathize and to help. This reminds of Gerrard's argument about the imagery of refugees that is intended to appall the observer: "Thus, any humanitarian ethic evoked through shocking imagery (…) is superseded by security and safety threats and fear for oneself and one's community through the explicit narration of the evil 'Other'" (Gerrard 2017: 884).

In conclusion, I suggest that the cover eloquently captures the unease of the liberal middle-classes and their struggle of defining their political stance in times of the "refugee crisis". A homology exists in the link between the visualization of the loss of control and the middle-class's unease. The front page represents a figuration that appeals precisely to a German middle-class' ambiguity that oscillates between the two poles of moral obligation towards the deserving and their subjective feeling of insecurity. In fact, it assists in sharpening the blurry boundary between the deserving and the

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undeserving. Readers of DIE ZEIT are middle-class liberals whose self-image tends to be marked by a general empathy for and a humanitarian stance towards refugees and forced migrants. Since the night of New Year's Eve in Cologne and the upsurge in right-wing extremism all over Western Europe, their empathy has increasingly turned to indifference at best or xenophobia at worst (Arendt/Brosius/Hauck 2017; Borneman/Ghassem-Fachandi 2017). Right-wing populism and far-right thoughts appeared to be gradually seeping into mainstream discourses and have become increasingly socially acceptable.

This fear is directed at the uncanny that may turn against "us" anytime. Thus, the cover page functions as a catalyst for a moral panic that calls for the border in order to regain a subjective feeling of security. Gerrard suggests that "there is the potentiality to border the 'pain of Others' through a recognition of their pain, if the narration rests upon fear and territorial imagined communities of nationhood" (Gerrard 2017: 887). The refugee family's fear, suffering, and desperation are overridden by a politicized framing that helps create and reproduce a politics of fear of the refugee Other and the threatened Self. The national border's security promise is restored at the refugees' expense by establishing distance towards the undeserving and redirecting the focus to the own threatened existence.

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