

**How can we see polarization expressed through the securitization of immigration by right wing visual media outlets and desecuritization of immigration by left wing visual media outlets and their portrayal of the other in this discourse?**

MA Thesis Global Conflict in the Modern Era

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05/07/2019

Word count excl. bibliography: 13,124

## **1. Introduction**

For decades immigration has been at the center of the U.S. political debate. The immigration debate requires a weighing of economic, security and humanitarian concerns. With roughly 14 percent of the population in the U.S. consisting of immigrants and immigrants and their U.S.-born children making up roughly 27 percent of the population we can understand the magnitude of the topic of immigration (Felter and Renwick 2018).

Although formerly the United States was regularly referred to as a "nation of immigrants", recently, immigrants have started to be represented as threats (Tharani 2011, 5). This is not an uncommon phenomenon as it has happened before in the United States. For example, Kramer in 'The Geopolitics of Mobility' describes how in 1940 there was a wave of anti-alien sentiment. Similar to the situation now this led to an increase of the ranks of Border Patrol and the passing of a multitude of ordinances at the state and municipal level. Immigration policy is considered to intersect with global concerns about U.S. power status and maintenance in the world. Depending on U.S. alliances, rivalries and conflicts, immigration policy and the maintenance of U.S. boundaries towards migrants has seemed to flow accordingly (Kramer 2018, 393-395).

Currently, anti-refugee riots and daily racial violence by state officials, not just citizens, has been on the rise. This kind of violence can be understood as a symptom of securitization. Immigrants are being policed, criminalized and subjected to unwarranted violence (Moffette and Vadasaria 2016, 291). Immigration policy decisions in the U.S. have been made under the guise of domestic and foreign security for over three centuries. It has been manipulated by U.S. leaders quite aggressively for security ends. A historic example is when immigration was utilized to further foreign policy goals during the Cold War where U.S. leaders utilized refugee policy to deal the Soviet Union an ideological blow (Totten 2012, 208-9). Immigration can be used as a tool.

Another influencing factor when it comes to policy is mass media, particularly the partisan news outlets in the United States (Arcenaux et al. 2016, 5). What are the trends we can identify regarding representation of immigration by these partisan news outlets?

Under Obama and now under Trump we can see an increase in the securitization of immigration on the right and an increase in desecuritization of immigration on the left when it comes to print media, evidence of polarization in that respect (Levin 2018,iv). Through securitization, issues can be constructed as existential threats thereby requiring extraordinary measures (Lupovici 2014, 394). Desecuritization on the other hand is characterized by efforts to

'threat pacification' (Levin 2018, 16). Polarization of attitudes towards immigrants by between Democrats and Republicans respectively, becomes even more apparent when looking at the polling data. This data suggests that Democrats and Republicans have never been further apart in their attitudes towards immigrants than they are at this moment (Jones 2019). This work is inspired by Levin's work on the topic but it will focus on visual media and therefore will also be looking at the visual tools utilized to present immigration a certain way.

Could we expect to see this same trend in visual media outlets as we have seen in print media? I will look at specific right-wing and left-wing media personalities to examine if we can see this trend of securitization on the right-wing, desecuritization on the left-wing and polarization continued. Namely, I will be analyzing Tucker Carlson and Rachel Maddow as part of the right- and left-wing visual media.

My research question is: "How can we see polarization expressed through the securitization of immigration by right wing visual media outlets and desecuritization of immigration by left wing visual media outlets and their portrayal of the other in this discourse?". I will perform a critical discourse analysis (CDA) on the discourse of Carlson and Maddow in response to the October 2018 migrant caravan heading to the southern U.S. border in order to answer this question. The critical part of the CDA will employ securitization theory to research how we can see this issue as being securitized/desecuritized by Carlson and Maddow. Carlson occasionally does 10-15 minute monologues and debates on certain topics and this is the material I will be analyzing for Carlson. Similarly I will review videos featuring Rachel Maddow. I aim to cover roughly the same amount of material for both Carlson and Maddow, not in terms of minutes of footage but in terms of words spoken and therefore, discourse to be analyzed.

The structure of this thesis will start conventionally, with a literature review of literature on securitization/desecuritization theory, securitization of immigration, language attitudes to immigration and mass media influence on the public and the political elite before diving into the data and methodology. The analytical chapter of this thesis will first focus on Tucker Carlson and the second section of the chapter will examine Maddow. For both personalities I will provide the reader with some background information in the form of a case selection chapter before diving into the discourse analyses chapters. I will apply securitization theory to the findings throughout this chapter. Finally there will be a discussion of the implications of the findings of the analysis, namely how they signify polarization and fit into the existing body of work and the conclusion.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

In this literature review I will review works relevant to my research to not only 'see what is out there' but also to examine where my research can add to the scholarship. Additionally, to identify scholarly works and their conclusions which may be useful for my research since the sources I am reviewing provide the kind of information necessary to place my findings into the securitization context. Therefore, I will point back to the information mentioned in this chapter in the analysis chapters. For the particular subject I am researching and the type of research I will be conducting there are several types of works that should be explored. The content of this literature review will be as follows: 1) Securitization theory; 2) desecuritization theory; 3) securitization of immigration; 4) language attitudes and immigration; 5) mass media influence on the public and ; 6) mass media influence on the political elite.

### **2.2 Securitization Theory**

There is a lot of scholarship centering around securitization theory. There are point of agreement and disagreement when it comes to what securitization theory constitutes. There is agreement on the fact that it is a process where issues can be constructed as an existential threat to a referent object. The drivers of securitizing moves in this sense are knowledge claims that are made about a so-called existential threat to for example the 'Western way of life' (Balzacq 2015, 106 ; Lupovici 2014, 394). Furthermore there is relative agreement on the fact that securitization occurs through social mechanisms, that it initiates policy changes and that it in that sense ascribes responsibility to a securitizing actor (Balzacq 2015, 106; Van Rythoven 2016, 494-95; Guzzini 2011, 330). Security is essentially whatever significant actors perceive as being security. Therefore, there are no subjects inherently security or non-security, this is up to the securitizing actor. Securitization looks at the social production of security, thus it examines what security does rather than what security means (Guzzini 2011, 330).

A big part of securitization theory is the idea of threat inflation. In essence, this constitutes an exaggeration of danger when compared to the more objective way of viewing a situation. In this way, a threat that could be considered relatively marginal may be portrayed by political leaders as genuine 'existential threats'. Most scholars agree on the inflation of the threat of terrorism by

President Bush after the attacks on the World Trade Center (Mearsheimer 2011, 22; Van Rythoven 2016, 490).

There is also however, a great deal of criticism and diverging opinions regarding securitization theory. These vary from theoretical and methodological criticisms to normative criticisms (Lupovici 2014, 394).

According to Balzacq et al. we can identify two broad approaches to securitization, securitization through speech act and through practice. Their criticism is that neither is sufficient to fully understand all of the aspects involved with the securitization process. Therefore, it seems they are suggesting that something such as discourse analysis combined with securitization theory would not provide a comprehensive picture because it would exclude an analysis of practice (Balzacq, Léonard and Ruzicka 2016, 517). Nevertheless, since we have acknowledged the influence of media on political figures and political processes it is still useful to see how issues are securitized by them through speech.

Wilkinson argues that securitization theory is not usable outside of Europe due to the 'Westphalian straitjacket'. Her phrasing of securitization as not being useable outside Europe sounds as though she is suggesting it would also not be useful to analyze the United States however, she refers more to the Western world as being the focus of securitization theory than Europe specifically (Wilkinson 2007, 5). Therefore, despite this specific criticism we can still utilize securitization theory for this particular subject.

Methodologically one of the major questions is what criteria should be maintained to determine if something is a case of securitization. Especially since scholars mostly agree that an issue can only be considered securitized if an audience accepts these claims made by the securitizing party (Balzacq, Léonard and Ruzicka 2016, 520). The influence of mass media on the public and the political elite will be discussed below to further justify why securitization theory can still be employed.

### **2.3 Desecuritization Theory**

Arguably, desecuritization has a much smaller body of work dedicated to it than securitization. There are however, some scholars that provide us with insight into desecuritization. Roe claims that there are three possible options on how to desecuritize. Firstly, not talking about issues in terms of security. Secondly, not continuing the securitization process and minimizing the response after the securitization of an issue to avoid generating more security dilemmas and ending

up in a vicious cycle. Lastly, to move the security issue back into what is considered the 'normal' sphere of politics (Roe 2004, 284). For the purpose of this thesis and considering we are doing discourse analysis we would probably be dealing with the first option the most. In that sense we might see the left-wing media outlets not talking about immigration as a security issue at all or explicitly mentioning that it is not a security issue.

Aradau considers desecuritization as a matter of different speech acts. For example, the amount of time spent speaking on an issue would partly signify the securitization or desecuritization of a matter. She further laments that the question of desecuritization is about the kind of politics we want, politics of exceptional measures or democratic politics which may mean slower procedures but at least these can be contested. The role of desecuritization in this is a political choice that restores democracy (Aradau 2004,393). These are the kinds of matters we might be able to recognize in Rachel Maddow's discourse.

Discourse is considered instrumental in facilitating desecuritization just as it is in securitization theory. However, what isn't as clear is what constitutes a desecuritizing move. According to Levin 'threat pacification' would imply a desecuritizing move since 'threat designation' or 'threat inflation' are considered to be securitizing moves (Levin 2018, 16). Additionally there is a discussion on whether desecuritization or securitization is more effective as a strategy. Cui and Li conclude that desecuritization is the more effective strategy in the case of frontier security specifically, since securitization polarizes and created an us-versus-them mentality. They argued that this notion of security made it more difficult to achieve proper frontier security rather than easier (Cui and Li 2011, 158). Yet, the notion of effectiveness and desecuritization is contested. Namely is it considered effective instrumentally or effective in the pursuit of a political-normative project. Thus, a distinction does need to be made when using terms such as 'effective' in conjunction with desecuritization theory (Hansen 2012, 534). Nevertheless, since we are discussing immigration and the southern border in this thesis, scholarship on frontier security and desecuritization is definitely relevant and the findings of the thesis could add to the scholarship in that regard.

## **2.4 Securitization and immigration policy**

Security and immigration had not been widely researched before the past two decades mostly picking up speed after the 9/11 attacks (Totten 2012, 30). Securitization of immigration scholarship often focuses on the violence directed towards immigrants. This violence is characterized as a

symptom of immigration. Furthermore how immigrants are being policed and criminalized (Moffette and Vadasaria 2016, 291). Especially post 9/11 there was a conflation of the notions of what an "immigrant" was and a "terrorist" respectively. Since terrorists might enter the country either legally or illegally, all immigrants attempting to enter the U.S. should be considered possible terrorists (D'Appollonia 2012, 77). Nevertheless, immigration had been securitized before 9/11 as well and the arguments made before 9/11 were still being utilized after. These arguments included those of suspicion towards foreign born populations who could possibly be members of a so-called "fifth column" and classifying those crossing the border as being criminals.

The difference between securitization before 9/11 and after 9/11 marked a change in terms of the intensity of the argument of immigration being a component of the terrorist threat. However, the nature of the policy remained relatively the same (D'Appollonia 2012, 50). Many scholars point to the fact that the percentage of immigrants actually posing a threat is quite small and that there is a fear of leaders sensationalizing the issue in order to garner support for a xenophobic agenda (Totten 2012, 159). Additionally, matters such as race, ethnicity or color and national origin cannot be separated from U.S. immigration law and policy. The U.S. has historically employed extraordinary measures to put a stop to feared mass immigration of people of color (Dobkin 2013, 119). Overall these are the types of issues we could see reflected in the findings of the analysis chapters.

## **2.5 Discourse, language attitudes and immigration**

Discourse about migration/immigration issues generally tends to focus on problems. There is an emphasis by conservatives and right-wing media on problems created by immigrants, this is also known as 'problematization'. Essentially this is the construction of a problem-subject, meaning the construction of an object of problematization (Schrover and Schinkel 2013, 1126). When discussing discourse on immigration, we deal with socially constructed identities. These identities include ethnic identities but also linguistic identities. Language is in this sense, used to either unite or divide groups. This involves the creation of the dichotomy between a 'them' and an 'us' to define these groups (Tharani 2011, 39).

Furthermore, figurative language used in both public and political discourse has effects. It causes or allows us to see an existing thing or matter in a different way. Specifically when discussing migration, the migrant body is heavily intertwined with the notion of the border. Suspect bodies, in that way, take the border with them and through this process the immigrant is

criminalized (Councilor 2017, 142). Another element of this sort of political culture is the use of stereotypes along with rigid social categories and a creation and subsequent rejection of outsiders. It is important to look at the extent to which immigrants in the media are being referred to as foreign or as outsiders. Essentially we are looking for the 'us' vs 'them' narrative with 'us' being the domestic and 'them' being that which is foreign or outside of the domestic. There have been numerous studies and reports of clear racial and ethnic bias and an oversimplified depiction of immigrant communities in news coverage on immigration (Woods and Arthur 2014, 425) These are the kinds of matters that we could see reflected in the discourse analysis chapter.

The work that approximates this work the most is the previously mentioned critical discourse analysis thesis by Levin (Levin 2016). Levin looks at securitization and desecuritization in print media in the U.S., the right and left wing print media respectively, and takes this as evidence for polarization. Although this work is similar it deals with print media while this thesis looks at visual media.

## **2.6 Mass media influence on public opinion**

News media has an undeniable influence on public opinion and expression. Especially in the social media age, news media is increasingly causing people to express themselves publicly. When the New York Times published a story about how fracking affects drinking water, even though this was relatively low on the policy agenda at the time, there was an observed spike of over 300 per cent in discussion regarding the broad policy area concerning water quality. This shows us how news media does not just influence public opinion but that it impacts how Americans participate in conversations revolving around public policy issues (King, Schneer and White 2017, 797).

The argument has been made that the wide variety of political media and people's natural tendency to stick to media consistent with their preexisting political opinion and orientations, creates an environment of people moving to these partisan echo chambers. Nevertheless, this does not mean these people actively avoid political media content running counter to their political views (Holbert, Hmielowski and Weeks 2012, 194-95). It has been shown that certain attributes or traits emphasized by news media have had an influence on the public's image of those candidates (Hyun and Moon 2016, 509). Once again however, partisan selective exposure in the current news environment may influence this in such ways that agenda setting by candidates may be presented differently according to the particular outlet's political orientation and therefore influence audience attitudes towards the candidates (Hyun and Moon 2016, 510). This gives these news media outlets



a relatively strong influence on which message will come across to the audience which we should bear in mind. Reportedly, the partisan media audience only consists of 10-15% of the American public (Druckman, Levendusky and McLain 2018, 99).

However, the partisan media influence does not extend only to the audience reading or watching. Their influence spreads through those who watch and proceed to talk to other people about it and might even attempt to persuade them. Through this process non watchers are influenced indirectly and perhaps even persuaded. In this way 10-15% can stretch to a lot more than it initially may seem (Druckman, Levendusky and McLain 2018, 99). For example, a Republican watching Fox News will watch a news item and consider it credible, then this person will advocate for the point of view to someone not exposed. This causes them to move in a partisan-consistent direction which subsequently polarizes attitudes (Druckman, Levendusky and McLain 2018, 100).

Especially within a homogeneous environment, namely groups consisting of solely Democrats or Republicans, the effect of those watching conveying the information to non-watchers is even greater since they will most likely already have similar political views. In heterogeneous groups the effects are not as strong but arguments aligning with their own partisan perspective will still be more persuasive than those that differ, thus it still generates polarization. Still, the fact that there are people from both parties does mitigate the effects somewhat. Individuals in these groups will not be as polarized as those in the homogeneous groups (Druckman, Levendusky and McLain 2018, 101). There is a definite influence from news media on public opinion and public expression, particularly when it comes to partisan media. Moreover, we can see how partisan media aids in the process of polarization directly and indirectly.

## **2.7 Mass media influence on the political elite**

We've seen how mass media can have a significant influence on the public, apart from that mass media can similarly influence the political elite and national agendas. While news media provide an essential link between the public and elected representatives, they also influence these same elected representatives (Arcenaux et al. 2016, 5). Simply put, when there is a great deal of media attention to an issue, political parties take note if they may have an interest in politicizing this issue already (Green-Pedersen and Stubager 2010, 664). The relationship between the media and politicians is reciprocal. Since politicians to a great extent rely on media exposure they have an interest in framing the public debate and because of this politicians are very likely to respond to

the media agenda (Green-Pedersen and Stubager 2010, 665). Party competition fuels this process even more. Politicians will try to politicize issues that benefit them and depoliticize those that do not benefit them. Party competition in this respect is all about drawing attention to those issues that may be favourable to their party. Media attention then influences party agendas if it focuses on issues that they would want to politicize, if this is not the case then it will not go with the mass media attention (Green-Pedersen and Stubager 2010, 667).

Members of Congress have been proven to respond to shifts in the media environment within their own district particularly. Following the introduction of Fox News Channel, Democrats as well as Republicans in the House of Representatives shifted toward the Republican Party in certain divisive votes, especially close to the general elections. Fox News specifically is said to have changed legislators' way of approaching political strategy (Arcenaux et al, 2016, 24). Clinton and Enamorado found no evidence that with the spread of Fox News between 1996-2000, there was a probability that an incumbent might be replaced by a more conservative candidate but they did see that elected officials were less likely to express support for President Clinton once Fox News entered their district (Clinton and Enamorado 2014, 941).

We can see a clear interaction between politicians, news media and the public. Politicians react to the media environment because it may influence their base and therefore their hold on power. Legislators may take actions to generate coverage such as propose certain laws and submit certain queries, this in turn promotes their agendas. Political behavior is shaped by the perception of what others think as much as it is by what people actually think. Additionally, the perception of media power and influence on public opinion, aside from these perceptions of the current public opinion climate, motivate political actors both on the public stage and behind the scenes in their power play (Cohen, Tsifti and Sheaffer 2008, 339). Thus, we can see how media influences politics through its perceived power over public opinion.

## **2.8 Conclusion**

There is a lot of scholarship on securitization theory in which we have seen how in securitization theory there are no such things as subjects inherent to security. This is up to the securitization actor to determine whether or not an issue is or is not security. Furthermore we can see how threats are inflated in order to securitize an issue. On the other hand desecuritization, which is a lot less researched than securitization, seeks to pacify these threats and take subjects out of the security scope. Both with securitization of immigration and discourse or language attitudes towards

immigration we can see an increase in the intensity of the debate post 9/11. Nevertheless, roughly the same arguments are being used both before and after 9/11. Furthermore we are looking at whether there is the creation of an 'us' vs 'them' narrative or the characterization of immigrants as the outside party. While there is a relatively broad scholarship dedicated to securitization of immigration and discourse analysis of this alike, this thesis sets itself apart by adding to the desecuritization scholarship and by focusing on visual media's securitization/desecuritization tactics instead of print media as done by Levin.

### **3. Method/Case Selection**

#### **3.1 Method**

In my thesis I will use critical discourse analysis on footage of Tucker Carlson and Rachel Maddow regarding immigration. Since this is audio-visual data I will transcribe some of this and perform the discourse analysis. This critical discourse analysis will be used to test two hypotheses. Firstly, it will be used to examine whether we can see polarization in the discourse on immigration in their representation of migrants. Secondly, whether we can see this polarization continued or amplified in their portrayal of each other within this immigration discourse.

Critical discourse analysis is a useful method for analysis since it can reveal what is left out of texts and how they transform and evaluate the social reality they represent. Furthermore it evaluates the findings of the discourse analysis (Van Leeuwen 2018, 140). Since I am looking at the framing of immigration/immigrants and the subsequent securitization this concerns language and identity. No matter the language there is no neutral way of representing people or in this case immigrants. Choices in language serve to draw attention to certain aspects of one's identity and that identity will subsequently be associated with certain kinds of discourses. Consider the following sentence:

*Illegal immigrant drives car into crowd at a Christmas Market.*

This man could have characterized in many different ways. For example, as a father, a church-going citizen or a husband. The fact that he is specifically named as an illegal immigrant draws the attention to a certain part of his identity. Now consider the next sentence.

*Father of three loses control of car at Christmas Market*

The meaning of this sentence is completely different. Especially when we consider the negative connotations attached to immigrant identity. Emphasis is being put on the fact that he is an

immigrant in the first sentence and further word-use would suggest it was intentional (Machin and Mayr 2012, 77-78).

In this way I will analyse in both Tucker Carlson and Rachel Maddow's discourse what is and isn't said and examine the choice of words in order to identify their social and political purposes.

There is some debate regarding discourse analysis. Discourse analysis in itself is not sufficient to evaluate its findings. It helps identify what questions should be asked but is not able to provide answers to these questions. For this, critical discourse analysis could be considered the more appropriate choice (Van Leeuwen 2018, 140).

Critical discourse analysis is a multidisciplinary approach and its main goal is examining social injustice manifested in a multitude of social practices. Furthermore to stand firm against in this specific case, social prejudice and discrimination against immigrants as being a group possessing less power (Le and Short 2009, 4). In this sense critical discourse analysis is an appropriate method to see how the illegal immigrant identity is being constructed by a conservative network such as Fox News who have notoriously expressed their anti-immigrant views. It is also appropriate to then use this to look at desecuritization on the left-wing. There are those who believe however that critical discourse analysis requires partly a sense of moral evaluation and that this moral evaluation is a key aspect of how discursive practices legitimize social practices (Van Leeuwen 2018, 147). I do not intend to focus on this in particular however I do intend to evaluate the findings of the discourse analysis in connecting them to social practice. In this sense my analysis will consist of three different parts according to Fairclough's model: description, interpretation and explanation. The description part will focus on the linguistic features of the texts - or in this case video clips - including choices and patterns in vocabulary, identifying what is said and what is omitted. The interpretation part will focus on the discourse as something produced, circulated and consumed in – in this case – the U.S. society. Lastly the explanatory part will look at the ideological effects and the hegemonic processes in which this discourse operates. For this I will have to draw on social theory, in this case securitization theory (Le and Short 2009, 8).

I must also acknowledge some concerns and criticisms there are regarding critical discourse analysis to identify its limitations. There is the criticism that the methodology is not systematic or rigorous, the unequal balance between social theory and linguistic method and the little attention being paid to non-linguistic aspects of discourse such as activity and emotion. Another big

criticism is that political and social ideologies are not revealed through the data but projected into it. As a response to these criticisms one could argue that in general interdisciplinary approaches run the risk of not being systematic or rigorous. Additionally the amount of attention being paid to linguistic features and social theory will most likely depend on the background of the researcher. Critical discourse analysis is also said to pay little attention to non-linguistic aspects such as activity and emotion. Although this is something interesting, for the purpose of this research it is not a necessary feature to evaluate to produce valid research. As for the criticism of political and social ideologies not being revealed through data but being projected into it is a problem that to some extent depends on the researcher in the sense that they will have to not let their own bias get in the way of the validity of their research (Le and Short, 10).

Thus, even in the face of this criticism, critical discourse analysis seems like an appropriate method of research for my thesis.

### **3.2 Case Selection**

As mentioned before, in this thesis we will examine two tv-personalities, Tucker Carlson of Fox News and Rachel Maddow of MSNBC representing the right- and left-wing perspective respectively. In this section we will answer the question of why the cases – or people – we have selected are relevant topics for study.

Carlson's relevance comes from the fact that Trump seems to be taking his cues from Fox News and in particular from Fox News personalities. Trump has declared the immigration issue a "national emergency" and claimed that the United States has invaders pouring across the southern border. This particular declaration of a national emergency has been attributed by some to the influence of Fox News on the president. Namely due to the fact that three days after Sean Hannity – a Fox News personality – told his viewers that he would find it acceptable for Trump to sign a bipartisan spending bill lacking in funding for the wall if he simultaneously issued an emergency order to finance his signature policy, Trump did just that (Levitz 2019). This is only one of the many examples showing how Donald Trump gets his talking points from Fox News.

Donald Trump frequently retweets Fox News anchors and other Fox News personalities and contributors. No matter how factually incorrect something may be, Trump sees Fox News as a reliable source for information. At one of his rallies in February of 2017, Trump referred to a terror attack in Sweden, which did not happen. However, he cited a Fox News broadcast of a Tucker Carlson segment about immigration in Sweden which suggested a link between its open-

door refugee policy and a supposed rise in crime (Gaffey 2017). It is these examples that show a clear link between Fox News and the current sitting United States President.

Therefore in this thesis I will be taking a closer look at one specific Fox News personality for the right wing, Tucker Carlson. There might be the question of: why not Sean Hannity? Sean Hannity as previously mentioned has been named as the one who made Trump move towards declaring a national emergency. It is also reported that Trump speaks with Hannity regularly and he has even had him on stage at political rallies, they clearly have a relatively close personal relationship(Ott 2019). The reason for this is that Tucker Carlson seems to influence Trump despite the fact that he does not have a close personal relationship with Trump like Hannity. Which makes him a more interesting and slightly more impartial right-wing subject for analysis. Trump on multiple occasions has admitted he tunes in to *Tucker Carlson Tonight* and reportedly thinks he is one of the sharpest minds on television. A more concrete example of Carlson's influence on Trump was when Carlson ran a segment on a land-reform policy proposal in South Africa and later that evening Trump tweeted that he asked the secretary of state to check on that specific matter even tagging Tucker Carlson and Fox News in it (Suebsaeng, Markay and Tani 2018).

Obama has not been as clearly influenced by left-wing media as Trump has been influenced by the right-wing and has not necessarily maintained the same close relationships with MSNBC personalities for example. However there is still, if not more relevance to looking at desecuritization in left-wing visual media by reviewing Rachel Maddow. Rachel Maddow, similiar to Tucker Carlson criticizing Donald Trump, has not been afraid of criticizing president Obama. She furthermore characterizes herself as a liberal and not necessarily a Democrat (Stelter 2009). In this sense it is useful for us to look at Maddow to see how immigration has become desecuritized on the left-wing more objectively since she does not have a strong relationship with a certain president or even the Democratic party in that sense. This case selection is mainly based on the desire for an as objective picture as possible of right and left-wing perspectives on immigration.

## **4. Critical Discourse Analysis Chapter**

### **4.1 Introduction**

In this chapter I will run a critical discourse analysis on the discourse of Tucker Carlson and Rachel Maddow, specifically on their videos regarding immigration in the recent U.S. political climate. Particularly these videos will focus on the migrant caravan which set forth from Honduras to the U.S. on October 12, 2018. While Carlson's material focuses on the caravan and the conditions

surrounding it more specifically, Maddow's material focuses on U.S. troop deployment to the border for the migrant caravan and a leaked military threat assessment document. Nevertheless, all of the discourse analysed in this thesis takes place from the time of the migrant caravan leaving for the U.S. up until a couple weeks after its arrival. Additionally, Rachel Maddow's videos take place before the 2018 midterm elections and Tucker Carlson's videos mostly take place after the midterm elections. This might prove a challenge for the analysis since their motivation for disclosing certain information may vary. Nevertheless since both Carlson and Maddow are discussing the same topic, namely the migrant caravan we can identify how each presents the issue differently and how it represents the partisan nature of U.S. politics. The passing of the midterm election should not be expected to significantly alter the view of these news outlets.

For the purpose of producing valid research, I will run the analysis on Carlson based on the referent objects to which migrants pose a supposed existential threat. Namely, how migrants are framed as being a threat to the economy, national identity and national security. For Maddow, I will run the analysis based on the objects to which migrants decidedly do not pose a threat, essentially we are examining the process of threat pacification through the critical discourse analysis. Preliminary analysis would suggest that Carlson delves into each topic quite explicitly while Maddow applies threat pacification almost exclusively to the area of national security. She does not seem to go into how migrants may affect the economy or national identity but the reason for this will be explained at the beginning of the analysis. Finally, an examination will take place of how each party is portrayed by the other party. This seems to be done in an attempt to discredit the other party and strengthen the own argument or efforts towards securitization and desecuritization respectively. The aim of this is to examine whether we can see the phenomenon of securitization on the right, desecuritization on the left and the polarization essentially, confirmed in visual media as it has been in print media by Levin. Before delving into the analysis however I will contextualize the discourse by elaborating on the political climate in which this discourse has operated and continues to operate.

## **4.2 Contextualization**

### **4.2.1 The Migrant Caravan**

There has been a rise in migration of unaccompanied children and families attempting to cross the US-Mexico border for the past decade. The migrant population increasingly consists of those attempting to flee violence and insecurity. Most of them come from Guatemala, Honduras and El

Salvador, also known as the Northern Triangle of Central America. The caravan starting with around 160 people grew to around 4,000 strong, although previously it was estimated at roughly 7,000 people (Lind 2018). The motivations for the migrants include the hope of a better future for themselves and their families, escaping gangs in their hometowns, economic motives and reuniting with families already in the U.S. The U.S. government's response to this has been strong. President Trump characterized the caravan as being 'an invasion'. Similarly in Tijuana protests broke out against the caravan with people holding signs also calling it an invasion (BBC News 2018). Homeland security officials claimed that of the 6,000 people in Tijuana awaiting processing at the San Ysidro border crossing, around 500 people were criminals and that there were members of the caravan purposely causing disruptions at the border ports of entry. Furthermore, there are mentions of an inability to process all of the asylum applications effectively with migrants forced to find a way to survive until it is their turn (Norman 2018).

All of this is taking place in a time where immigration is a contentious topic. Trump campaigned on the promise of building a wall along the southern border, a wall he claimed Mexico would pay for. A claim later disputed by Mexico's then-president, Enrique Peña Nieto. Once elected, Trump signed an executive order instructing the U.S. government to start construction on the wall with federal funding. This did not go through due to concerns about the huge expense (Williams 2019). In addition to that there was controversy concerning family separation at the southern border. As of June 2018, in an attempt to crackdown on illegal entry into the U.S., almost 2,000 children had been separated from their families over a six-week period at the border since children cannot be held in federal jail. There has been outcry over the conditions in these facilities with accounts of children waiting in cages on concrete floors and older children taking the responsibility to take care of the younger children (Holpuch 2018).

Immigration policy under Trump has divided Americans in half according to polling data. 52% of respondents said they disapproved of Trump's immigration policy while 44% said they did approve of his actions. This highlights a larger issue of partisan divisions in the United States. 91% of Republicans expressed their approval for the presidents actions, this was 42% for independents and only 14% for Democrats. Immigration is said to be an issue contributing to deepening divides between the American people. Hard right and hard left rhetoric has become more prominent (Santhanam 2018). The regions of the U.S. most worried about a threat from the caravan are the Southeast with 35%, the Midwest and mountain Northwest both having 33% of respondents seeing



they considered the caravan a threat. Of those actually living in states sharing a border with Mexico such as Arizona, California, New Mexico and Texas, this percentage is 21% (Dudar 2018).

Thus we can see the migrant caravan debate taking place in an environment where there are a multitude of logistical, humanitarian, security and economic factors to consider with polarized opinions dominating the stage.

#### **4.2.2 The Midterm Elections**

November 6th 2018, voters headed to the ballot box to cast their vote in the midterm elections. Up until the midterm election, Republicans controlled a majority in the Senate and in the House of Representatives. The midterms were the opportunity for the Democrats to take back the majority in the congressional chambers and tackle Trump's policy decisions and programs up until that point (Al Jazeera 2018). Voter enthusiasm, registration and female participation in candidates had all taken flight this election making it an important political moment (Jungreis 2018). There were a number of issues at the center of the debate in the mid term elections, namely, healthcare, supreme court appointees, economy, women's rights, impeachment and finally immigration. All of these contentious topics made for a high stakes game for both parties (Al Jazeera 2018). The immigration debate particularly heated up as the elections approached. The immigration issue was one of major concern to the electorate and therefore of great concern to both parties (Semotiuk 2018). With multiple news outlets claiming that Trump and the Republican party were fear mongering in the immigration debate, spouting anti-immigration rhetoric in order to garner votes, there was a lot of attention paid to immigration and the migrant caravan (Buncombe 2018).

Since Trump's anti-immigration rhetoric motivated some of the voters in the presidential election, it is said that he fueled the debate around immigration once again to help his party win seats in the House of Representatives. For example, although most of the members are trying to enter the country legally, seeking asylum, Trump put his focus on illegal immigration (Segers 2018). RNC analysis showed immigration was not the most important problem for respondents however, there were signs that it could aid the Republican party at the margins. Thus, although the influence of Trump's hardline stance might not have had a significant impact, it could still make a difference in the elections (Sink and Epstein 2018). This caused people such as Huffington Post columnist Juan Escalante to call for people to vote or contribute in other ways to the Democratic parties campaigns in the midterm elections (Escalante 2018). In any case it is clear that the

immigration debate was an important point for both parties and a major issue leading up to the midterm elections.

After the midterm elections, although Democrats had taken control of the House of Representatives flipping well over the 23 seats needed to take control of the house, the power struggle continued. The Democrats having the house majority allowed for them to launch investigations into the administration. A possibility to which Trump responded that the Senate – which is majority Republican – would investigate them in turn (Siddiqui and Jacobs 2018). This demonstrates how even after the win, both parties are still embroiled in a struggle for power and a struggle for public support. Therefore we could most likely see this struggle continued in the discourse analyzed after the midterm elections.

### 4.3 Tucker Carlson

#### **4.3.1 Migrants as a threat to the economy**

Carlson attempts to frame migrants as a threat to the economy through his language and through images playing in the background of his videos. He does this in more subtle, and more obvious ways interchangeably. Subtly he presents migrants as a threat to the economy by implying they are there to try and take advantage of the system. He says about the migrants: "Their plan is to present themselves at our southern border and demand entry into our country with all the benefits that that of course entails..." (Carlson 2018a). We need to look at the word connotations since these bring certain associations with them (Machin and Mayr 2012, 32). Use of 'their plan' implies a premeditated idea they will certainly carry out and the word 'demand' brings with it a sense of forcefulness. 'Demand' could have just as easily been replaced by 'ask for', 'apply for' or any variety that did not carry this forcefulness with it. This implies that migrants are coming to be able to take advantage of the U.S. and its resources, thereby adding another economic element to migrant motivation to want to enter the country. A similar idea is conveyed through a video playing in the background where someone is holding a banner saying 'Caravan Extortion' (Carlson 2018d). The word 'extortion' would suggest someone trying to get money from another party by applying pressure. Similar to this he refers to migrants as 'cynical shakedown artists' and once again implying that the migrants' goal is to get money through dishonorable means(Carlson 2018d) Another example is Carlson referring to an event where migrants were detained at the U.S. border

as taking place in the 'last fiscal year'. This might not seem initially as Carlson presenting migrants as a threat, however, this once again connects migrants to economic matters.

There are many references to migrants as being 'poor', 'impoverished', 'from the third world' and claims migrants will make the country poorer (Carlson 2018a; Carlson 2018c; Carlson 2018d). There is a case of suppression here. It is just as important to analyse what is missing from a text as what is in it (Machin and Mayr 2012, 85). All that is stated is that the migrants are supposedly poor. What is missing is how they became poor and an explanation for how this would automatically lead to the U.S. becoming poorer. Carlson more or less presents poverty as an infectious disease. If the U.S. were to let immigrants in, then it would thereby make the country poorer, thus posing a threat to the economy. He strengthens this argument by presenting the case of Tijuana and referring to 'closed schools' and 'people living in the streets' which translates to an impoverished environment brought on by migrants (Carlson 2018d). Once again there is a case of suppression. He makes the case of migrants having led to closed schools and people living in the streets but he neglects to mention how migrants have contributed to this situation. While using this language he does not directly refer to the images in the background. The images show people staying in tents, people staying in poor conditions, dilapidated buildings and overall an image of poverty. Settings, such as these, are used to communicate a certain idea, to give a connotation to the discourse and its subsequent values, its identities and its actions (Machin and Mayr 2012, 52). This setting gives the idea of migrants being poor, with a negative connotation and not valuing hygiene. Since these are not images he is showing outright, but rather in the background, it would suggest that he might be using this to give extra legitimacy to his argument of migrants bringing poverty wherever they go rather than making a point solely using words or images. Carlson is using Tijuana as a cautionary tale of sorts, most likely to warn Americans that they should not let these people enter the country as they will weaken the economy.

#### **4.3.2 Migrants as threats to U.S. national identity**

Throughout Carlson's videos we can see a case of aggregation when speaking about the migrant community. Aggregation meaning, Carlson refers to the immigrants as statistics. Carlson refers to the migrants with phrases such as 'many immigrants', 'huddled masses' and 'a caravan of migrants' (Carlson 2018a; Carlson 2018b; Carlson 2018d). This can be used to give an impression of credibility and objectivity however, specific figures are not given. This could be done in an effort to dehumanize and group together migrants to the public (Machin and Mayr 2012, 84). Grouping

migrants together as if they are somehow all the same signifies a process of 'homogenization'. This is a common phenomenon in news stories regarding negative consequences of mass immigration. This may be done to collectivise and generalize people who may all have different motives for trying to enter the country (Machin and Mayr 2012, 101). It also presents them as a group that consists of immigrants in the sense that they are decidedly not U.S. nationals. This in conjunction with the 'us' vs 'them' narrative shows more clearly how this may be a case of securitization.

The 'us' and 'them' division is prominent in the discourse. He often uses the words 'our' when referring to the U.S. as 'our country' and the U.S. border as 'our border' (Carlson 2018a; Carlson 2018b, Carlson 2018c). Even when negatively referring to 'our leaders' he makes the distinction between 'our' vs 'their' (Carlson 2018d). This use of pronouns and definition of a clear 'we' places the 'we' against a 'them' thereby creating a collective other in opposition to the shared ideas the 'we' share (Machin and Mayr 2012, 84). Carlson also often brings up racism. In responding to Enrique Acevedo, a Univision news anchor calling Tijuana residents not wanting migrants in their city racist, he asks: "You just said that they're racist, but they're latino, spanish speaking latinos, attacking other spanish speaking latinos, so where's the racism?" (Carlson 2018c). While he is speaking about Mexican citizens in this case, he regularly points out that it is perhaps not racist to not want migrants entering the country. Another example of this: "Maybe it is not just racism, maybe it is okay to want your government to keep your border intact." (Carlson 2018c). This is a case of dynamic modality, he is offering a sense of possibility (Machin and Mayr 2012, 187-88). Now initially these statements might seem like they are about whether or not a certain party is racist, which essentially it is. However, by making these statements Carlson draws attention to the fact that the migrants are of another race and in that way different to the rest of U.S. society although there is a large latino community within its borders already of which most identify as white, thus not another race than Carlson himself. The Hispanic population is the largest minority in the United States, with a little under 59 million Hispanic people residing in the United States. Of these 59 million people, roughly 38 million identify as white (CNN Library 2019). This is something Carlson leaves out, most likely to emphasize the difference between the migrants and the non-Hispanic white people in the United States. Carlson is implicitly pointing to a difference in demographic with these people potentially coming in.

This comes out more so in the form of Carlson presenting the caravan as mostly consisting of 'young unattached men' and decidedly not majority women and their babies (Carlson 2018b). This is an overlexicalisation. Overlexicalisation suggests that there is something problematic and gives a sense of over-persuasion. The overlexicalisation in this case points to the fact that they are young and unattached which is perceived to be problematic (Machin and Mayr 2012, 37-38). We also see in the background videos that there are more young men in these videos than families with children. Additionally the demographic argument becomes undeniable when Carlson explicitly refers to the entry of migrants as bringing about a demographic change with their arrival in Tijuana. He states: "... a massive and abrupt demographic change is destabilizing to a society no matter what the color of the people involved is..." (Carlson 2018c). Another overlexicalisation takes place in calling the demographic change 'massive and abrupt' indicating that this is problematic. Aside from that, Carlson again draws attention to the fact that he considers migrants as being of a different color. On top of that he unequivocally states that a change in demographic brought about by migrants is destabilizing, not to just a city, but to a society as a whole. This could be considered an over exaggeration since one city does not necessarily represent what these migrants would bring with them in terms of effects to a large country and society such as the United States.

#### **4.3.3. Migrants as a threat to national security**

The securitization aspect becomes clear as well when examining how migrants may pose a threat to national security. Carlson speaks of migrants as being 'cynical shakedown artists', 'illegal', 'highly aggressive' and as them having 'hopped our shoddy defenses' (Carlson 2018b; Carlson 2018d). Here we can see securitization taking place two-fold. In addition to implying the migrants' motivation for making their way to the border is purely economical, referring to migrants as 'illegal' and 'cynical shakedown artists' adds a criminal element to the identity of the migrants. Speaking of 'shoddy defenses', while a case of overlexicalisation, frames the issue as a security issue by alluding to the idea that the defenses are inadequate and therefore need to be reinforced to protect against 'the migrant threat'. Leaders of the caravan being dubbed 'highly aggressive' further feeds into the threat narrative.

In the videos playing in the background we can examine the narrative of migrants as a threat to national security. While not posing a direct threat to national security, we can see significant amount of footage show large groups of migrants moving. They are either walking in large groups or they are on buses or on the backs of chicken trucks but the general image is a large

amount of people moving from one place to the other. We can most likely assume these are all migrants moving towards the U.S. border. The images mostly show migrants moving towards the camera, coming closer. This is a way of positioning the viewer in relation to the people being depicted in an effort to dramatise the situation (Machin and Mayr 2012, 97). This may be presenting the migrants as a threat in the sense that they are getting closer and are almost at the border. Another less clearly threatening – but still threatening nonetheless – image recurring in the videos is large throngs of people gathered actually at the border. This is a tactic of collectivisation in images, presenting the group as such gives no attention to these people as individuals (Machin and Mayr 2012, 101). People are seen either standing around or sitting on the fence, trying to push their way through or standing in the line awaiting processing perhaps. Nevertheless, this portrays the 'threatening' image of migrants trying to either force their way in, or illegally trying to enter the country by 'hopping the fence' so to speak.

The videos where we can more clearly observe the inflation of the threat of migrants to national security are the videos showing migrants in potentially violent or overtly violent situations. These videos contain images of migrants either being arrested by law enforcement or border patrol or being held back by what seems to be riot police. This image – although less – is also depicted in footage with sirens in the background signaling some type of emergency situation. Overall the images appear to try to present migrants as a threat, a violent threat nonetheless. Violence that they could potentially bring to the United States. The images of protests and conflict arising between migrants and local Tijuana residents further supports this idea. When securitizing immigration, a narrative is often presented of immigration having destabilizing effects to a society (Levin 2018, 19). A large group of migrants, potentially violent, ignoring the rules, causing streets to become dirty and disproportionately consisting of men could be perceived by an audience as potentially destabilizing to a society by threatening national security.

#### **4.3.4 Discrediting the other party to legitimize securitization**

As we might expect for either party, Carlson's view of Democrats or 'liberals' as he often refers to them as, is less than favorable. Democratic politicians are deemed 'liars' outright on multiple occasions, five times in one video even. Liberals are being characterized as 'guilty' and trying to atone for the sins committed by the U.S. through immigration (Carlson 2018b). The word connotations here are quite clearly negative and personal and there are decidedly no uses of honorifics in his statements. This would imply that Democrats and liberals have less than pure

intentions. The motive for this is relatively clear. This most likely is done in an attempt to present himself and those sharing his views as the trustworthy party. We can observe more negative behavior ascribed to those not sharing his political views in a debate with Enrique Acevedo. Carlson brings up how the mayor of Tijuana wants the border enforced and when Acevedo points out that the mayor rolled back on some of these statements Carlson stated: "Well I'm sure you bullied him as most politically correct media figures do." This expression of certainty is an example of deontic modality and is often used to convince people (Machin and Mayr 2012, 187). With this statement Carlson is essentially saying that those not agreeing with him are 'politically correct' and then goes on to say that most politically correct people are bullies. From 2015 and onward, political correctness began to be seen as something negative for conservatives (Kilgore 2018). This makes it clear that Carlson was trying to paint Acevedo and thereby perhaps all those with differing views in a negative light.

Something that might be more interesting than how Carlson characterizes the other party is his portrayal of those sharing his views. Especially when addressing the idea that people may consider Trump and his followers racist, he defends this idea regularly and fervently. Whereas with migrant identity we can see Carlson using collectivisation to negatively reflect on migrants, when it comes to defending the idea that Republicans or conservatives may be racist he uses collectivisation to reflect positively on them. Carlson in this sense groups Tijuana residents together with Trump and those that share his views. For example after showing a video of Tijuana residents claiming migrants are bad people and that it is not racist to not want them there, Carlson said the following:

"When Honduras sends its people, it is not sending its best and that is a racist statement obviously, we know that because Donald Trump said something like that about Mexico once and the geniuses on cable news never forgot it, they're still talking about that line years later as evidence of Trump white supremacy and yet here you have non-white people in Mexico saying pretty much exactly the same thing, how can that be?" (Carlson 2018c).

Carlson uses the fact that Mexicans – whom he considers to be the same race as those in the migrant caravan – consider it not racist to want the migrant caravan out. He takes this as it not to be racist for Trump and himself to want those things. Aside from collectivisation he makes use

of exclusion in the sense that he is ignoring racial differences within Latin-America by presenting them as a racially, ethnically homogeneous community which they are not (CNN Library 2019; Telles and Steele 2012; Machin and Mayr 2012, 100-102). Another example of this is when Carlson introduces Genaro Lopez, a municipal official from Tijuana. Lopez, sharing his views is characterized as: "... not a bigot suffering from white privilege or toxic masculinity, he is just a citizen who is upset about what is happening to the city he loves..." (Carlson 2018d). On the one hand Carlson groups Tijuana residents and Mexicans as a whole together with the migrant caravan as being of the same race, in his opinion, but on the other hand since they share the same views as him and as Trump they are the same in their shared views since it would signify they are in fact, not racist. It appears as though Carlson is trying to justify his securitization of the migrants by stating that it is not just him and people like him that have these ideas, but also those 'of the same race' and therefore his views are justified. Overall we see Carlson actively trying to paint an overly positive image of his own party and a decidedly negative one of the opposite party.

#### **4.4 Rachel Maddow**

##### **4.4.1 Pacifying the threat to the economy and national identity**

Maddow appears to pacify the possible threat of migrants to the economy and national identity by not discussing it at all. Suppression is a tactic just as overlexicalisation is and this is a case of suppression. It is entirely possible that mentions of effects migrants may have or even linking migrants to aspects of the economy or national identity are purposefully left out (Machin and Mayr 2012, 85). The word threat is used seven times in the material. Each time it is used however, it is used to signify that there is no significant threat to speak of. She doesn't specify how migrants don't pose a threat to the economy and national identity. This is consistent with desecuritization theory. Since in some cases, the time spent speaking on a certain issue signifies to what extent it is securitized or desecuritized. Not speaking on the threat migrants may pose to the economy and national identity is also an indication of desecuritization aside from 'threat pacification' in which one would talk about it, just in a different manner (Aradau 2004, 393; Levin 2018, 16). Therefore, by saying nothing, Maddow is essentially saying that the topics do not deserve the attention in an attempt to minimize the response already present to avoid generating more buzz and fueling the securitization process (Roe 2004, 384).

While Maddow does not pacify the threat by talking about the threat to national identity, we can see some threat pacification from the videos she plays in the background. The videos show



children playing, laughing and hugging adults (Maddow 2018a). Overall it appears to be a happy picture. Collectivisation is used to paint a positive picture. Exclusion takes place here by primarily showing children, few adults and by only showing people who seem to be happy and smiling. We don't see pictures of people who are not doing well or struggling in any way (Machin and Mayr 2012, 101-102). This is most likely an intentional effort to humanize those in the migrant caravan and connect migrants to positive images of regular people playing with children and 'having fun'.

#### **4.4.2 Pacifying the threat to national security**

The one referent object of an existential threat Maddow does discuss in relative detail is national security. She attempts to pacify the threat through certain knowledge claims and a presentation of the 'facts' through a leaked military report.

A part of Maddow's attempt at pacifying the threat lies in claims that the migrants are far away from the border, might not ever try to reach it and that it is a long time before they would ever get anywhere. She literally states: "*... nobody's gonna be anywhere for a really long time. They are 800 to 2000 miles away depending on which route they take...*" (Maddow 2018b). Firstly she makes use of anonymisation in referring to the migrants as nobody. This can be used to avoid specification and providing a detailed argument in order to make the situation easy to dismiss (Machin and Mayr 2012, 83). She remains relatively vague by saying it would take a 'really long time'. She does not specify how long that is, it could be weeks or months but there is no further clarification provided. The migrants are meant to appear as if they are not likely to, if ever, reach the border. Here, Maddow attempts to try to minimize the response to the supposed threat of the migrant caravan by making it seem as if it is nothing of concern for the moment, a desecuritizing move essentially (Roe 2004, 284).

Additionally, Maddow addresses the claim of migrants being criminals. In response to a military document stating that there is 'limited criminal exploitation' and no case of 'terrorist infiltration' she surmises: "*... so no criminal problem, no terrorist problem and not all that many people overall...*" (Maddow 2018b). The use of 'problem' instead of 'exploitation' and 'infiltration' brings different word associations with it (Machin and Mayr 2012, 32). The word 'problem' is a more simple term than the other words. For example, where politicians using hedging will prefer words that give a more sophisticated appearance such as 'facilitate' instead of 'allow', Maddow has done the opposite to perhaps sound more on par with the general public (Machin and Mayr 2012, 197). This could be considered a desecuritizing move where Maddow attempted to move the

security issue back into the 'normal sphere of politics' (Roe 2004, 284). This would explain why she referred to the issue in a term that is inherently less 'security'.

More directly, there is the outright claim that the migrant caravan is not an existential threat. She characterizes the migrant caravan as not being this 'terrible immediate existential threat', 'no credible threat' and a 'supposed threat' (Maddow 2018a; Maddow 2018b). All of these terms express a low probability of the caravan posing a threat. Particularly through words such as 'supposed', signifying low modality or less certainty (Machin and Mayr, 188-89). This should be taken as less certainty lexically. In terms of what Maddow is trying to convey it is the image of the migrant caravan as not posing a threat at all. She further draws attention to the idea that the threat is framed and thereby not real, for example: "*People have been whipped up into a frenzy, into believing that the border is being overrun...*" (Maddow 2018b). This is a case of suppression. Who have people been whipped up into a frenzy by? The agent here is missing thereby making it seem as something natural rather than something that could be questioned (Machin and Mayr 2012, 85). This is something which could definitely be considered 'threat pacification' and thereby a desecuritizing move since she is essentially doing the opposite to 'threat inflation' (Levin 2018, 6).

Finally, Maddow takes attention away from the issue by pointing to another one more deserving of attention. She claims that the real threat is not the caravan, but 'civilian fake border patrol' to whom she also refers as 'untrained civilian vigilante fake uniform roger gator' and 'armed militia vigilante guys' (Maddow, 2018b). These are all cases of overlexicalization. Since it is not one or two words ascribed to the noun but three or more even this would hint at a strong case of over-persuasion which as previously mentioned points to something problematic (Machin and Mayr 2012, 37). The words 'civilian', 'untrained' and 'vigilante' in combination with 'border patrol' and 'armed militia' suggest these are people carrying out tasks they are unqualified for and thereby potentially form a danger to other people. This is in line with securitization theory since she is framing this civilian border patrol as the real threat to national security. This tactic begs the question of if securitizing one thing to take attention away from an already securitized issue constitutes a desecuritizing move?

#### **4.4.3 Discrediting to other party in an effort toward threat pacification**

We can see further desecuritization of the migrant caravan take place through Maddow's portrayal of the other party. The other party being president Trump and Republicans in general. Maddow's argument against them centers around the idea that immigration and inflation of the migrant threat

is being used as a political stunt or tactic and that the 15,000 troop deployment to the border in particular is politically motivated and not warranted by an actual threat (Maddow 2018a; Maddow 2018b).

Maddow's argument of immigration being used as a political stunt comes forward in several of her statements, one example of this is: "*... as the president doubles and triples and quadruples down on this hard shove to make this election about terrible immigrants and race and the border...*" (Maddow 2018a). Maddow makes use of hyperboles here in the word choice of 'doubles and triples and quadruples down' and 'terrible immigrants'. Generally, unfavoured demonstrations are described through hyperboles (Machin and Mayr 2012, 170). She then uses the metaphor 'hard shove' to put an emphasis in place that a word like 'effort' does not carry with it (Machin and Mayr 2012, 172). In this case, Maddow is condemning the president's – according to her – deliberate efforts in inflating the threat of immigration and the migrant caravan at the border. What is interesting here is that she is still using honorifics by referring to the president as the president rather than 'Trump' or 'Donald Trump', thereby still emitting a degree of respect (Machin and Mayr 2012, 82).

The troop deployment in particular is being presented as a blatantly politically motivated move not based on any tangible military evidence. As a matter of fact, the leaked documents presented by Maddow would suggest this is true. She mentions how this deployment is 'just in time for the election', 'right before the election', 'right ahead of the election' and more outright 'to help the president's party win the election'(Maddow 2018a; Maddow 2018b). Her occasional hedging in saying it 'might' be for a political reason does not express uncertainty but rather a way of 'padding' the message to soften it while still getting the point across (Machin and Mayr 2012, 192). That is to say, the point that instead of the migrant caravan being a real threat, the president and the Republican party are using the issue as a means of winning the election. While making claims about the Republican party and the president not having actual military motivation for a 15,000 troop deployment she simultaneously desecuritized the migrant caravan by pointing to an imagined threat rather than a credible threat. The point she makes is consistent with Aradau's claims of desecuritization being about whether we want politics of exceptional measures or 'democratic politics' with slower procedures (Aradau 2004, 393). The president's moves are presented as extraordinary and unnecessary and therefore fall under exceptional measures. To summarize,

Maddow uses her portrayal of the other party to further delegitimize the threat of the migrant caravan.

### **5. Discussion securitization, desecuritization and polarization.**

The findings of the CDA suggest there is strong evidence of polarization. The discourse analysis reflects a large amount of the conclusions drawn in works of scholars which have been discussed in the literature review. This chapter will link the literature discussed to the findings of the analysis and elaborate on how the findings of the analysis constitute a case of securitization, desecuritization and polarization.

There is sufficient evidence to confirm that Carlson framed the migrant caravan as an existential threat to the referent objects of the U.S. economy, U.S. national identity and U.S. national security by making knowledge claims about the caravan and thereby confirming Balzacq and Lupovici's research. This framing of the threat ultimately presented the migrant caravan as a threat to the United States as a whole. Carlson's frequent mentions of race and racism strengthen Dobkin's claim that race, ethnicity or color and national origin are inherently tied to U.S. immigration law and policy and fits into the historical narrative of the U.S. employing extraordinary measures to stop the feared mass immigration of people of color (Dobkin 2013, 119). A recurring theme in Carlson's material could also be found in his focus on problems or problematization which is consistent with claims that discourse about immigration tends to focus on problems (Schrover and Schinkel 2013, 1126). Language has long been used to unite or divide groups in immigration discourse through the creation of an 'us' and a 'them' which we see reflected in Carlson's discourse on the migrant caravan (Tharani 2011, 39). He separates the migrants from citizens of the U.S. in his language use to create distance between the two groups.

The criminalization of migrants is through which we can see securitization quite clearly. Language and images presented by Carlson in his attempt to criminalize migrants are consistent with the idea of threat inflation and through it we discover how heavily the migrant body and identity is intertwined with the metaphysical idea of the border. By connecting migrants to the border, the migrant is criminalized (Councilor 2017, 142). In the case of Carlson's discourse this has happened quite literally by depicting images of migrants by and 'on' the border and through associating migrants with crime in the imagery presented in his show.

Desecuritization theory is equally clearly represented through Maddow's work. Her omission of the migrants in relation to the economy and national identity support the idea that

deseuritization is partially expressed by the amount of time spent discussing an issue as claimed by Aradau since the time she spent speaking on this was zero (Aradau 2004, 393). The discourse fulfilled all three possible options on how to desecuritize as proposed by Roe. Specifically: 1) Not talking about issues in terms of security; 2) not continuing the securitization process and minimizing the response after the securitization of an issue and 3) moving the security issue back into the 'normal' sphere of politics (Roe 2004, 284). We are also able to observe how Maddow pacifies the threat of migrants to national security through claims that the threat is imagined and inflated. Furthermore, she attempts to take attention away from the supposed migrant threat by pointing to another, 'real' threat and essentially securitizing that. Although the literature has not stated this to be a desecuritizing move, it could still be considered as such a move if we consider it in conjunction with the other statements made by Maddow which have pointed to deseuritization.

From the literature, it was to be expected that Carlson would elaborate on the migrant caravan and its effects more than Maddow and that we would be able to observe a considerable difference therein. The difference in portrayal of migrants was also to be expected considering one side is securitizing and the other desecuritizing. An interesting development however, is the difference we can observe in how Carlson and Maddow portray the other party. They both attempted to discredit the other party yet the way they went about doing this is decidedly different. One might expect both parties to refer to each other in rather strong, negative terms but this was not the case. Whereas Carlson used rather overtly negative and personal ways to describe his Democratic counterparts, Maddow continued to use honorifics and refrained from any personal attacks. Carlson for example, used the word 'liars' and other outright claims of ill character whereas Maddow pointed to the other party as making an exaggeration of the facts without making any such explicit claims.

This further ties into how the immigration debates demonstrates this idea of polarization. Polarization is not just expressed through a difference in political views on immigration. It is not just expressed through seeing an issue securitized on the one hand and desecuritized on the other hand. Of course we can see how it is being securitized by the right-wing media and desecuritized by the left-wing media and therefore there is definitely a case of polarization. However, we can also observe polarization in each respective parties attitude towards one another of which the manner of portrayal perhaps could not be more different. We see polarization expressed here not

just through applying securitization and desecuritization theory but by looking at how perception or portrayal of the other fits into this narrative and expresses a difference in tactic and amplifies polarization even more.

## **6. Conclusion**

This thesis set out to research how we can see polarization expressed through the securitization of immigration by right wing visual media outlets and desecuritization by right wing visual media outlets and desecuritization of immigration by left wing visual media outlets and their portrayal in this discourse. For this we examined discourse revolving around the 2018 migrant caravan by Tucker Carlson and Rachel Maddow as right- and left-wing news personalities.

The analysis reflected the literature discussed in the literature review. There was a case of ‘threat inflation’, ‘problematization’ and the creation of an ‘us’ vs ‘them’ narrative in the case of Carlson which indicates securitization. Maddow’s discourse indicated desecuritization through ‘threat pacification’, omission of elements of concern regarding migrants, minimizing the response after securitization and moving immigration back into the normal sphere of politics. The findings were also in line with previous scholarship on securitization and immigration policy. Both Carlson and Maddow used a number of language techniques to get their point across and further the process of securitization or desecuritization. This work has added to the scholarship in providing another work dealing with desecuritization which is relatively under researched as stated by Aradau. It further produced the finding that securitization of a subject in order to pacify the threat of another may also constitute a desecuritizing move, something which has not been mentioned in the scholarly works reviewed in this thesis.

Another way in which this thesis has added to the scholarship is through showing how polarization is expressed not just through securitization of a subject but also through portrayal of an opposite party. Polarization was already clear through the critical discourse analysis and employing securitization theory, however, by looking at how these parties represented each other it became clear that presenting the other a certain way could be used as well in an effort to securitize or desecuritize. Moreover we have observed how this amplifies the expression of polarization.

This work overall has demonstrated the usefulness of securitization/desecuritization theory in displaying characteristics of the U.S. political environment, namely, polarization. Especially the combination of discourse analysis and securitization has produced valuable results and has shed more light on how we can see issues such as immigration securitized/desecuritized and the

subsequent expression of polarization. This same method might be applied to the Black Lives Matter movement to explore whether we can see the same polarization take place. In general, critical discourse analysis using securitization theory might be particularly useful for issues similar to immigration that divide societies and bring about intense reactions from the public. Additionally, more research could be conducted on desecuritization theory to gain more knowledge on how to bring securitized subjects back out of the realm of extraordinary measures.

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