

**The Interaction  
between the Asylum Policies of the Visegrád Group and International and  
EU Obligations**

**Synopsis of PhD Dissertation**

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## 9. List of publications of the author on the subject of the thesis

- 1) Amouri, Baya. "The pushback practice in Hungary: Legalising the illegal?" *International journal of migration studies: Studi Emigrazione*, LIX, n. 226, 2022, pp.283-298.
- 2) Amouri, Baya. "The Visegrád Countries and Western Balkans: Main Cooperation Areas on Migration Issues." *The Migration Conference 2020 Proceedings: Migration and Integration*, edited by Ibrahim Sirkeci & Merita Zulfiu Alili, Transnational Press London, 2020, pp. 157-162.
- 3) Amouri, Baya. "the impacts of cultural, religious, and ethical factors on legal regulations related to migration : special focus on the Visegrád group." In: *Jog-erkölcs-kultúra : értékdilemmák és identitások a jogrendszerekben*, (10), 2020, pp. 11-25.
- 4) Amouri, Baya. "The 1956 Hungarian refugee emergency and the United States : inventing resettlement criteria? In: *Acta Universitatis Szegediensis : forum : publicationes doctorandorum juridicorum*, (10), 2020, pp. 15-23.
- 5) Baya Amouri. "The Visegrád's migration policy: Coalition or a separation in disguise? Special focus on the European migrant crisis." In :*A Jogtudomány Sajátossága - Doktorandusz Konferencia: Doktori Műhelytanulmányok*, 2019, pp. 333 -347.
- 6) Amouri, Baya. "The Interaction Between the EU And V4 Countries on the European Refugee Crisis." *The Visegrád Group facing New Challenges*, edited by Garai Nikolett, Institute for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Budapest, 2018, pp. 4-17.

Title of presentation: Les centres de Traitement des Migrants en Afrique du Nord du point de vue Théorique et Pratiques. [ Migrant Processing Centers in North Africa from a Theoretical and Practical Perspective ]

5) 2019, Debrecen, Hungary  
Conference title: XXII. Tavaszi Szel Konferencia (Spring Wind Conference) organized by Debrecen University  
Title of presentation: The Hungarian Migration Policy And Eu Migration Policy: Compliance Or Conflict? (special Focus On The European Migrant crisis)

6) 2018, Győr, Hungary  
Conference title: Jogtudományi Széleskörű Konferencia (peculiarity of jurisprudence Conference) organized by Szechenyi Istvan University Postgraduate Doctoral School of Law and Political Sciences.  
Title of presentation: "The Visegrad's migration policy: Coalition or a separation in disguise? (Special focus on the European migrant crisis)"

7) 2018, Budapest, Hungary  
Conference title: "The Visegrad Group Facing New Challenges" conference organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade in cooperation with the Institute for Foreign Affairs and Trade .  
Title of presentation: The Interaction between the EU and V4 Countries on the European Refugee Crisis

## 8. List of summer/winter schools/academy on the subject of the thesis

1) Athens, Greece, 20-26 July, 2020, Online  
Summer school title: 2020 Migration Summer School (MIGSS)  
Precarious integration? Migrants, Refugees, Rights & Policies.

2) Istanbul, Turkey, 29 January- 3 February 2018.  
Winter academy title: Winter Academy of International Law (WAIL). 2018  
II. Refugee Law in Istanbul: Current Challenges to 1951 Geneva Convention.

The thesis discusses the highly debated issue of asylum policy in the Visegrad group (Hungary, Poland, Czechia, and Slovakia). The year 2015-16 will be remembered as the year when an unprecedented number of asylum seekers arrived in the EU, putting several EU Member States under intense pressure regarding their national capacities to process and accommodate asylum seekers. Therefore, the issue of dealing with asylum seekers has dominated Western headlines, calling into question the EU's asylum and refugee policies. Several points are at the root of the distortions in the EU asylum system and explain many of the tensions and divisions among EU Member States when it comes to addressing asylum challenges.

The Visegrad group took a strong and distinct stance on the hotly debated issue. The group's position principally contradicted the open-door policy attributed to other EU countries such as Germany and Sweden, and as a result, the four countries and their suggestions sparked interest throughout Europe and the world. A variety of new policy proposals were made in all four countries to stem the influx of asylum seekers. Despite the fact that the policy change's orientation was similar across the four countries, the policy instruments chosen, the tools and mechanisms developed for their implementation, as well as the style and content of policy actors attempting to legitimize public discourses, differed. The V4 group appears to have enacted restrictive asylum policies.

## 2. Hypothesis and research questions

Following the 2015-16 refugee crisis, the V4 countries enacted restrictive asylum policies in order to protect their national security, public order, and cultural identity. However, it appears that the V4 countries failed to strike a fair balance between their legitimate national interests and their EU and international obligations related to the protection of asylum seekers. Notably, the introduction of unilateral, sovereign solutions was often not in compliance with international obligations undertaken by the V4 countries, alongside the EU asylum acquis. The conformity evaluation of the V4 countries' asylum policies with undertaken international obligations, and with the relevant EU acquis, in the spirit of a 'joined up approach' to the European protection of fundamental rights, reveals a lack of compliance.  
This thesis focuses on asylum seekers' protection and their right to seek asylum in the V4 countries. The research questions for this thesis are formulated as follows:

while ignoring fundamental rights could reflect the state's attempt to avoid certain of its legal responsibility. This serves to 'minimize or avoid responsibilities, obstructing rather than facilitating access to international protection.'

Partnership with sending countries does not exonerate states from their *non-refoulement* and related obligations, both under general customary law and in accordance with the relevant international treaties. It is dangerous to 'normalize' the extreme features of policies that restrict asylum seeking, especially in countries guided by human rights principles. The discussed abuses in four countries were *de facto* border control methods that could not be presented, in most of the cases, as isolated incidents carried out by fringe elements. In any case, the asylum policy of the V4 countries should not be based on abuses of human rights or disregard for EU asylum standards. Restrictive asylum policies risk not only violating EU and IRL, but also undermining efforts to develop a comprehensive and coordinated approach to dealing with asylum seekers.

#### **7. List of conferences where the author gave a presentation on the subject of the thesis**

1) 2020, Bratislava, Slovakia- online

Conference title: International Legal Conference "The Law of the Future - The Future of Law" organized by the Faculty of Law of the Pan-European University.

Title of presentation: "The Future of the Practice of push back in the Visegrád Group: Legalizing the Illegal?"

2) 2020, Skopje, North Macedonia, online

Conference title: International Migration Conference TMC2020.

Title of presentation: The Visegrád Countries and Western Balkans: Main Cooperation Areas on Migration Issues".

3) 2019, Szeged, Hungary

Conference title: JOG-ERKÖLCS-KULTÚRA Konferencia organized by the Doctoral School of the Faculty of Law and Political Sciences of the University of Szeged.

Title of presentation: The Impacts of Cultural, Religious, and Ethical Factors on Legal Regulations related to Migration : Special Focus on the Visegrád Group.

4) 2019, Tunis, Tunisia

Conference title: "Les migrations internationales en Afrique du Nord organized by the Association Nationale des Familles d'Emigrés"

Question 1: What is the reasoning behind the V4 countries' restrictive asylum policies?

By answering this question, the thesis seeks to provide an overview of the key reasons behind the V4's restrictive asylum policy. Since the 2015-16 refugee crisis, the V4 group has been widely criticized from all sides, including EU institutions and other EU Member States, for its lack of solidarity; however, little effort has been made to truly understand why those countries are restricting their asylum and refugee policy. That's why it's important to go beyond the rhetoric and get to the facts and realities of this restrictiveness. It makes more sense to look for factors generally believed to influence asylum policy at the regional or state level as individual host governments are still regarded as 'the agents primarily responsible for refugee policies' even in the EU, especially that the Common European Asylum System has failed because of the growing challenges that Member States have faced in the aftermath of a significant increase in the number of asylum applications.

The V4 group has advanced political, ideological, and cultural explanations for the states' willingness to reduce the capacity to admit asylum seekers and recognized refugees, this has been a prominent argument among governments favouring restrictive asylum policies. Besides that, the V4 group supported the policy of externalization of the outsourcing of asylum policies to third countries. The general changes in asylum policies and asylum legislation in the V4 group will be identified and discussed in the thesis. Since the refugee crisis of 2015-16, the evolution of the V4 countries' rules on asylum and borders can be represented as a story of continuous tightening of access to territory and asylum procedures.

Question 2: To what extent are the V4's asylum policies compliant with EU and international obligations?

The thesis will question the legality of certain legal and practical measures enacted in the aftermath of the 2015-16 refugee crisis, such as the denial and deterrence of access to asylum procedures, detention, and push-back of asylum seekers. Indeed, certain amendments to the V4 group' asylum legislation, as well as the enactment of new legislation, demonstrate a significant incompatibility between national, EU, and international rule of law regarding the fundamental rights and status of asylum seekers. Because of the restrictive nature of post-crisis asylum policies, it appears that there is a lack of national protection of asylum seekers' fundamental rights in the V4 group in some cases. Besides, the practice of the V4 countries revealed a rather restrictive application and interpretation of international instruments that apply directly or indirectly to asylum seekers.

Question 3: What is V4's position on the Global Compact on Refugees?

It has been argued that the 2015-16 refugee crisis, as well as the need to outline a series of short- and long-term measures to address upcoming refugee crises, was one of the factors that pushed the Global Compact for Refugees' adoption. It seems necessary to analyse the position and approach taken by the V4 group with regard to this soft non-binding instrument. By examining the V4 group's position on the Compact we tested, on the one hand, the degree of unification of the V4 countries as a group toward asylum issues, and on the other, the extent to which the Compact could make a difference in government policy and practice, and whether it is ultimately improving asylum seekers' protection.

Question 4: To what extent can the V4 asylum policy influence the development of new EU asylum policy?

The different EU Member States' positions on asylum policy created political tension throughout the EU. The restrictive asylum policy taken by some Member States, including the V4 group, have already had some success in the EU, elevating the issue to the top of the agenda. It is impossible to deny that the V4 group has a clear vision and shared agenda for the future of their asylum policy. The group is more than just a policy recipient in the EU; it is also a policy shaper in the field of asylum. The group was successful in promoting the concept of 'flexibility' or 'effective solidarity' as a comprehensive asylum strategy in the V4 group and throughout the EU.

This regional cooperation contributes to the ambition of influencing the EU's present and near future on asylum issues. In the EU and elsewhere, there is a growing trend toward more restrictive asylum policies. Strict controls are implemented through various tactics such as visa regimes, carrier sanctions, and 'push-back' operations by EU Member State border authorities, to deter asylum seekers from accessing EU Member State territory to access asylum procedures and claim asylum.

Question 5: How can the V4 group improve the alignment of international treaties and existing asylum policy?

To avoid undermining the international regime for refugee protection, it is essential to ensure that states' legitimate security interests are consistent with all of their obligations under international treaties to which they are parties, and that border controls do not indiscriminately affect asylum seekers in need of international protection. Ensuring that the rights granted to asylum seekers under EU and international law are fully respected on the

*Part of the V4 group's asylum policy should be reconsidered and reassessed.*

The V4 has evolved into an influential and constructive actor at the EU level, with the ability to significantly shape EU policy. It is within this context that, the V4 group succeeded in promoting the term 'flexible solidarity.' This success can be seen in the inclusion of this concept in the proposal of New Pact on Migration and Asylum. In line with the V4's restrictive stance, the EU is developing concrete measures to protect Europe's security and strengthen the EU's external borders control.

The group promotes 'the art of disagreement' on issues of asylum, and its position has raised the bloc's profile in the EU and contributed to the perception that it is primarily a protest group. In other words, the crisis gave the group new impetus, attracting unprecedented attention on the European level and raising expectations about its performance both within the Group and among partners.

Since border security has taken precedence over access to asylum, the V4 asylum policy is, for the most part, overly defensive and under protective. Border restrictions continue to prevent some asylum seekers from claiming asylum. If they are admitted to the territories, they will face even longer waits for claims to be processed, as well as discriminatory restrictions and violations of certain rights, as discussed in previous chapters. Without a doubt, several new measures, and laws adopted by the four countries, have widened protection gaps, and further restricted the already limited options for asylum seekers, forcing them into even more dangerous forms of irregular migration via human smugglers. Tighten access to asylum seekers will have a negative impact. Indeed, externalizing national borders and lowering the quality of asylum processing may allow countries to avoid their legal obligation to provide protection. The creation of physical distance, whether through exit control, disembarkation platforms, holding sites, or international reception camps, contributes, to some extent, to 'irresponsibility' through diffusion.

The current asylum policy advocated by the V4 group appears to be lacking in that it does not work out a well-balanced solution to help correctly identify the person in true need of international protection from other irregular migrants who abuse asylum and seek to enter in irregular manner. National law and policies that externalize asylum responsibilities could endanger the efficient admissibility of asylum claims. Asylum seeking is a fundamental human right that must be respected by states; accordingly, any policy implemented to avoid this legal obligation is a violation of international law. The externalization of asylum policy

political choice, but it also reflects indigenous people's will to protect their national culture and identity.

The V4 group defends a 'Fortress Europe' and highlights the importance of concentrating on the 'external dimension' of EU asylum policy, as well as seeking alternatives outside of the EU. This approach is heavily reliant on strengthening EU external border protection and deploying cooperation or partnerships with origin and transit countries as a tool for addressing the root causes of displacement. In this context, the four countries acknowledged that the asylum issues could not be resolved without cooperation with the countries along the Balkan migratory route. Throughout and after the refugee crisis, the group brought the Western Balkans agenda into the spotlight and maintained that more effort should be directed toward supporting their accession to the EU. This has the potential to reduce irregular migration and create safe asylum channels.

The group emphasizes the importance of implementing a more effective system for returning third-country nationals who do not have the legal right to remain in the EU Member States. Otherwise, there can be no credible EU asylum policy. Furthermore, the group works to develop the policy of 'claiming asylum from outside' through various external cooperation schemes. This policy suggests that processing of asylum seekers could take place outside of EU borders. From the V4 perspective, this policy or strategy is needed not only to protect the EU's security, national identity, and culture but also to reduce 'bogus asylum seeker.' The rationale behind this strategy is that during the 2015-16 refugee crisis, a large number of 'newcomers' to the EU were not genuine asylum seekers fleeing persecution, but rather irregular migrants seeking a better life.

The Visegrád group asylum approach cannot be ignored. The regional coalition has responded to the 2015-16 refugee crisis by an unexpectedly consistent position. The group increasingly cooperates on asylum issues and speaks as a bloc. Arguably, the V4 group's involvement in discussions about the 2015-16 refugee crisis and reform of the Common European Asylum System contributed to the perception of the group as an alliance with many common interests. It is becoming increasingly clear that the V4 group in the EU is more than just a policy recipient; it is also a policy shaper. This regional cooperation contends it has the potential to influence the EU's current and future asylum policies. On a global scale, the role of the V4 in the GCR negotiations and their eventual role in influencing the Compact's content have been notable.

one hand, while maintaining national security, cultural and religious identity on the other, appears to be a 'difficult formula' in the context of the V4 group. In the context of the V4 group, it appears that there is no balanced approach focusing on both national security, public order, and national identity protection on the one hand, and international protection on the other. Recognizing that state security and international protection are complementary and mutually reinforcing, and that asylum seekers 'protection can be reconciled with state security interests,' is essential.

### **3. Methodology**

This thesis presented a policy and legal approach to the protection of asylum seekers in the V4 group. It has been conducted primarily from an explanatory perspective, drawing on existing literature such as doctrine, jurisprudence, and other legal sources of international law such as treaties, conventions, and the pertinent secondary sources of EU law such as directives, regulations, as applicable. It was carried out in an empirically qualitative manner under the premise of positivist epistemology. Data from the literature on the international refugee law, EU asylum policy, and V4 country asylum policies were gathered and analysed using qualitative methods.

Thus, content analysis has been used to conduct a systematic analysis of qualitative data. The goal in this case is to describe how the V4 countries have developed restrictive policies on asylum policy since the 2015-16 refugee crisis, as well as to discuss the points of divergence and convergence between the four countries' policies. It is important to mention that the focus has been placed on each of the V4 countries separately. However, the disparity between some aspects of their asylum policy has been highlighted at times, while it has been overlooked at others. In other words, the V4 group has been viewed as a deviant case throughout the dissertation because it appears to be the only group in the EU that rejects the open door asylum policy during the 2015-16 refugee crisis. This position has put the V4 in the spotlight and demonstrated publicly the group's repeated opposition to the open-door policy, making the group a meaningful targeted study case. Additionally, it has examined the extent to which these policies are in full compliance with EU and international norms and standards.

Secondary sources were massively used, but also primary sources which have included UN and EU documentation, as well as V4 government publications, official statements by leaders in the V4 countries, official publications and interviews in national media, public

speeches and appearances, transcripts of speeches addressing governments, parliaments, and cabinets, and official documents such as the joint statements of the V4 group, as applicable.

The thesis has covered, on the one hand, an overview of these four countries' national legislation, and, on the other, the V4 official speeches and documents from early 2015 to December 2021. These sources were an important component of the evidential value required for this study. The use of content analysis is important because, researchers can get material on decision-making without interviewing the decision-makers. As it can be challenging for the academic researcher to interview directly heads of states and government representatives, the analysis of the official statements is the preferred alternative to collect data on the official stances and opinions of such elites. The limitation of this method is the limited availability of material and the fact that it does not provide primary data to the researcher. Furthermore, the language barrier is difficult to overcome because we are dealing with four different countries and languages. In addition, this thesis will not be based on fieldwork or questionnaires.

The development of this thesis has drawn on the neorealists, social constructivists, nationalists, and Copenhagen schools of thought to interpret the V4's asylum policy. From the point of view of the realist approach, the state plays the key role of a guardian of the 'national interest' and security in the international arena. Its principal mission is to make every effort and the potential to protect its sovereignty and increase its power. Thus, the actions of states cannot be judged by universal moral standards. This school of thought could help explain why the V4 countries perceived the 2015-16 refugee crisis and the EU-imposed supranational solution as a threat to their sovereignty and territorial integrity. In light of this and according to this school of thought, state interests and nothing else determine the asylum policy of a given country.

Social constructivism is a useful tool for comprehending the reasons why the V4 group rejected an open door policy. From the constructivist perspective, international migration in the post-communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe has undergone a historical evolution. Hungary, Poland, Czechia, and Slovakia became a space for new and dynamic international population movements. This has changed the once predominant character of the V4 group as 'sending' migrant countries into 'sending and receiving' ones. So what is new is that these countries have themselves become the destination for significant population flows. Based on the constructivist narrative, the lack of historical experience with asylum and migration and the socialist past made the societies of the Visegrád region 'less welcoming to

It is absolutely essential to explain why these restrictions, in part, are not necessarily

negative, but rather contribute to the strengthening of security and combating the root causes of asylum seeking. This does not justify the V4 group's breach of some of its IRL and EU-derived obligations. The direct or indirect breach of an international obligation that affects the right to seek asylum should not be overlooked. Preventing such violations will be important step toward improving the system of asylum seeker protection in the V4 group.

A part of the V4 group's asylum policy should be reconsidered and reassessed. A balance should be achieved between the need to protect the fundamental rights of asylum seekers and states' interest in protecting their sovereignty to the greatest extent possible. Strategic rethinking about the future of international protection while respecting the state's choice to externalize asylum and capacity to regulate access to its territory is required. There is a lot more that can be done.

*Part of the V4 group's asylum policy should not be overlooked.*

The essence of the Visegrád group's asylum policies can be summed up in three short sentences: securitization of national territory; protection of cultural and religious identity; and externalization of asylum policy.

The V4 countries opposed any supranational developments or solutions that limit state sovereignty. Asylum policy is interpreted, therefore, as being somehow intrinsic to what it is to be a nation. A sovereign state, according to the conclusions of the V4 group, has the right to its own definition of solidarity and establishment of rules for the acceptance or rejection of asylum seekers. That is why, any solution to asylum issues at the EU level that does not place the sovereignty of the Member States at the centre of its debate and does not respect the states' rights to prioritize the safety and security of their own citizens will not be considered. The four countries' asylum policy aims to preserve homogeneous cultural and religious identity. As a result, asylum policies cannot be developed in isolation from its cultural and religious context.

The Visegrád group's asylum policies are more selective than restrictive. What exactly does this indicate? The V4 countries are not against asylum in general, but rather against specific types of asylum seekers. They are reluctant to accept asylum seekers from different cultural and religious backgrounds. Ultimately, this type of selective asylum policy is a

## 5.2. Shedding light on an unorthodox asylum policy

The thesis highlights the Visegrád Group's asylum policy, which exemplifies a nonconformist and somewhat 'rebel' sub-regional group within the EU when it comes to both implementing EU asylum policies and shaping – or at times obstructing – EU law- and policymaking in this domain.

## 5.3. Highlighting multi-layered and complex topic

One of the goals of the thesis is to analyse the efforts of the V4 as a group and profoundly scrutinize relevant policy and legal changes in each of the four countries concerned following the 2015-16 refugee crisis, in light of international and EU law standards on asylum and beyond.

## 5.4. Holistic approach

The thesis showed the 'true colours' and compatibility of these V4 policies with external-international and European -legal rules binding on the four countries, while also offering future avenues of reconciliation of the opposing legal regimes as a way forward.

## 5.5. Structured recommendations

Far from the wooden language (*langue de bois*), this thesis offered realistic and applicable recommendations. If only one or two of these recommendations are implemented in practice, they could serve to improve the asylum policy of the V4 countries.

## 6. Scientific results

This thesis studied the asylum policies of the V4 group both during and after the 2015-16 refugee crisis. One could draw the conclusion that neither the V4 asylum policy, the EU law, nor the IRL are complete failures. Both have their own set of strengths, weaknesses, as well as their own list of accomplishments. It's crucial, but not sufficient, to analyse the inconsistencies between IRL, the existing EU asylum acquis, and national asylum laws and policies in the V4 group is important. The thesis attempted not only to identify shortcomings in the V4 asylum policy that affect the right to seek asylum in specific cases, but also to take a neutral stance and investigate the essence of the V4 group's restrictive asylum policies, which is seen as, in large part, contrary to the four countries' obligations under IRL and the existing EU asylum acquis.

foreigners', including asylum seekers and refugees. Because they were less prepared to receive asylum seekers, as well as in order to defend their ethnicity, nationality, and maintain their cultural and religious identities, the four countries have enacted restrictive asylum policies.

Nationalism is another school of thought that was used to comprehend the V4's asylum policy. Nationalist discourses typically work to dehumanize asylum seekers in order to justify stricter border protection measures and the ensuing isolation of this group from the nation-state. According to this school of thought, borders serve to designate sovereign zones in accordance with supposed cultural similarities and norms, making it feasible to separate people who 'belong' from those who do not. This emphasis on 'security,' which includes growing funding for border control, the employment of military troops and upgraded surveillance technologies, and stricter laws on unlawful entry, represents a 'rebordering' of the state. This 'rebordering' comprises a shift toward policing, which is justified by discourses of 'dangerous mobilities', and it serves to separate the 'unwanted from the wanted', excluding people who are deemed to be threatening (such unlawful asylum seekers) from within the state. The thesis will show that following the 2015-16 refugee crisis, many discourses and practices about asylum seekers in the visegrád countries can be interpreted as nationalistic in nature, i.e., by 'protecting' a sovereign state and upholding border control. As a result, border security measures, safety precautions, and surveillance techniques have increased, which has an impact on the right to seek asylum.

Lastly, the asylum policy of the V4 was analysed using the Copenhagen school of thought and the securitization theory. Securitization, which was first introduced to the security studies agenda by the so-called Copenhagen School of Security Studies, is when a securitizing actor invokes the rhetoric of an existential threat on a topic in order to elevate it from the realm of regular politics to that of emergency politics, where any appropriate measure can be taken to mitigate the threat. Following the refugee crisis in 2015–16, the politics of the V4 countries - in terms of both their policies and rhetoric- can be characterized in the framework of securitization and protection of national and cultural identity. Accordingly, asylum policies are frequently justified and shaped by considerations of public security and cultural and religious identity.

#### 4. Structure the thesis and demarcation

The thesis is divided into seven chapters, which are divided into several sub-chapters. The first chapter, which serves as an introduction, covered the choice of subject, objective of the thesis, hypotheses; the research question; the research methodology; structure and demarcation of the thesis; and the outline of the subsequent chapters.

The second chapter of the thesis attempted to cut through the complexity of international refugee law by outlining its current legal and normative framework and exploring the interdisciplinary interactions between international refugee law, international human rights law, and international criminal law. This chapter, which provides a general international background, is absolutely necessary before discussing the V4 group's asylum policy in its EU and national context.

The third chapter covered the organizational framework of the EU's asylum and refugee policy as well as the organizational framework of the V4 asylum policies. The second and third chapters are crucial because this thesis is predicated on the assumption that V4 asylum policy cannot be thoroughly studied unless it is contextualized in relation to other regimes, both EU and international.

The fourth chapter examined how the 2015-16 refugee crisis influenced Visegrad' asylum policies. It concentrated on the various factors that led the four countries to adopt a somewhat restrictive asylum policy and reject the open-door policy. Then, it examined the different legal measures and practical actions related to asylum policy that the V4 group implemented, at the national level, in the aftermath of the 2015-16 refugee crisis. Lastly, it demonstrated how the V4 group supports policies and practices that seek to externalize asylum policy.

The fifth chapter questioned the legality of certain legal and practical measures enacted in the aftermath of the 2015-16 refugee crisis, as well as their compatibility with the Visegrad group's EU and international obligations.

The sixth chapter revealed the V4 groups' position on GCR and identified some of its potential legal and political implications, if any.

The last chapter, chapter seven, was a summary and findings of the entire thesis, based upon the research question and secondary questions posed at the outset. It made an attempt to propose some *de lege ferenda* proposals.

#### 5. Contributions of the thesis

##### 5.1. Conceptual clarity

Three demarcations—conceptual, geographic, and temporal—guided the thesis. Conceptually, the focus of this thesis was on international protection rather than on migration in general. While there is some overlap, it is important to keep categories of migrants separated as we cannot assume that all movements across international borders raise the same issues. 'Asylum seekers' and 'refugees' are not 'migrants', and this distinction is essential. It would be assumed for the sake of this thesis that those rejected at the V4 group's border were, in fact, seeking asylum. It should be noted, however, that some of them would probably not meet the criteria for refugee status if admitted to the national territory.

Geographically, this thesis concentrated on asylum seekers in the V4 group. It would attempt to capture the geographical context of the V4 group, with the caveat that it would be awardedly EU-centric. This would be achieved by investigating and integrating various legal disciplines, such as international law, EU law, and the V4 group's domestic law

The temporal demarcation was the 2015-16 refugee crisis. The study would thus highlight the recent regulations and legislation, as well as several amendments to existing asylum laws that have been implemented in the V4 group in the aftermath of the 2015-16 refugee crisis. In this thesis, the term 'Refugee Crisis of 2015-16, referred to the period beginning in January 2015 when 1.3 million people sought asylum in Europe, the highest number since World War II. The term 'crisis' is not neutral. It was, however, used to situate this work within the discourse that has developed around this catchphrase in the media, the public, and most importantly in academia. According to some academics, the crisis stems not from the arrival of 'wave of people,' but rather from the failure to deal with external pressures that have caused the number of asylum seekers to skyrocket, and from the failure to build a fully functional common asylum system.

The exact meaning and appropriate use of terminology were emphasized consistently. One of the thesis' accomplishments is the clarification of the well-established legal boundaries between 'asylum seeker' and 'refugee' on the one hand, and 'migrant' and 'irregular migrant' on the other.