



Securitizing Migration in the West

On the ways in which the refugee crisis has been socially
constructed by Europe's far-right

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Abstract: The research focus of this study is to investigate the ways in which the so-called European refugee crisis has been socially constructed as number one urgent matter for the European community in the years between 2015-2017. Noting the unprecedented rise of the public support for far-right parties in the European polls, the goal of this study is to understand and conceptualize the ways in which the refugee crisis has been presented as an existential threat by the right-wing political leaders in the Netherlands, France and Germany, three core European members, which held elections in 2017. This has been done by utilizing the theoretical framework, composed of the Copenhagen School, as well as the categorization framework which builds upon the results from previous literature on the topic of the securitization of migration. In addition, by utilizing critical discourse analysis this study probes the hypothesis that regardless of the magnitude of the crisis, the securitizing discourses are largely revolving around four overarching realms: the identity, criminological, political and economic realm.

The findings infer that the securitizing discourses of the right-wing leaders in the Netherlands, France and Germany in relation to migration are identical and are revolving around the aforementioned domains, regardless of the countries' political landscape.

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Key words: European refugee crisis, far-right parties, 2017 Elections, securitization of migration, Copenhagen school, critical discourse analysis

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1. Introduction

In the beginning of 2015 Europe's prosperous and untroubled climate, as well as status of paragon for philanthropism and human rights, has been greatly challenged when it faced the biggest migration flows since the end of World War II in the person of the seemingly endless influx of refugees, migrants and asylum seekers from the Middle East. Initially warmly welcomed, the newly arrived migrants have gradually shifted into being addressed both by the general public and the political elite in most of the European countries as constituting a threat to the identity, quality of life, economy, and ultimately, the security of the European citizens.

As a result, a growing backlash against the refugees has gradually stirred up the political arena across all of Europe with xenophobic and nationalistic parties boosting their popularity at record levels in the polls in several core Western European countries, such as France, the Netherlands and Germany. Thereupon, in 2015, the rhetoric of the implementation of extraordinary measures, such as border control, razor-wire fences and even utilizing firearms by the border troops to stem the inflow of migrants, had gradually become the norm. Thus, the European integration had entered a new and more controversial episode of its existence, marked by rising Euroscepticism and an upsurge of radical anti-establishment parties which produced siege mentality discourses, portraying the European states as facing an existential threat in the person of the migrant flows.

In sum, the political scene, which linked together the topics of security, border and migration, had progressively acquired the characteristics of what is known in the field of International Relations as the *securitization of migration*.

1.1 Goal and Research Question

In explaining how the refugee crisis has been socially constructed as an existential threat to the European states by the right-wing politicians and illuminating the importance of discourse as a constitutive foundation of reality, this paper draws upon the securitization theory, developed by the Copenhagen school (Buzan et al. 1998). In addition, by utilizing critical discourse analysis this study analyzes a number of speeches, interviews and political statements within the topic of the European refugee crisis made by the far-right political elites in France, the Netherlands and Germany, three core Western European states which have been traditionally associated with democratic values, tolerance and philanthropism but have nevertheless seen a substantial rise in the public support for the far-right. This serves to

investigate the case of this research- if and how the refugee crisis has been socially constructed to pose an existential threat to the European member states. In addition, this inquiry goes into a dialogue with previous studies done on the topic of the securitization of migration by building on their findings to forge a categorization framework for what to expect initially when analyzing the population of texts selected for this study.

The goal of this study is to critically analyze the discourse, encompassing the securitization of migration between 2015 and 2017, inspect the major themes utilized in the anti-immigrant rhetoric and discern if there is an overlap in the rhetoric used by the far-right leaders in the Netherlands, France and Germany. Therefore, this study investigates the research question on *how the right-wing leaders in the Netherlands, France and Germany have securitized migration by discursively constructing it as a security threat to the EU?*

The reason for focusing on these three states is that they constitute one of the strongest economies in the EU ergo have the potential to exercise significant influence on the entire policy-making apparatus of the Union. Furthermore, all three share the feature of being among the countries of destination, which have admitted the highest number of migrants between 2015 and 2017. As a consequence, rising public support for far-right movements and them potentially occupying the highest echelons of power in their respective states had the capacity to change the socio-political national and international profile of the Netherlands, France and Germany. Such an outcome would have had a monumental impact on the European integration and unity.

It is important to point out that this study is guided by the hypothesis, that regardless of the magnitude of the European refugee crisis the rhetoric of the far-right is virtually identical and can be seen to manifest itself in four overarching realms.

1.2 IR relevance

The topic of security constitutes one of the most prominent areas of research in the field of International Relations by serving as a foundation for a number of its core theories. Among the research areas, dealing with the problem of security, securitization is a subject thoroughly researched and debated throughout the years by various scholars in a list of International Relations journals such as *Review of International Studies*, *The European Journal of International Relations*, *International Political Science and the International Relations Theory and the Politics of European Integration*. Thus, the argument is apparent that securitization as part of the security studies branch is a topic firmly anchored in the field of contemporary International Relations research.

In relation to this paper, its relevance to the field is provided by focusing on how security can be perceived as a socially constructed phenomenon, which different actors can successfully produce and re-produce with the assistance of securitizing speech-acts. Furthermore, even though this study might appear as a comparative study on populism, its primary goal is to study how a global political phenomenon in the person of migration, under the right settings, can impact the socio-political profile of the main actor within International Relations- the state.

The research's significance is determined by the importance of how migration can be presented to pose an existential threat to a referent object in the person of the state. Furthermore, it elucidates how the so-called refugee crisis has been socially constructed and securitized in three different countries and if there are overlapping similarities in their right-wing leaders' securitizing speech acts.

1.3 Content

The structure of this paper proceeds as follows: the theory chapter illustrates a discussion on the theoretical pillars of the Copenhagen school as well as it presents the theoretical framework, which will be utilized in the analysis chapter. Following, the literature review examines the previous research on the topic and most notably the security areas, which have been identified by scholars in the field to be associated with migration and will be used to forge the categorization framework for what to expect initially from the population of texts in the analysis. Next, the methods section outlines the tenets of critical discourse analysis as the selected method of research as well as the choice for material, analyzed later in the analysis. The analysis section investigates and discusses the findings of the discourses, produced by the far-right political leaders in France, Germany and the Netherlands, serving as case-studies for the research puzzle of this paper. The conclusive chapter of the thesis recaps the conclusions drawn from the analysis in relation to the securitization theory and the research question it posed.

2. Theory

As stated in the Introduction chapter, the topic of security constitutes one of the most prominent areas of research in the field of International Relations by serving as a focal point for a number of its core theories. However, this paper takes an alternative angle by perceiving

security as a socially constructed phenomenon, which can be produced and re-produced with the assistance of securitizing discourses. Hence, in this part of the study I will present the securitization theory and how it is favourable in understanding the mechanisms behind the construction and presentation of migrants as a security issue (Ibrahim 2005).

The theory chapter begins by outlining the theoretical foundations of the securitization theory, its key tenets and main debates within it. In addition, it will introduce the main critiques towards the theory as well as an argumentation for why it nevertheless serves as a favourable framework for the goals of this study. Lastly, this chapter will present the theoretical framework, which will be utilized in the analysis section of this paper.

2.1. The Copenhagen School

The topic of the securitization of migration, especially in the context of the European Union, is a topic which has accumulated a wealth of various research on the development of the anti-migration narrative (Marie, 1988; Bigo 2002; Bigo 2002; Huysmans, 2000; Ceyhan and Tsoukala, 2002; Karyotis, 2007). This research has shown that while the securitization of migration in the EU has palpably intensified since the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center in the US, the fortification of borders and the efforts to deter asylum seekers from seeking refuge began much earlier. Initially warmly welcomed via the guest worker system in the years following World War II in the decades that followed migrants have progressively started to be presented through political discourses as constituting one of the main threats, which are weakening the societal homogeneity and ultimately the security of the Western countries.

But what then is *security*? Most classical International Relations theories hold an objectivist ontological stance by framing it as an external social phenomenon, seen exclusively in military terms and set into a pre-existing social world. Hence, security is understood predominantly as state-centric and the emphasis being put on the survival of the state's territorial integrity and the physical safety of its inhabitants (Walt, 1991).

In response to this traditional definition, Barry Buzan and a group of scholars known as the Copenhagen School focused on developing a broader and more coherent concept of security, which includes alternative realms such as economy, society, politics and environment (Peoples and Vaughan-Williams, 2010: 80). This expansion led to a new wave of scientific approaches to security to emerge with the Copenhagen school being at the forefront.

The philosophical cornerstone of the securitization theory is that security must be understood as a speech-act, which not only a securitizing actor labels as an existing issue to pose an

existential threat to a referent object, but frames it as such and by this it eventually brings it into being (Williams: 2003: 512). Thereby, as Peoples and Vaughan-Williams postulate, in order for an issue to be securitized ultimately there is a “seemingly simple formula: *Existential Threat to a Referent Object = A Security Issue*” (2010: 93).

However, securitizing speech-acts alone are not sufficient for an issue to become securitized. There also have to be ‘felicity conditions’, or conditions that increase the likelihood of successful securitization, at hand. These ‘felicity conditions’ are an actual *existential threat* at present, *securitizing actor* in a position of authority and *context*, which builds upon historical connotations of threat, danger and harm (Peoples and Vaughan-Williams, 2010: 96). These conditions will be discussed more in-depth in the following Theoretical Framework chapter and how they will be applied to the case of the securitization of migration.

To summarize, according to the Copenhagen School, security is not a fixed phenomenon but rather a socially constructed one, which favours those actors possessing cultural capital by virtue of their authority, expertise or position in society to make legitimate security claims (Buzan et al. 1998). As such securitization is predominantly seen as a top-down process, in which political elites assume the role of the securitizing actor and frame an issue as an existential threat by dramatizing the need to act urgently and by any means necessary to a target audience, which has to approve the extraordinary measures. The securitization act is completed once the target audience of these speech-acts accepts the “securitizing move”, which in turn facilitates the implementation of extraordinary measures, which may disregard any legal, economic, moral or other considerations (Buzan et al. 1998: 24).

2.2. Critique towards the Copenhagen School

Despite Copenhagen School’s indisputable contribution to security studies, there is still some criticism from academia.

One of them is that it focuses primarily on the linguistic and discursive practices of those political actors, who are deemed to be institutionally legitimate to speak on behalf of the collective (most of the time the state) and omits alternative actors such as media, popular culture, companies, professionals and individuals (McDonald, 2008: 564). Along similar lines, Karyotis outlines that the narrow focus on the speech acts of dominant elites points toward an imbalanced reading of securitization theory in favor of the securitizing actors at the expense of the audience (Karyotis, 2007: 11). This is an important critique since according to the Copenhagen School for securitization to be complete the audience assumes the role of the

ultimate judge as to whether the securitizing act and the emergency action should be accepted or rejected. However, for the purposes of this thesis the audience's response rate will not be studied since it falls outside the scope of this study. Instead, it will focus on these securitizing discourses which are framing migration as an existential threat.

Another vivid critique towards the Copenhagen School is that it focuses primarily on the logic of exception. The criticism here lies in the fact that the Copenhagen School largely disregards the development of a security issue over a period of time as a process and essentially leaves out its full contextual understanding (McDonald, 2008). In consonance with McDonald, Stefano Guzzini openly challenges Wæver's original framework by stating that the procedural character of the original securitization analysis encompasses the notion of speech act as "a process, not a kind of single bombshell event" (2011: 335). This paper will attempt to mitigate this shortcoming of the securitization theory by providing the reader with a background of the context, in which the so-called refugee crisis has been gradually shifted from a humanitarian dilemma to the most prioritized issue on the agenda of the political elite in the EU in 2015. Thus, it will illustrate how by being continuously presented as an existential threat the refugee crisis eventually assumed the status of such.

2.3. Theoretical Framework

By focusing on the creation of discourses through speech acts formed by securitizing actors, the securitization theory is suitable in showcasing the ways, in which an issue such as the refugee crisis can be socially constructed as posing an existential threat to a referent object in the person of the European populations. However, as mentioned in the previous chapter, in order for a securitizing speech-act to be successful there are "felicity conditions", which would greatly increase the likelihood of a successful securitization (Wæver, 2000: 252).

First, there has to be an existential threat, which would legitimate the utilization of extraordinary measures to deter said threat. In the case of the securitization of migration it is important to highlight that migrants do not necessarily have to constitute an existential threat but rather have to be constructed and presented as such with the help of securitizing speech-acts. These speech acts portray migration as a political phenomenon, which directly and indirectly endangers the identity and the very existence of the European states with dynamics such as "cultural flows, economic integration and population movements" (Williams, 2003: 513). Once constructed as an existential threat, the only way to contain migration is by implementing extraordinary measures such as "involving the army, intelligence, and police

forces in migration management, intensifying border controls, increasing counterterrorism activities, installing razor wire, making asylum policy stricter” (Buzan et al. cited in Vezovnik, 2018, 40).

The second requirement is that the securitizing actor “is in position of authority and has enough social and political capital to convince an audience of the existence of this existential threat” (Peoples and Vaughan-Williams, 2010: 93). The securitizing actors, which will be studied in this paper are the leaders of right-wing parties in the Netherlands, France and Germany, who have been enjoying a rising support in the polls in the years between 2015-2017 with more and more people rallying to their banners. By gradually accumulating more influence both domestically and internationally this paper argues that these actors have potent enough authority to actually attempt a securitizing speech-act and have big enough public support to stand behind their call of presenting migrants as a security issue.

Lastly, the third felicity condition is to “present an issue as an existential threat if objects associated with the issue carry historical connotations of threat, dangers and harm, or where a history of hostile sentiments exists (Peoples and Vaughan-Williams, 2010: 96). Human interactions have always been based on the dichotomy of those one can trust and associate oneself with and those who one should fear and who are unlike oneself. With this said, looking at the long history of the rivalry between the Christian civilization and the Islamic world, illustrating the new-coming migrants from the Middle East as ‘them’ who do not belong is an age-old struggle between civilization and barbarism anew.

The analysis section shows in greater detail how the right-wing leaders of the Netherlands, France and Germany have utilized these felicity conditions by continuously portraying migration as an existential issue with the help of the grammar of security. Once the speech-acts have been presented, the analysis will conclude with a discussion of the findings and how they are situated in the theoretical framework, based on the tenets of the securitization theory.

In summary, the Copenhagen School contribution to the securitization of migration finds its relevance by constituting a favourable framework by illuminating the ways, in which influential political actors bring about securitization by presenting the migrant flows as an existential threat and by dramatizing it as having an absolute priority, which in turn justifies the use of extraordinary measures.

3. Literature Review

In order to atone for one of the Copenhagen School's biggest limitations, namely disregarding the context of the social and historical formation of a securitized issue, the literature review will first and foremost present the background of the refugee crisis since it will be consequential within the specific cultural contexts, in which the performatives are realized (Guzzini, 2011: 335). In addition, it will present an overview of the previous research conducted on the topic of the securitization of migration as well as the main factors with which migration has been associated to pose an existential threat.

3.1. Setting the stage

The unprecedented inflow of migrants into the EU has created the perfect opportunity for the rise in popularity for the far-right parties all over Europe and the world. This could be attributed to the fact that this phenomenon combined three main issues- immigration, political corruption of the established political system and security issues, which constitute “the heart of their ideological agenda comprised of nativism, authoritarianism and populism” (Mude, 2017). In such setting, the far-right has effectively started to demonize the third-world newcomers and instrumentalize them as scapegoats onto which to project all contemporary misfortunes of the host countries such as worsening unemployment rates, stagnating economy and increased crime rates to name a few. Thus, the inflow of hundreds of thousands of refugees, asylum seekers and economic migrants into the EU in combination with such discourses has gradually led to the development of nativist and nationalist feelings among the European population. Having achieved this, the European right-wing parties took advantage of having the wind in their sails by instrumentalizing these nativist anxieties to criticize both the national and European politicians who were lacking the determination and decisiveness to deal accordingly with the so called ‘refugee crisis’ by closing off the national borders to third-country nationals.

In such times of political instability and turmoil the British vote to leave the EU alongside the election of Donald Trump as the 45th president of the USA were all events, which have sent shockwaves throughout the entire world, marking the inception of the so-called ‘Trump effect’ and paved the way for right-wing parties to reach bigger audience and to make their securitizing discourses even more vociferous.

In the analysis section, I will present in greater detail how this political environment has impacted the far-right in France, the Netherlands and Germany and the public's opinion on the matter of migration.

3.2. Discourses on the securitization of migration

In this part of the paper, the empirical findings of previous research conducted on the subject of the securitization of migration will be presented and discussed. The literature on the securitization of migration has to a large extent fixed four pivotal axis or realms with which migration has been associated to pose a threat to the referent object, in this case the European population and culture (Bigo, 2000, Huysmans, 2000; Ceyhan and Tsoukala 2002; Karyotis, 2007,).

Although, these realms might be named differently by the different scholars, they all refer to the same four major areas, hence, I will label them with the most common and self-presenting titles, which are as follows: the identity, the criminological, the political and the economic realm.

3.2.1. Identity realm

The identity realm revolves around the claim made by the Copenhagen School that the primary referent object for the securitization of migration is related to situations when states and societies perceive a threat in identity and culture terms (Wæver et al. 1993). In addition, the identity realm is strongly related to the first and third felicity condition, namely the presence of a threat set in a historical context. By revolving heavily around the 'us' versus 'them' dichotomy, which attempts to instigate a form of neo-tribalism, the identity realm perceives the migrant flows as a threat to the host societies' identity and culture. Thus, according to Huysmans discourses representing migration as a cultural challenge to social and political integration have become an important source of mobilizing security rhetoric and institutions (Huysmans, 2000: 765).

In the context of the European refugee crisis, the threat to the European identity was seen in the person of the unparalleled migration of predominantly Muslim population into the European member states and the dangers this influx of migrants posed to the culture and identity of the host country. The host country's political leaders and public have envisioned the presence of the unprecedented number of immigrants from a distinct culture as a challenge to the established

ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic profile. This fear was oftentimes associated with the traditionally higher birth rates of the Muslim immigrant groups vis-à-vis the declining and aging European populations (Lipka and Hackett, 2017). Thereby discourses presenting the refugees as carriers of inferior but dominant genes pitted against the nationals who had superior but recessive genes further emphasized the distinction between ‘us’ and ‘them’ (Karyotis, 2007:9).

3.2.2. Criminological realm

The criminological realm further builds on the ‘us’ versus ‘them’ opposition as well as the first and third felicity condition, but this time the discourses portray the refugees as posing a direct threat to the public order of the host society. This is achieved with migrants being demonized and widely linked to criminal activities such as drug trafficking, illegal trespassing of borders, organized crime and increasingly after 2015 and series of terrorist attacks on European soil with terrorism. The generalization of the stereotype that migrants are inherently suspect of engaging in criminal activities could be attributed to the fact that crimes, committed by foreigners receive larger publicity than the crimes committed by nationals (Karyotis, 2010:10). Thus, the construction of migrants as inherently criminal provides the basis for successful securitization (Bigo, 2002).

In the context of the European refugee crisis the constant threat of increased criminal activities and terrorist attacks has been blamed on the globalization and the open-border policy, which has made it easier for young men to travel swiftly between borders and wage a holy war on the non-believers. Hence, the image of the Muslim migrant as today’s incarnation of the Medieval barbarian, posing a threat to Europe’s open society and virtues, is a particularly potent one. Richard Jackson argues that globalization has come to be seen as the late-modern sociological term for the ‘civilizing process’ and in that respect “terrorism, as a form of barbarism, can be seen as a challenge to the international order and the civilizing process of globalization” (Jackson, 2005: 48).

3.2.3. Political realm

The political realm is tightly linked with the second as well as the first felicity condition which are respectively about the presence of an existential threat and the securitizing actor who is portraying the migrants as a potential political force, which poses a threat to the host countries in a number of ways. One of them, as noted by Karyotis, is when migrants are perceived to be

capable of affecting the bilateral relations between their motherland and the host country with the sending country trying to mobilize its expatriate population to lobby for its interests in the host country's government (2007: 11) The second way, in which the security discourse relates to the political realm, is when the so-called "professionals of security" (Bigo, 2000: 202) such as the police at the national level and Europol at the European level played a fundamental part in constructing and reproducing the securitization discourse on migration, in order to advance their bureaucratic positions and attract more resources. The third and arguably biggest concern for policy-makers relates to the manner, in which migration has an impact on their power positions in terms of challenging their legitimacy and undermining their electoral power.

The discourses that migrants and asylum seekers enter the national borders unchecked has the potential of creating the impression that the government is not effectively ensuring the interests of the people it represents by being incapable of effectively controlling the population flows within the state's territory. As Leitner postulates "vast population movements call into question the very meaning of national boundaries and citizenship" forcing nation states to "deal with such challenges to state power, sovereignty and national identity" (1995: 263). For the governments in power acting indecisively in times of substantial migrant flows could turn out costly in election times when the far-right could instrumentalize migration to bolster their electoral power and ensure their political legitimacy by inciting anti-immigrant, racist and xenophobic narratives in the population.

3.2.4. Economic realm

Following the theoretical framework, the economic realm is linked to the first and the third felicity condition which refers to the influx of migrants perceived to be a destabilizer of the economy and the job market of the host countries. In the context of high unemployment in the host country, the securitization discourse builds on the perception that the migrants put economic burdens on the host countries. As Ceyhan and Tsoukala contend the economic realm revolves around "the correlation between migration and unemployment, the surge of informal economy, the crisis of the welfare state and the urban environmental corrosion" (2002: 24). In the context of the scarcity of social goods such as housing, jobs and health care in synch with the palpable rise of large-scale unemployment, immigrants are perceived as rivals to the national citizens in the labour market. This contributes to *welfare chauvinism*, portraying the migrants as profiteers trying to illegitimately exploit the benefits from the welfare system from a community to which they do not belong (Huysmans, 2000: 768).

It is the link between nationality and welfare entitlements, which encapsulates the essence of welfare chauvinism, which plays a central role in the discourses by the European far-right (Huysmans, 2000: 753). Still recovering from the Eurocrisis in 2008, the European far-right leaders have largely associated the influx of migrants with a source of further economic destabilization and stagnation. Thus, the securitizing discourses in the economic realm paints the refugees not as asylum seekers fleeing from their war-torn homes desperately in need of a shelter and safety but rather as economic migrants, who acknowledge the ongoing crisis as an opportunity to migrate with their families to the prosperous climate of Europe. Furthermore, these discourses outline the influx of economic immigrants drives down the wages and further exacerbates the already high levels of unemployment, while at the same time drives up the cost of housing and other goods. This triggers a widely-shared concern among the host country's population that they eventually will have to compete for the scarce jobs and services with the low-paid immigrants thus even losing job positions to them.

In summary, although the literature on the topic of the securitization of migration indicates that the discourses revolving around the threat of migration to be linked, although not exclusively, to the aforementioned realms, this paper utilizes the findings of the previous research done on the topic of the securitization of migration as a foundation for the framework for what to anticipate initially in the data, which will be analyzed. This framework will be presented in detail in the ensuing methodology section.

4. Methods

Having presented the theoretical framework, which will be utilized in the analysis section and the previous research on the securitization of migration, it is time to turn to the guiding methodological and analytical framework upon which this thesis is based. In this section of this paper I will present this study's method of research, namely critical discourse analysis with its focus on "understanding how language constitutes and produces the world around us" (Lamont, 2015: 92). Furthermore, the selected timeframe and the criteria for selecting the material will be explained. In the closing chapter of this methodology section a discussion of the delimitations of this paper will be presented.

4.1. Method

The method chosen for this study is critical discourse analysis (CDA), which provides the tools, which will help to analyze several of the most fervent anti-migration speeches held by the leaders of the biggest far-right parties in the Netherlands, France and Germany. To borrow the definition of CDA from Hardy et al. it constitutes a “methodology for analyzing social phenomena that is qualitative, interpretative and constructivist” (2004: 19). CDA is “critical” because it aims to reveal the role of discursive practices in the maintenance of the social world, particularly these social relations that involve unequal relations of power. As Van Dijk postulates, critical discourse analysis is principally concerned with the “role of discourse in enacting, reproducing, and resisting social power abuse, dominance and inequality” (1985: 352). Thus, discourse analysis constitutes a technique, which not only understands the content of texts, but it also helps in analyzing the relation of said text to its historical and social context. It is this feature of CDA that ameliorates the Copenhagen School’s shortcoming of focusing predominantly on the logic of exception and omitting the importance of context and the development of an issue overtime. Thus, this paper argues that CDA and the securitization theory constitute an excellent symbiosis in terms of investigating the securitization of migration in the context of the far-right leaders in the Netherlands, France and Germany and how a political phenomenon, which is not necessarily threatening in itself, can be constructed as such through speech-acts. Furthermore, this paper aims to gauge whether there is an overlap in the discourses the aforementioned securitizing actors are producing.

To summarize, regarding this study and the securitization of migration, CDA provides the analytical tools for analyzing the securitizing speech acts of far-right leaders. This is being done by illuminating the processes, involved in the construction and reconstruction of series of meta-narratives that necessitate the need for extraordinary measure through an implicit fear of the “migrant other” as a source of insecurity and uncertainty. All of which, according to the CDA scholars, serves someone’s interest.

4.2. Method’s relevance to the study

The theoretical framework presented above in combination with CDA enables this paper to answer the research question and puzzle by illuminating the ways, in which the migration flows in Europe have been socially constructed as a ‘refugee crisis’ by political elites with the help of securitizing speech-acts. Furthermore, in order for this paper to study its research question more

in-depth, it employs an interpretivist epistemological approach, which is favourable when applied on a research by using qualitative methods, compatible with the constructivist perspective of the thesis.

Furthermore, Halperin and Heath postulate that interpretivism maintains a non-generalizing approach, which fits the purposes of this paper, which are not to generalize its findings but to test the hypothesis that regardless of the magnitude of the “refugee crisis” the right-wing leaders employ largely overlapping discourses, which link migration with the same four realms of threat (2012: 39). Thus, this small-N research study, which compares three different cases, avoids the pitfall of generalizing its findings until the theory has been tested on a large number of cases.

In addition, this study evaluates whether a political phenomenon such as migration translates in the same way across different contexts and applies one theory developed in one case to another context. This Rokkan refers to as ‘micro replication’, which is designed to “test out in other national and cultural settings a proposition already validated in one setting” (1996: 19).

With this said, this paper critically discusses the ways, in which the “refugee crisis” has been gradually constructed overtime as a security threat and how this process has been done in the cases of France, the Netherlands and Germany. The framework in combination with the method of choice make it possible to see a potential convergence or divergence in the ways the securitization has been achieved in all three countries and in the discourses surrounding asylum-seekers, migrants and refugees.

4.3. Timeframe

The timeframe chosen for this study has been set between September 2015 and March 2017. This timeframe has been selected considering that on the 9th of September 2015 Jean-Claude Juncker stated that “the first priority today is and must be tackling the refugee crisis” (Juncker 2015 cited in Standard Eurobarometer 84, 2015: 3). Thus, it could be argued that on this date the refugee crisis has officially been given the status of an emergency issue, which needs to be given highest priority.

The end of the timeframe coincides with the first presidential debate in France, in which the far-right Front National’s candidate for president Marine Le Pen, a figure widely regarded as the embodiment of the populist far-right resurgence, who has openly been calling for establishing anti-European policies and campaigning for an eventual *Frexit* if elected as president of the République française.

4.4. Material and data

With the assistance of the theoretical framework presented above and CDA, this study aims at analyzing a number of speech-acts in the form of interviews, speeches and political statements within the timeframe from September 2015 - March 2017 within the topic of the European migrant crisis and made by the far-right leaders of France, the Netherlands and Germany. The choice for analyzing the speech acts of representatives from the far-right parties from these countries is far from fortuitous. Marine Le Pen with her openly anti-European stance has become the incarnation of the rising popularity of far-right politicians. In the Netherlands, Geert Wilders has scored sweeping success in the polls in the beginning of 2017 with some predicting that he was to win the parliamentary elections later that year (Korteweg, 2017). Frauke Petry and the *Alternative für Deutschland* (AfD) were enjoying an unprecedented support from the German population with some speculating that the far-right German party was to succeed in coming as the third biggest party in the parliamentary elections this September.

Furthermore, this paper argues, that even though these actors were not occupying the highest echelons of power at the moment when the speeches were done, they became more and more influential by attracting substantial public support as well as some moderate parties partially acquiring some of their rhetoric. Drawing from the Theoretical Framework one of the ‘felicity conditions’, which increases the likelihood of a successful securitization is that the securitizing actor needs to be in a position of authority with significant social and political capital to convince a target audience of the existence of an existential threat (Peoples and Vaughan-Williams, 2010: 93). Having fulfilled these requirements, the right-wing leaders of France, the Netherlands and Germany have assumed the roles of ‘security experts’. This self-proclaimed title and the authoritative rhetoric, with which they were portraying migration as an existential threat have managed to attract substantial public support- all factors, which made them assume the role of securitizing actors.

Moreover, because securitization is about speech-acts, the material is chosen on the basis that by utilizing CDA this paper examines the ways, in which language constituted and produced the discourses of the threat of migration within the European context. For the purposes of this inquiry and for expediency, this argument will be illustrated with only a limited number of examples from the speech-acts, which are examined in the analysis section. All the material has been manually coded and narrowed down to those instances, in which migration is the overarching theme and which are held within the aforementioned timeframe. In addition, due

to the method of choice, the data will be made up mostly, but not exclusively, from primary sources in video format in order to avoid any loss in meaning and misinterpretation from third parties. However, when necessary speech transcripts as well as interviews in textual format have been also analyzed in which the securitizing actors in the person of Geert Wilders, Marine Le Pen and Frauke Petry are discussing migration.

For time and space limitations, this paper has relied principally on the available data to be in English and accessible to the wider public. However, due to the fact that some of the material was available only in the native language of the speaker, translation is presented in the form of a footnote. The translation of the selected speeches has been achieved with the assistance of native speakers of the selected languages in order to avoid any loss in meaning and context.

4.5. Delimitations

Since, this study conducts qualitative discourse analysis, it will not aim to evaluate the number of occurrences of certain words or phrases, which appear in the selected population of texts. Instead, the aim of this study is to analyze the speech-acts of the European far-right leaders in regards to migration and whenever a securitizing speech-act, in which migrants are depicted as a threat ensues, this part of the text will be further scrutinized to evaluate what is the discourse said text is constructing.

Thus, it is important to pinpoint that from the very inception of the data analysis the hypothesis of this thesis was that regardless of the magnitude of the European refugee crisis the rhetoric of the far-right leaders was revolving around the four main realms, identified in the literature review. These realms are namely: the identity, the criminological, the political and the economic realm. In addition, I was anticipating that the rhetoric of the different securitizing actors to be identical, regardless of their nationality or domestic political setting. Thus, when conducting this research, the guiding hypothesis was that there would be repetitive pattern of migration being positioned in either of the aforementioned four realms even in the years during the refugee crisis. Had this failed to materialize, my hypothesis would have been proven wrong, indicating that there was a difference in the far-right discourses encompassing migration.

Another delimitation of this paper is that it has not operationalized the target audience's rate of acceptance or rejection of the securitizing speech-acts since it falls outside the area of research of this study. However, bearing in mind the rising public support for the securitizing far-right politicians in France, the Netherlands and Germany it would be an educated guess to assume that the speech-act had the potential to be successful. However, whether the

securitization act has been seen to a completion, remains to be scrutinized in the Analysis chapter.

Having noted its constructionist and interpretivist foundations, the purpose of this study is to critically analyze the speeches of the leaders of the far-right parties in France, the Netherlands and Germany in regards to the securitization of migration in the context of the European refugee crisis. Moreover, this paper will examine how this rhetoric has constructed the image of the refugee as posing an existential threat to the host countries and their populations. Furthermore, it aims to study the securitizing speech acts within the framework of the Copenhagen School and by positioning them in their historical and social context, it will attempt to deduce how the refugee crisis has been successfully securitized and how identical the securitizing narratives are of the far-right leaders in the Netherlands, France and Germany.

5. Analysis

In the analytical section of this paper the rhetoric circulating the securitizing discourses made by surging far-right politicians in the person of PVV's Geert Wilders, FN's Marine Le Pen and AfD's Frauke Petry will be presented in chronological order based on when the states of these actors were to hold their respective elections.

The first country to hold national elections in 2017 was the Netherlands, in which the struggle materialized to be between the conservative premier Mark Rutte and the populist far-right Geert Wilders. If the latter would have won the elections, as the Centre of European Reform had predicted in the beginning of the year by giving him up to 80% chance of success (Korteweg, 2017), the 'populist momentum' would have grown even stronger in the context of the French presidential elections the following month with the leader of FN Marine Le Pen campaigning to become 'France's Trump' (Mude, 2017). This frame could also be applied to the German parliamentary elections in September, in which even though the right-wing AfD, has scored but a third of the support of Angela Merkel's Christian Democratic Union, it has still enjoyed a substantial rise with many arguing that it had the potential of becoming the third biggest party in the parliament. As argued by Goodwin, the far-right groups across Europe were gathering support because they have recognized that "public anxieties over migration, refugees and Islam are much about perceived threats to their cultural security, values and ways of life as they are about welfare states and the distribution of resources" (2015)

The remaining part of this section will critically assess the most prominent speeches made by the leading far-right politicians in the Netherlands, France and Germany. This shall be conducted with the aid of the theoretical framework comprised of CDA and the Copenhagen School's securitization theory as well as the categorization framework for what to expect when analyzing the speech acts. This paper's goal is to analyze these speeches and monitor the securitizing speech acts in the making of the so-called refugee crisis has been constructed, what are the securitizing discourses utilized by the securitizing actors and whether an overlap can be monitored in the narratives used by the far-right leaders in the Netherlands, France and Germany.

5.1. The Netherlands

In the Netherlands, a country long known for "its serene and conciliatory parliamentary culture" (Vossen, 2011: 185), the voice of the leader of the Party for Freedom (PVV) Geert Wilders has become blunter and more vociferous than ever in light of the European refugee crisis. As early as December 1999 he presented to the Dutch parliament a large report of Islamic terrorism and weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East chanting that:

The extremism in the Middle East is a threat to the stability of Europe and the Netherlands. It will even be the most urgent problem of the next ten years since this extremism will also come to the Netherlands as a result of the immigration. This is already happening but everybody is silent about this (Wilders cited in Lammers, 1999:3).

Thus, it can be apparent how since the beginning of his political career Geert Wilder has been perceiving himself as the only one who has the courage to break taboos, face the facts and represent the voice of the Dutch population who are way too fearful of speaking their mind about sensitive topics such as the threat of migration. Hence, from very early on one can monitor Wilders assuming the title of 'security expert', who alone is capable of recognizing the threat, which migration constitutes. This stance of his is visible in the political profile of his party.

The PVV has traditionally been a remarkable aberration from a national populist perspective. Founded in 2006, the PPV cannot be deemed merely as either fascist due to Wilders' close personal and professional relationship with Israel and the US or xenophobic since he has been openly championing women and gay rights (Vossen, 2011: 187). However, Wilders evokes the

image of him being the sole protector of Dutch modernity against Islam, which is the culprit of a number of different problems such as high youth crime rates among the Moroccan population, high unemployment and drop-out rates among Muslims to name a few. Thus, through the increasing presence of Muslims in the Netherlands and the issues associated with them, one can observe the establishment of the historical context of the Dutch being exposed to living with the 'other'.

In light of such events, the European refugee crisis has provided the perfect storm for his popularity among the Dutch population to reach an all-time great. Being widely referred to as the "Dutch Donald Trump" (Frayer, 2017) in an interview for *Europamagazin* on February 12, 2017, Wilders gave an in-depth overview of the ways, in which Islam and European values are incompatible with one another:

Islam and freedom are incomparable. I'm not talking about the people. But I believe that the Islamic ideology is very dangerous. Islam, the word, means submission. Islam as an ideology is not about freedom. Look at all the countries, almost all the countries in the world, where Islam is dominant, you see a total lack of civil society, of rule of law, of freedom for a journalist, or a Christian or a woman even someone who wants to leave Islam- an apostate. So, I believe that in the end of the day, that the influx of more Islam in Europe will cost us our freedom (Wilders, 2017).

From this excerpt, one can monitor a repetitiveness in the narrative, which Wilders has used back in 1999 as the harbinger of Islam becoming the most existential threat the Netherlands and Europe at large will face in the years to come. By presenting all the differences between Islam and the European values, Wilders is essentially constructing the opposition of 'us' versus 'them'. In this example Wilders is linking the European identity and values to its Greco-Roman heritage of civilization, democracy, freedom of speech, tolerance and human rights and in particular associated with the perpetual conflict between Christendom and the Islamic world (Guerrina, 2002). By illustrating the migrants as 'them' who do not belong, Wilders defines the political and cultural boundaries of Europe and shapes its identity towards the outside world (Cederman, 2001).

The aforementioned speech-acts are effectively positioning migration in its historical context as an existential threat to the identity of the Netherlands and the European communities in general. Thus, Wilders has achieved the first and the third felicity condition by accentuating on

the incapability of the migrants to integrate and accommodate according to the European values, which is yet again presenting the migration flows as posing a threat, endangering the survival of the Netherlands.

Building on this rhetoric, on September 16, 2015 in the Dutch Parliament, Wilders made a fiery speech about the European refugee crisis by painting an ominous picture by elucidating that:

ISIS is smuggling thousands of terrorists into Europe. [...] Two out of every 100 Syrian refugees who flee to Europe, according to the minister, are fighters for ISIS, are terrorists. [...] The ticking time bomb threatening us here in the Netherlands. 3,100 last week. Assume this Lebanese minister to be right, then we not only reeled in 3,1000 refugees but also 60 terrorists. In just one week. [...] The pink dream of free traffic of goods and people proves to be the nightmare of free traffic of weapons, criminals and jihadists. Terrorists armed with Kalashnikovs are in our trains looking for infidels to kill. Unchecked. Undisturbed. The security services fail. European governments fail. [...] The Netherlands will become less safe, poorer, and above all less Dutch, because of the *Islamic tsunami* raging over our country” (Wilders, 2015).¹

In this excerpt Wilders continues to construct migration as an existential threat, by addressing the *Islamic tsunami* looming over the Netherlands. The analogy between the refugee influx and the destructive force of nature, which is the tsunami is far from fortuitous and is a potent metaphor, which is central in the arsenal of the far-right politicians. Evoking the image of the tsunami, a natural catastrophe unleashing cataclysmic forces capable of laying waste to entire cities and societies, Wilders established the connection with the natural world by illustrating the destructive nature of the migrant threat.

¹ “ISIS smokkelt duizenden terroristen naar Europa. [...] Twee per 100 Syrische vluchtelingen die naar Europa vluchten zijn, volgens de minister, ISIS soldaten en terroristen. [...] De tikkende tijdbom die ons bedreigt hier in Nederland. 3,100 vorige week. Er van uitgaande dat deze Libanese minister gelijk heeft, dan hebben we niet alleen 3,100 vluchtelingen binnengehaald, maar ook 60 terroristen. In maar 1 week. [...] De roze droom van vrij vervoer van goederen en mensen blijkt de nachtmerrie te zijn van vrij vervoer van wapens, criminelen en jihadisten. Terroristen bewapend met Kalashnikovs zijn in onze treinen, zoekende daar ongelovigen om te vermoorden. Niet gecontroleerd. Onbemoeid. De veiligheidsdiensten vallen. Europese overheden falen. [...] Nederland zal minder veilig, armer en minder Nederlands worden, door de Islamitische tsunami die over ons land raast.”

Furthermore, by talking in apocalyptic terms of the migrant influx as the harbinger of Europe's undoing, Geert Wilders states that:

It is at a *dramatic and decisive moment* in our history that I am addressing you. The Netherlands is confronted with mass Islamic migration. Hundreds of thousands of refugees flee to Europe. This is just the beginning. Every day more arrive. According to the UN many millions. A few hours ago the Hungarian-Serbian border was stormed by "Allahu Akhbar"- shouting thugs armed with bottles, knives and sticks, injuring twenty Hungarian police officers [...] When we have lost the Netherlands in the ongoing invasion? Millions, millions of Syrians, Iraqis, Eritreans, Afghans, North Africans ready to seek their fortunes here (Wilders, 2015).²

Portraying the migration flows as an invasion, threatening the survival of the Netherlands and its innate Christian values is a powerful usage of language illuminating the exceptionality and severity of the situation at hand, which demands an adequate and decisive reaction. Another interesting element from this particular segment of Wilders' speech is the emphasis on the current situation as being a "*dramatic and decisive moment*" which necessitates the immediate implementation of extraordinary security measures in order to answer accordingly the severity of the situation at hand. This very statement about the exceptionality of the crisis and how it needs to be dealt with by all means necessary can be explained from Copenhagen School's perspective on how exceptional situations and key moments are at the spotlight of the securitizing actor's speech-acts.

When it comes to the extraordinary measures which would stem the unprecedented threat, Geert Wilders is addressing borders by saying that:

² Het is op een dramatisch en beslissend moment in onze geschiedenis dat ik het woord tot u richt. Nederland wordt geconfronteerd met een islamitische volksverhuizing. Honderdduizenden migranten stromen naar Europa. En dit is nog maar het begin. Iedere dag komen er meer. Volgens de VN gaat het om miljoenen en miljoenen. Een paar uur geleden werden aan de Hongaars-Servische grens de politie bestormd door Allahu Akbar schreeuwend tuig die met flessen, staven en stokken 20 dienstdoende Hongaarse agenten verwondden, mishandelden. [...] Wanneer heeft Nederland deze invasie verloren? Er staan nog miljoenen Syriërs, Irakezen, Eritreeërs, Afghanen en Noord-Afrikanen klaar om hier hun geluk te komen beproeven.

Only then, will the flux end. Only then will unscrupulous human traffickers lose their incomes. Only then no more people will drown. Let us do what Australia is doing. Send them all back. PM Rutte is not doing all this [...] He neglects his duty. Help the Freedom Party (PVV) to save our country. It is time to close our borders. It is time to come up for our own flag. It is time to choose for the Netherlands (Wilders, 2016).

It is evident from Wilder's rhetoric that the discourse which he is building on equalizing open borders with essentially bringing the Netherlands' own downfall. Thus, borders assume the role of a powerful symbol of representing sovereignty, marking the national identity and protecting the nationals against external threats. Seen from this perspective, borders are perceived as the line which distinguishes 'us' from 'them'. It is a representation of the nation as a whole and leaving them open for massive migration, renders the state's sovereignty and integrity under siege both from the outside and from inside. And seen through the securitization theory's lens closing the borders is the extraordinary measures which would curb the existential threat which migration poses to the Netherlands.

Another way, in which Wilders has been presenting the influx of migrants to constitute a threat to the European nation states and the Netherlands in particular is by causing an enormous strain on the economy of the receiving countries. To accentuate the imminent clash between the Dutch population and the new-coming migrants over the limited welfare provisions and the benefits which the refugees are receiving on a daily basis in comparison with the Dutch natives, Wilders fervently rebuked the government in front of the Dutch Parliament in the Hague by saying that:

Refugees get free housing and preferential treatment. They can visit the dentist for free. They can visit the doctor for free. They can get free hearing aids, free glasses. They can get, if they want, relational therapy. Free education, free legal assistance. On top of that, pocket money. And as if this weren't enough, they can also see football matches for free. Now just look at how the native Dutch are being treated: After our cabinet demolished our economy with many billions in budget cuts and raised taxes, the people will get a meager tip of a billion or so back. For the care of the elderly a trifle is available, after it was wrecked the last couple of

years. Where refugees get everything for free, 40% of our retirees will have to do with less coming year (Wilders, 2015).³

At this point, Wilders has further exacerbated the ‘us’ versus ‘them’ dichotomy by interweaving the economic aspect into the securitizing narrative by painting a classical zero-sum game in which the resources are finite and one’s gain is someone else’s loss.

The excerpts above clearly indicate that Geert Wilders has assumed the role of the securitizing actor, who alone can save the referent object in the person of the Netherlands from the existential threat which migration poses (Buzan et al. 1998). The context of the PPV’s political profile and the high Moroccan population in the Netherlands provide for the historical context of threat in the face of the ‘other’ which can only be ameliorated by the implementation of the extraordinary measures such as closing the national border. In addition, it is evident that when referring to migration Wilders presents the plethora of ways in which migration is threatening the survival of the Netherlands in terms of endangering its identity, heightening the crime rates, the threat of terrorism and driving the economy down.

The next section presents France and Front Nationale’s Marine Le Pen, whose rhetoric echoes to a large extent the one of her Dutch counterpart.

5.2. France

Under the campaign slogan “*Au nom du peuple*” (In the name of the people) Marine Le Pen has been gathering more momentum in public popularity and admiration than ever. Since the 1970s when the party Front National (FN) was established anti-immigration has been the leitmotif of FN’s discourse, ideology and campaigns (Stockemer and Barisione, 2017: 107). But ever since Marine Le Pen took over the presidency of the FN in January 2011 and distanced

³ “Vluchtelingen krijgen gratis onderdak en een voorkeursbehandeling. Zij kunnen gratis naar de tandarts. Zij kunnen gratis naar de dokter. Zij krijgen gratis gehoortoestellen, gratis brillen. Ze kunnen zelfs, als ze willen, relatie therapie krijgen. Gratis opleiding, gratis rechtsbijstand. Daar boven op ook nog eens zakgeld. En als dat nog niet genoeg is, kunnen ze ook gratis naar voetbalwedstrijden. En kijk nu eens hoe de Nederlanders behandeld wordt. Nadat ons cabinet ons land verwoest heeft met miljarden in budgettaire bezuinigingen en hogere belastingen, krijgen de mensen een magere fooi van een miljard of zo terug. Voor de zorg van de oudere is er weinig beschikbaar, nadat het vernietigd was de afgelopen jaren. Waar vluchtelingen alles gratis krijgen, hebben 40% van onze gepensioneerden het te doen met minder komend jaar.”

herself from the party's previous vehement homophobic and racist remarks, resulting in FN's unprecedented success in a number of fronts. Such are an increase of over 4 times increased memberships by December 2014, electoral success (in the 2014 and 2015 European, departmental and regional elections, recording its best results ever by winning roughly 25% of the popular vote in each) and public opinion (from polls reflecting a 20% decrease of individuals who consider the FN a 'danger'")(Stockemer and Barisione, 2017: 100-101).

Another factor which contributed to FN's rise in popularity was the fact that in the past five years, during president Hollande's presidency France has weathered a palpable economic stagnation, increasing unemployment rates and failure to increase the standard of living. After Hollande's decision not to run for a second term a power vacuum manifested itself which prompted the French to turn their gaze to an alternative ruling party. A woman from Hayange, a northeast town, in which unemployment has risen by 75% in the last decade, told the BBC news that she was voting for the Front National, despite having some misgivings about their policies: "I'm not totally in favour of them, but it's my way of saying that I'm not happy with today's politics" (Galbreath, 2017: 9).

In the face of a number of horrific events such as the terrorist attacks in Paris and Nice among the population of already hard-hit economically areas, the threat of terrorism and the migrant crisis have unleashed strong fears of being overwhelmed by the outsiders, which has effectively fed into years of FN's anti-immigrant rhetoric (Walt, 2017: 38). Hence, it is in this context that the securitization of migration has become the leitmotif of Marine Le Pen's presidential campaign. But how has FN's leader presented migration to pose an existential threat to the referent object, in the person of France?

Le Pen's narrative is very similar to Wilders' by stating that Islam is incompatible with the democratic Christian values, firmly grounded in the core of the European member states' Constitution and laws. In a speech during her presidential campaign the leader of FN stated that "they speak their own language and follow their own rules and traditions. They have simply recreated their own locality-based communities abroad" (Le Pen as cited in McGuinness, 2017).

This excerpt illuminates Le Pen's discourse of the incapability of the migrant to adapt to the laws, governing French society as well as the unwillingness to integrate into the host country by learning the local language and start living according to the French Constitution. Thus, Le Pen is constructing the "clash of cultures" narrative, which shows how migrants are incapable to accommodate to Western values and are posing a threat to the very identity of France by indicating the robustness of their culture and the difficulty they have to live peacefully with their neighbors. This discourse refers directly to the identity realm and to the third felicity

condition of establishing the historical context of threat and cultural friction in which the securitizing act is to play out.

This narrative is even more evident in the speech, with which she launched her campaign for the presidential elections in February 2017 in the city of Lyon, in which Le Pen categorically stated that the French people:

do not want to live under the rule or threat of Islamic fundamentalism. They are looking to impose on us gender discrimination in public places, full body veils or not, prayer rooms in the workplace, prayers in the streets, huge mosques or the submission of women, forbidden to wear skirts, have a job or go to the bar. *No French, no Republican, no women* with her freedom and dignity at heart, can accept it (Le Pen cited in Farand, 2017)⁴.

This ethnocentric worldview translates into a potent discourse that instigates anti-foreigner and anti-immigrant feelings among the population which under the slogan ‘France of the French’ has the ambition of restoring France to the proud, steadfast and purely French country it used to be. In addition, by assuming the authority to speak on behalf of all the French and how they will not tolerate and accept the Muslims cultural quirks showcases how Le Pen assumes the role of the securitizing actor who constructs a perceived threat as being existential and mobilizes a collective ‘us’ against a supposedly threatening ‘them’. Such discourses of danger have the ability to draw communities together by emphasizing the differences between the members of the community and those on the outside. Thus, the second felicity condition has been achieved.

Furthermore, in a meeting of party activists in Marseille in September 2016, Marine Le Pen further highlighted the threat which migrants are posing to the security of France with:

Migrants are now wandering in our neighborhoods, around the train stations or in the slums, the cause for France of immense security and public hygiene

⁴ ”ne voulons pas vivre sous le joug ou la menace du fondamentalisme islamiste .

Ils cherchent à nous imposer pêle-mêle , la contestation de la mixité dans les lieux publics ,le voile intégral ou non , des salles de prière dans les entreprises , les priers de rues , les mosquées cathedrales , la soumission de la femme , interdites de jupes , de travail , ou de bistrot .

Cela , aucun français , aucun républicain , aucune femme attachée à sa dignité et à sa liberté ne peut l’accepter.”

problems. [...] We are now becoming accustomed to terrorism (Le Pen as cited in Nossiter, 2015).

By comparing jihadists settling in France by exploiting the stream of protection- and shelter-needing refugees and asylum seekers to “wolves in a henhouse”, Le Pen continued by saying that “Islamic fundamentalism is attacking us at home, planting itself in some neighborhoods and vulnerable minds” (Le Pen as cited in Farand, 2017). Here, Le Pen is portraying strong *siege mentality* which has manifested itself among the French population further boosting the ethnocentric worldview it promotes in which the nation “should be primarily reserved for people of a certain type: individuals who share the same ethnicity, history, religion and identity” (Hainsworth, 2008: 12). The metaphor of “planting itself in some neighborhood and vulnerable minds” is especially powerful as it connotes migrants as a ticking time-bomb, which is only a matter of time to explode and see the downfall of France. Thus, Le Pen accentuates on the exceptionality of the threat and also achieves the first felicity condition of the presence of said threat. But what are the extraordinary measures which according to Le Pen could tackle the existential threat which migration poses?

Echoing Geert Wilders, Marine Le Pen has also sounded her adherence for the establishment of borders with France taking back the control of its borders being an ever-present argument in her rhetoric. According to her, the border control encapsulates one of the core constituents of the state’s sovereignty and how it plays a central role in halting unchecked migration and terrorism is one of the key rhetoric statements by right-wing politicians. The discourse of taking back control over their own borders, because “without borders, there’s no protection or security” (Le Pen as cited in Tasch, 2015) has become one of the main pillars in the right-wing leaders’ rhetoric over the past three years.

In a warning that jihadist fighters can take advantage of the lack of border security, Le Pen indicated the importance of border control as being “essential in the fight against terrorism”(Le Pen as cited in Parfitt, 2017) and the need for France to have national borders because “we can’t count on Greece to deal with the flow of migrants” (Le Pen as cited in Batchelor, 2017). What these statements insinuate is that Le Pen highlights the incapability of the EU’s southernmost member states to halt the influx of migrants, fostering an ‘us against the world’ mentality that the French people alone are capable to defend their territory from the stream of refugees. And the means to do this is by taking back control over France’s borders. Without borders, according to Le Pen, the French are left vulnerable to uncontrolled immigration and the constant threat of terrorist attacks.

When addressing the ways in which migration can impact France, Le Pen stated that “France is about to be submerged in a terrifying wave of migrants who represent only a burden” and “bring filth, crime, poverty and Islamic terrorism” (Le Pen as cited in Nossiter, 2015). Once again, by evoking the topos of a *terrifying wave*, the image of the influx of migrants as a destructive force of nature is conjured. Water metaphors seem to be prevalent in the securitizing discourses in which the securitizing actors are depicting migration as an existential threat. This is due to the reason that it brings about the dehumanization of the migrants by constituting them as an out of control, agentless, unwanted natural disaster (Baker et al., 2008). Furthermore, with the aforementioned segments from interviews, Le Pen managed to encompass all the different aspects of the migration threat. Thus, by securitizing it on the basis of identity, criminological, political and economic basis, Le Pen essentially showcased the diversity of ways in which migration posed a threat to the European member states.

In summary, Marine Le Pen’s securitizing discourse mirrors that of Geert Wilders, regardless of the fact that the two countries have different domestic political environment. Both right-wing politicians assume the role of securitizing actors who speak on behalf of their people by illuminated the different ways in which migration constitutes an existential threat and by closing the border being the only means to halt this threat.

The final case study presents the state which has accepted the biggest number of migrants and in which Chancellor Angela Merkel with a historical and widely dividing speech decided to accept more than one million refugees. Enter Germany.

5.3. Germany

In the face of the growing difficulty of the member-states with external EU borders to process asylum-seekers and their applications, the Dublin Regulation, which “designated the first state of entry as the responsible authority for assessing an asylum-seekers’ application” (Carrera, 2015: 1), proved to be widely unsuccessful. As a result, Chancellor Angela Merkel made the decision to open Germany’s borders and admit around one million refugees thus bypassing the Regulation. Later, in interviews and press statements, she explained that her decision was due to “the sense of commitment to human rights and the responsibility for the victims of the refugee crisis” (Banai and Kreide, 2017: 904) which every European member state should share. This very decision resulted in a powerful political mobilization, especially in the populist camp, who were fiercely against the admission of migrants and refugees with

the immigrants being depicted to constitute both short-term and long-term security threat to the public and social order (Banai and Kreide, 2017: 904). Thus, the context in which the securitizing act was to play out as well as the portrayal of migration as a security threat is set. Having achieved the first felicity condition for successful securitization, there remains to be a securitizing actor who will enforce speech-acts to construct migration as posing an existential threat to the referent object.

Amidst such settings the right-wing Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) found itself with rejuvenated strength and popularity after being predominantly on the sidelines ever since its inception in 2013. The so-called *Professorenpartei* (Party of professors), which started off as a single-issue Eurosceptic movement, has found its moment in the summer of 2015 with the refugee crisis and being the political party to openly criticize Merkel's liberal refugee policy with bringing more than a million refugees into the country.

It is then in the beginning of 2017 when the leader of the AfD Frauke Petry joined forces with the most notorious European far-right leaders and hosted the "European counter summit" in Koblenz, Germany. Among the guests were Marine Le Pen and Geert Wilders and the ambition of the conference being to put on a united front in a decisive year of high-stakes elections, claiming that 2017 to be "the year of the patriotic spring" (The Local, 2017).

With a rhetoric which echoes that of her far-right colleagues in France and the Netherlands in an interview for Channel 4, Petry noted that the Germans:

have to face the fact that we have a clash of cultures. Not only in Germany, but in France, in Belgium, we see that many values of the Islam, especially of radical denominations of the Islam do not agree with our European values and regulations. [...] There is a number of characteristics that do not fit into Europe. First of all, look at how women are treated in Islamic countries that has nothing to do with the right of the women and girls in Germany and in Europe. The same with the Sharia and our Grundgesetz rather democratic values. They don't fit together, they don't agree with each other. Simply look at the fact that crossing a border will not get rid of your cultural background" (Petry, 2016).

In this excerpt, Petry is taking a vivid anti-immigration stance, which constructs the rhetoric that the refugees and Germans are incompatible and is simply not possible to live together on a cultural level. Moreover, she further builds the anti-migration discourse by exasperating the

differences between ‘us’ and ‘them’ and they would have been welcomed to Germany if they were willing to leave behind their ‘obsolete’ beliefs and integrate into the German society:

Scientists have found that in many ways Islam has not been modernized in any way. It got stuck in the Middle Ages, basically [...] We have to accept that many of these views do not fit into a democratic context (Petry cited in Schwartz, 2017).

This feeling of incompatibility has increased dramatically in response to the 2015/2016 New Year’s Eve sexual assaults all over Germany as well as the Berlin attacks in December 2016, which prompted Frauke Petry to proclaim ominously that Germany is “no longer safe” and that the “horror has arrived” (Petry, 2016). Thus, Petry has essentially built the link between the terrorist and the migrant as inherently criminal thus rendering them virtually interchangeable. This discourse is even more potent in the context of the Muslim minority living in Germany which although constituting a relatively small part of the population (5%), the public discourse oftentimes perceives them as being part of a much larger Muslim population across Europe and in the countries bordering Europe to the South (Banai and Kreide, 2017: 909). Moreover, the events on September 11, further contributed to a highly-charged atmosphere against the Muslim population in Germany with the exposure of the role of the “Hamburg Cell” in the attack thus providing the perfect environment for securitization discourses, depicting Islam and its followers as adverse to German society and values, to flourish (Banai and Kreide, 2017: 909). By having established the historical context in which the securitization act is playing out, Petry has achieved the third felicity condition which would greatly enhance the success of the securitization act.

Furthermore, in an interview for Channel 4 News Frauke Petry regarded the mass migration of refugees as a political force by highlighting the means to stop it:

We have to face the fact that at least within the last couple of years, through illegal and mass migration, we have increasing problem that has been there for long time and yes, securing borders, controlling who is coming in is part of that analysis we have to do” (Petry, 2016).

Here once again the language of borders is vivid in the securitizing speech acts of Petry. The discourse of borders is yet again brought up as the extraordinary measure which would halt the migrant flows and thus securing the survival of Germany. By securing the national borders and by monitoring the population movements passing through them, Frauke Petry further denoted that by taking back the control over the German borders, diminishes the possibilities for more potential terrorists entering the country “we have to basically achieve that there is no more moving in of potential terrorists into Europe and that is a problem, according to our security agencies “ (Petry, 2016).

Moreover, in an interview for Deutsche Welle Petry further accentuated the importance of Germany taking back control over its borders and them constituting the line between ‘us’ and ‘them’ by saying:

Securing German borders, controlling them as now 26 out of 28 European states decided to do without Germany’s help is something we have to talk about. And if it’s a democratic party raising the problem that our border guards, our policemen are not allowed to do their job because the government basically refuses to take responsibility for our national borders, that is not a party like the AfD posing the problem but our government (Petry, 2016).

In this excerpt Petry takes a shot at the ruling government by calling the policy for securing the national borders ineffective and that the government is not functioning as it is supposed to.

Going even further, in a widely controversial interview for Mannheimer Morgen when asked how a border policeman should react in the case of illegal trespassing, Petry answered that:

He must prevent illegal border crossing, if need be putting firearm to use. “That is what the law says (...) No policeman wants to shoot at a refugee. I do not want that either. But the application of force of arms ranks among ultima ratio. What is crucial is that we do not let it get to this point and restrict the influx of refugees through treaties with Austria and border controls at the external borders of the EU” (Petry cited in Becker, 2016).⁵

⁵ ” Er muss den illegalen Grenzübertritt verhindern, notfalls auch von der Schusswaffe Gebrauch machen. So steht es im Gesetz. Kein Polizist will auf einen Flüchtling schießen. Ich will das auch nicht. Aber zur Ultima Ratio gehört der Einsatz von Waffengewalt. Entscheidend ist, dass wir es so weit nicht kommen

This segment illuminates the extraordinary measures, which Frauke Petry is willing to employ in the face of the existential threat which the refugee crisis is posing to the German population and Europe. With the border being the incarnation of security itself, closing them and defending them by any means necessary Petry stresses the existential threat, which the migrants constitute. Thus, Petry, assuming the role of the securitizing actor, is presenting the extraordinary measures needed to curb the existential threat embodied by migration. It is clear that in order to mitigate the threat, Petry is willing to trespass certain legal and moral considerations (Buzan et al. 1998).

In an interview for Russia Today (RT) Petry addresses the failed realization of the initial hope of Angela Merkel that the migrants, constituting a cheap and much needed labour force, which would reinvigorate Germany's economy:

This fairytale of migrants coming to Germany and being the enriching factor for the economy has been proven to be false and there are no concepts from our government on how to deal with the situation (Petry, 2016).

As can be seen from this analysis, Frauke Petry's rhetoric in regards to the refugee crisis resonates with the discourses constructed by Marine Le Pen and Geert Wilders. It is interesting to note, however, that regardless of Petry's strong securitizing speech-acts which present migration as an existential threat, she is striving not to be associated with other far-right movements and parties by claiming that "Tolerance towards or cooperation with members of extreme parties has no place in the AfD" (Petry, 2016). This can be explained due to Germany's political culture and the National Socialist legacy it carries which has made it extremely difficult for right-wing rhetoric, which is always in danger of being associated with Hitler, to break through and gather electoral support (Grimm, 2015: 268).

In summary, when analyzing the speech-acts of AfD's Frauke Petry one can deduce that she has assumed the role of the securitizing actor, who speaks on behalf of the population and builds the image of the migrants as posing an existential threat to the referent object, in this case Germany. This is being done by illuminating the plethora of ways in which migration is

lassen und über Abkommen mit Österreich und Kontrollen an EU-Außengrenzen den Flüchtlingszustrom bremsen."

threatening in terms of corrupting the German identity, being widely associated with terrorism and rape and the delusion that they would boost the German economy. Thus, according to her, the only way to deal with this threat is by taking control over the borders and if necessary, use firearms as the extraordinary measures, which would subdue it.

In the following section I will present a discussion of the findings and how they relate to the broader topic on the securitization of migration by answering the research question.

5.4. Discussion of the findings

Having presented the findings of the analysis of the speeches and political statements by Marine Le Pen, Geert Wilders and Frauke Petry, this section discusses what these findings mean for the securitization of migration in the context of the European refugee crisis and how the securitizing discourses have been produced and re-produced by continuously presenting migration to constitute a security threat, demanding the deployment of extraordinary measures to be handled with.

To answer this study's research question: the results from the analysis section indicate that Geert Wilders, Marine Le Pen and Frauke Petry have assumed the roles of securitizing actors by constructing migration to pose an existential threat to the survival of their respective states and the EU in general. This has been done with the assistance of statistics, powerful images and metaphors, which relied chiefly to instigate emotions such as fear and hatred towards the immigrants as well as hope that the nation will be able to survive this existential threat if lead by a steadfast leader who can be resolute and act decisively in turbulent times. Furthermore, as the analysis suggests, regardless of the political climate in their respective countries as well as the parties' profile, Wilders, Le Pen and Petry have all been using identical discourses, which were presenting migration to pose an existential threat to their states and the European communities, in the same overlapping realms of the identity, criminological, political and economic realm. From the analysis, one can observe how the aforementioned securitizing actors have been constructing the migrants as posing a threat to their nation's very identity by building on the 'us' versus 'them' dichotomy, presenting them as inherent criminals and potential terrorists, who have come to exploit Europe's economy.

The consistent portrayal of the influx of refugees as posing an existential threat to the European member states was done by utilizing a variety of linguistic techniques and evocation of powerful images and metaphors. Thus, migration has been repositioned in the security realm

by the sheer magnitude of the phenomenon and the myriad ways in which it has been presented to constitute an existential threat to Europe.

However, regardless that all three felicity conditions of having a clear-cut presentation of an existential threat, a persuasive securitizing actor who talks on behalf of the nation and a historical context, in which the new existential threat is operating anew the securitizing act in the Netherlands, France and Germany did not come to fruition. Coming in short in their respective elections and not managing to implement the extraordinary measures they have been calling for during their electoral campaigns renders the securitizing act incomplete.

In summary, the results from the analysis showcase how a phenomenon such as migration can effectively be presented as a security threat, which necessitates the implementation of extraordinary measures. Alas, if the securitizing actor is not occupying the highest echelons of power, even when having the felicity conditions at hand, the securitizing act would fail to be completed.

6. Conclusion

This paper has investigated the securitizing speech-acts, which the far-right political leaders in the Netherlands, France and Germany have utilized to instigate potent anti-migration discourses, which have circulated in the European political scene since the intensification of the refugee crisis in 2015. What this study has shown is that the influx of third-country nationals from predominantly Middle Eastern countries has been repeatedly securitized and portrayed by the aforementioned leaders as posing an existential threat to the security of the European Union in terms of the identity, criminological, political and economic realm. Thus, migration has gradually shifted its position from being considered as a humanitarian dilemma to one widely associated with security threats and terrorism.

With the help of discourse analysis on several of the most emblematic speeches made by France's Marine Le Pen, the Netherlands's Geert Wilders and Germany's Frauke Petry, the findings infer that the discourses by the aforementioned far-right political leaders, which were built around the securitization of migration, are strikingly similar only altering the possible argumentation strategies in accordance to the context and public policies. However, this study has indicated that regardless of the magnitude of the refugee crisis, the discourses on the securitization of migration still essentially revolve around the aforementioned realms with an avid Eurosceptic rhetoric coupled with the evocation of the 'language of borders' serving as the

delimitations for demarcating the ‘inside’ from the ‘outside’ and the ‘us’ from the ‘them’, becoming palpable.

Overall, this thesis has contributed to the field of International Relations and particularly to the field of security studies and the securitization of migration by investigating the discourses, utilized by right-wing leaders within the Copenhagen School’s securitization theory and how a political phenomenon can be socially constructed to pose an existential threat to the referent object.

The 2017 elections presented an unparalleled opportunity for the far-right to occupy the highest political positions in their respective states. However, in the Netherlands, Geert Wilders came in second, regardless of his initial success. In France, the presidential elections saw Emmanuel Macron trumping over Marine Le Pen in the second round of the elections. In Germany, although giving away to the Christian Democratic Union and the Socialist Democratic Party, Petry still scored an unparalleled success by coming in as the third biggest party in the parliament by mustering the highest public support since its inception.

Notwithstanding, can one argue that even though losing the battle, in the long run, the far-right might have won the war with mainstream parties gradually adopting parts of their rhetoric? Will the right-wing rhetoric deteriorate or bolster in the years to come?

The rising prominence and support for populist politicians and the increasingly more sceptic rhetoric of the more moderate leaders regarding the refugee crisis are signs pointing in this direction. Mark Rutte, Geert Wilders’ main opponent and current Dutch PM adopted a hard line, which mimicked his adversary’s rhetoric by warning migrants to “act normal, or go away” (Taylor, 2017). Similarly, Angela Merkel has also admitted that the refugees entering Germany are too much.

To provide answers to these troubling questions goes beyond the boundaries of the present paper, however, they are important from both theoretical and practical standpoint.

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