

# Security and the Duty to Protect

## *EU Migration and Border Control*



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**Master Thesis**

MSc Political Science

Track: International Organisation

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Word Count: 9908

12th January 2017

# *Abstract*

The problem of migration is a highly debated topic in international politics. This can be portrayed in the securitization of migration practices of the EU, which has pursued to control irregular migration ever since the Schengen Agreement. This thesis builds on the framework of both the Copenhagen and Paris Schools of securitization, to show how the process of securitization is present in EU border and migration practices. The aim is to look at how the process of securitization is illustrated in compassionate border work. An analysis of the main EU policies in the context of the Mediterranean crisis has been made. It shows that the process of securitization is persistent in practices dealing with border security, despite a shift of a humanitarian discourse. This thesis serves to display the complexities of the European anomaly of humanitarian border security.

# *Acknowledgements*

I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Yvonne Kleistra for her time and support throughout the journey. I would also like to thank Dr. Francesco Ragazzi, for agreeing to act as my second reader, whose guidance helped me in the completion of my thesis. To my parents, I am forever grateful for everything you have done for me.

Finally, I dedicate this thesis to those who have perished in search for a new life.

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# Chapter One

## *Introduction*

In the age of globalization international migration is an increasing phenomenon that goes beyond the nation-state sovereignty and transpires into a transnational issue and priority for the international community (Koser 2007, p.16). Several scholars argue that the securitization of migration emerged in Western Europe during the last three decades and has gained greater attention since the 9/11 terrorist attack (Huysmans 2000; Neal 2009; Bigo 2009). Indeed, in the language of the Critical Security Studies, 9/11 offered a discursive opportunity to frame the issue of migration as posing an existential threat to European states. And as a result, it helped justify practices in migration control that were usually reserved for national security threats (Buzan et al. 1998, pp. 23-6). A basic condition of such a securitization is the ‘speech act’, which places the issue in an “existentially hostile environment” (Huysmans 2006, p. 50). The construction of migration as a threat to national security shifts policy makers to security actors, providing a pretext for the more coercive migration control practices.

### **The Problem Statement**

However, the political discourse on the current refugee crisis illustrates a shift in the securitization paradigm marked by an emphasis on the language of ‘saving lives’, rather than constituting migrants as threats. This has allowed the EU to maintain its security response to the problem of migration under the rubric of compassionate border practices. Therefore, it is possible to recognize the emergence of a discourse of compassionate border security, which defies traditional understandings of border control. Although several scholars have examined in the EU context the birth of the humanitarian border control (Walters 2011; Pallister-Wilkins 2015; Basaran 2015), neither study reflects on the complexities posed by the incorporation of a humanitarian discourse by securitizing actors in border management. This thesis aims to fill this gap by offering an alternative conceptual framework, which can be used to explain how compassionate border practices create political opportunities, and have often detrimental effects on the lives of migrants by limiting safe channels of migration to Europe. This thesis argues that while the Critical Security Studies offer a useful account of how discourse can legitimize security practices, it cannot explain the more varied patterns of securitization that have emerged since 9/11.

## **The Research Question**

Consequently, in light of the present thesis the **research question** is as follows:

- What has been the effect of the shift from a securitizing to a compassionate discourse on practices of security at the EU border?

## **Overview**

The first part of the thesis begins with a literature review providing a summary of the most relevant research that can be used to explain the securitization process of the ‘European refugee crisis’. To do so, the thesis adopts the theoretical framework of the Copenhagen School’s theory of securitization, while also combining it with the Paris School approach to examine how the issue of migration can be used to study securitization. The following section offers the justification of the methodology employed in this empirical study. A discourse analysis is used to investigate the EU migration control practices in order to illustrate the institutionalisation of security practices in migration and border control initiatives. Next, the analysis chapter is presented which examines EU border and migration practices in light of the Mediterranean crisis. Lastly, the thesis finishes with the conclusion section which offers a discussion of the findings of the thesis.

# Chapter Two

## *Literature Review*

This section will proceed with a review of some of the key concepts within the securitization literature which connects migration to the security nexus. The literature background displays sections on the securitization of migration, including the concepts of human security and identity politics, followed by the EU border regime. This literature review is pertinent to the thesis topic, namely the process of securitization of migration and EU border control practices.

### **Security-Migration Nexus**

Europe has a long history of dealing with the issue of migration. In the aftermath of the Second World War, migrants and refugees were viewed as useful labour that could contribute to the period of economic recovery. The end of the bipolar conflict, however, increased waves of external migration to Europe, which marked a ‘clash of civilisations’. This created an emergency discourse, whereby fear was referenced to “the different, the alien, the undocumented migrant, the refugee, the Muslim, the non-European” (Ceyhan & Tsoukala, 2002, p. 22). As a result, migration has been portrayed as a ‘new focus for insecurity’ in Europe (Waever et al. 1993). This practice of moving the discourse on migration towards that of security is an instance of the logic of securitization, which has been the focus of a growing body of literature in recent years (Huysmans 2000; Leonard 2011; Waever et al., 1993). Thus, current flows of migration fit well into the security frame of the non-European migrant.

The main premise of the theory of securitization is the transformation of an issue into a security threat, regardless of whether the threat is real or not (Buzan et al. 1998). The securitization of migration operates on the process of construction of a threat and distrust between groups in the society, creating a “security spectacle” (Huysmans 2006, p. 60). This converts refugees and asylum seekers into means of “inscribing fear as a political currency and an organising principle in social and political relations” (Huysmans 2006, p. 61). Securitization can be thus understood in terms of “a more extreme version of politicization” (Buzan et al. 1998, p. 4), where ‘speech acts’ serve the political act of ‘talking into existence’ certain issues through “security-survival logic” (Emmers 2007, p. 110). The

securitization practices can be used to explain instances when such performative acts place issues on the security agenda.

An analysis into the current refugee crisis can be linked to a wider global policy discourse on migration, aimed at explaining the way migration is portrayed by the actors tasked with managing it (Geiger and Pecoud 2010). Therefore, it is important to pay attention to both the securitization of refugees within the public debate and the relevant policy discourse. In accordance with the Foucauldian theory, such discourse on migration can produce ‘political rationality’ that employs a ‘spectacularized public discourse mentality’ labelling migration as a security threat (Foucault cited in Zartaloudis 2011). Such discourse increasingly normalizes the use of coercive approaches to migration control ‘as part of the repertoire of justifiable practice’, whereby migrants are viewed as a security threat (Boswell and Geddes 2011).

This thesis aims to conceptualise migration as not just a security issue but an agency-driven migration narrative (Aradau 2008; Huysmans 2006). It is important to mention at this stage the human-state security juxtaposition invoked under the prism of the ‘human security’ theory. Human security came to the fore as a challenge to the traditional understanding of national security since it “conceives international security beyond military defence of states interests and territory” (Paris 2001, p. 87). The concept of human security can be applied to respond to new security threats to guarantee, for example “protection for peoples suffering through violent conflict, for those who are on the move whether out of migration or in the refugee status” (Liotta et al, 2007, p.15).

Despite this, Ronald Paris criticises the vagueness of the term due to its inclusive nature since the concept includes a wide range of issues. According to Paris, “if human security means almost anything, then it effectively means nothing” (Paris 2001, p. 93). This criticism is further explored by Huysmans and Squire who argue that “human security approaches to the migration-security nexus are problematic in terms of their potential reification of migration as a threat”, and thus risk “doing little more than pragmatically tinkering within the strategic frame of state security” (Huysmans and Squire 2009, p. 6).

The current refugee crisis can be understood as a puzzle for modern identity politics (Bauman 1991). As noted by Ceyhan and Tshoukla, in “securitarian discourses, culture, migration, and identity are linked to one another by the perception of the migrant as a ‘cultural other’ who comes into Western countries and disturbs their cultural identity” (Ceyhan and Tshoukla 2002, p. 28). In this manner, the emphasis of the European common identity conceptualizes refugees as the ‘other’ (Huysmans 2000, p. 10), as means of developing national identity and cohesion (Ceyhan and Tshoukla, 2002, p. 29). The growing feeling of ‘European’ insecurity shaped by the current waves of migration



has been developed into a number of political consequences, the most critical being the securitization of migration (Burgess 2011, p. 14).

## **The Border Regime**

Recently, the notion of the ‘border regime’ has experienced a vast scholarly interest (Albrecht 2002; Klepp 2010). Before further scrutiny, it is important to mention the different types of borders, namely the ‘territorial’, ‘organizational’ (e.g. referring to labour market), and ‘conceptual’ (e.g. referring to identity) (Geddes 2005, p. 789). In the traditional sense, borders symbolise social constructions on power play between those in charge, while also contributing to the ‘othering’ practices that emphasise the ‘us’ against ‘them’ theory. As a result, borders politicize migration through a “pronouncedly spatialized politics of identitarian difference” (De Genova 2010, p. 55). Therefore, the concept of migration can be regarded as a ‘border construction site’ that is more concerned with the symbolism behind a state’s ability to exercise control over its borders (Dauvergne 2008).

Furthermore, it can be argued that borders can represent means of differentiation, whereby certain groups’ freedom of movement is limited due to their societal status. This line of argument connects itself to the idea of “micro-politics of illegality” within which illegal immigration is referred to a “phantom that haunts the space of migration and security policy” (Walters 2010, pp. 83-88). The current refugee crisis illustrates the EU’s migration narrative which focuses on the interplay between “threat and criminalization” and “number games” (Vollmer 2011, p. 338), resulting in implementing restrictive migration policies. Furthermore, one could argue that in terms of the EU border regime, migration has not only been securitized, but also criminalized. The political climate shaped by the post 9/11 insecurity contributed to migration-security nexus. The 9/11 terrorist attacks further constructed the ‘governmentality of unease’ (Bigo 2002) transfiguring “global anxieties about migration into a mode of ruling” (Nyers 2010, p. 413). However, Boswell (2007) argues that there is very little evidence in support of attempts to securitize migration after 9/11. In fact, migration policies do not appear to have become securitized as expected. A main explanation is that the image of highly organized terrorist networks does not correspond with the image of desperate migrants arriving to the borders of Europe (Boswell 2007, p. 598). Additionally, as Koser (2011) claims, the terrorist linkage is not evident after the economic crisis beginning in 2008, which instead shifted the focus to economic threats of increased migration.

In sum, the literature review shows a gap when trying to apply the earlier knowledge on the current migration problem. The linkage between migration and terrorism is not obvious in the Mediterranean crisis, which rather has the dimension of a humanitarian urgency. Thus, the aim of this thesis is to contribute to the debate surrounding securitization practices in the policy domain of

migration. This thesis sheds light on the processes that influence border management in terms of security. It illustrates that in the midst of the ongoing migration crisis even the most prospective asylum seekers face increasing difficulties to enter Europe. Thus, the EU consensus on strengthening external borders undermines international rules relating to the protection of human rights. Ultimately, the EU's response to the refugee crisis is one of constructing "a new landscape of walls" (Van Houtum and Pijpers 2007, p. 306).

# Chapter Three

## *Theoretical Framework*

This thesis aims to explain the process of securitization of migrants with an emphasis on the refugee flow in Europe. The theory of securitization is discussed in greater detail drawing on two conceptual approaches – the Copenhagen School and the Paris School of Security Studies.

### **Development of Security**

Until the 1980's consensus prevailed in Critical Security Studies which focused on military threats for states within an anarchic international system. The end of the Cold War however, brought about vast changes. Some of the old threats, such as interstate wars were disappearing from the world agenda, while new threats, such as ethnic conflict and domestic instability were emerging. This has caused a “real security gap” (Kaldor 2007, p. 10), whereby states have lost their ability to respond to the new threats. When the Soviet Union disintegrated in 1989, the identity-creating narrative lost its power (Huysmans 2006, p. 16). At the same time the fall of the Iron Curtain opened up academic redefinitions of the concept of security (Buzan 1993, p. 1). In this context a wide range of issues were included into the field of Critical Security Studies, among the problem of migration (Booth 1991, p. 320). Correspondingly, another discussion emerged which defines security as a discourse framing non-military issues influenced by the scholars of the Copenhagen School (Huysmans 2006, p. 16).

### **The Copenhagen School**

As discussed above, the end of the Cold War marked a widening of the concept of security. The Copenhagen School defines security as “the move that takes politics beyond the established rules of the game and frames the issue either as a special kind of politics or as above politics” (Buzan et al. 1998, p. 23). In this manner, the concept of securitization was first introduced by the Copenhagen School of Security Studies.

Unlike the traditional realist approaches to security that largely focus on the relations between states, the securitization theory took the notion of security to a different level, focusing on the social construction of threats. In *'Security: a New Framework for Analysis'* (1998), authors Barry Buzan, Ole

Waever and Jaap de Wilde, argue that securitization is a constructivist “quality actors inject into issues by securitizing” (Buzan et al. 1998, p. 204). The defining feature of securitization is a ‘linguistic action’ or a ‘speech act’ marked by a specific rhetoric of ‘urgency’ and ‘priority’ (Buzan et al. 1998).

Yet, ‘speaking security’ is not the only a way of representing an issue in a specific way, but also a way of influencing policies. For instance, Huysmans argues that “policies depend heavily on the language through which they are politicised” (Huysmans 2006, p. 6). Thus, the role of language and speech acts is not merely to describe, but also to mobilise certain meanings, creating a ‘domain of insecurity’, which is further tackled through specific security policies. To become securitized, the issue needs to be formulated in terms of an ‘existential threat’, requiring extraordinary counter-measures. To put it simply, when “a securitizing actor uses rhetoric of existential threat and thereby takes an issue out of what under those conditions is ‘normal politics’, we have a case of securitization” (Buzan et al. 1998, p. 24). This gives the ‘securitizing actor’ the authority to implement measures that would otherwise be restricted by the normal bounds of political procedure, underlying the ‘speech act’ towards the ‘audience’.

Furthermore, securitization can only occur when there is a specific relationship between the speaker and the audience (Buzan et al. 1998, p. 26). First, the actor needs sufficient institutional and political authority to shape policy outcomes. Second, the audience must be receptive and allow the speaker to legitimize measures against the constructed threat and enable security politics to deal with the matter (Neal 2009, p. 335). McDonald formulates it as the “suspension of normal politics in dealing with that issue” (McDonald 2008, p. 567).

A complete securitization relies on three basic elements, including ‘existential threats’, ‘emergency action’, and ‘effects on inter-unit relations by breaking free of rules’ (Buzan et al. 1998, p. 26), compromised by a scale ranging from ‘non-politicized’ through ‘politicized’ to ‘securitized’ (Buzan & Hansen 2009, p. 214). The non-politicized level includes security subjects that do not concern the public and so it is virtually needless for a government to deal with them. On the other hand, moving up the rank, the politicization level becomes a part of public policy agenda, and when extreme measures are required to tackle an existential threat, the practice of securitization occurs (Collins 2007, p. 111).

## **The Paris School**

The theory of securitization developed by the Copenhagen School generated a broad debate about its applicability. According to the Copenhagen School, there are only security issues which have been constructed as threats through ‘speech acts’, thus the unit of analysis is overwhelmingly linguistic in nature, offering a narrow framework.

There are instances when logic of security is at play, despite the fact that there is no securitizing discourse impeded through speech acts. What is more, certain reoccurring threats, such as terrorism, become institutionalised over time, thus a new process of securitization is unnecessary (Buzan & Waever 2003, pp. 27-28). This means that to study cases of institutionalised securitization, one cannot be limited to focusing entirely on security discourses. To address this limitation it is useful to broaden the framework to include non-discourse practices, such as the functioning of bureaucracies or policy-making. This would allow an issue to become securitized not only through the speech act discourse, but also through other acts connected to security practices.

Leonard (2010) refers to the work of Didier Bigo, a member of the Paris School, who developed a different approach to identity securitization acts. Leonard points out that it is important to analyse securitization not only on the basis of speech acts but also on policy practices and the implementation of particular measures (Leonard 2010, p. 235). Huysmans explains that the political security discourses are interlinked with the practices, such as technological devices used for border management (Huysmans 2004, p. 307). Bigo claims that the securitization of migration appears through successful speech acts and the mobilisation against particular groups but also through administrative practices, including population profiling, risk assessment, and category creation (Bigo 2002, pp. 65-66).

In other words, Bigo claims that analysing non-discursive practices of the security professionals in addition to political discourses may disclose useful anomalies. The complexity of EU border management surpasses “that of the political theatre of securitization”, meaning one should disengage from “a spectacular dialectic of norm/exception and [become] more concerned with an ongoing process of incremental normalization” (Neal 2009, p. 353). In relation to increased border controls sparked by the refugee crisis, a study based on Bigo’s approach, for example, would not only include discourse on borders, but would also require the analysis of how migration and border policies are justified in practice.

Nonetheless, the discourse linking migration with security has undergone a long process of naturalisation, achieving a particular stage when the so called migration-security nexus became visible. In other words, the securitization of migration has reached a stage of institutionalisation, meaning that the security logic has become ‘normalised’ in the EU migration policies. This means that in order to justify the implementation of exceptional border control measures, the refugee crisis has been articulated in terms of humanitarian paradigm.

## Development of Compassionate Border Control

Although the relationship between humanitarianism and security has a long history of academic interest (Aradau 2004; Huysmans et al. 2006; Fassin 2012), the humanitarian-security nexus in regards to migration is itself a very recent development. As supported by Williams, even though “humanitarianism has long been the handmaiden of imperialist and militarized interventions (...) the humanitarianisation of borders and border enforcement is a relatively new phenomenon linked to the rise of more restrictive and violent enforcement regimes” (Williams 2015, p. 14). These regimes are designed to “manage, regulate, and support the existence of human beings” (Fassin 2012, p. 1), shaping hegemonic discourse on migration, whereby bordering practices are a method of “compensating for the social violence embodied in the regime of migration control” (Walters 2011, p. 139).

The effects of the humanitarian border regimes reflect on Foucault’s (1998) biopolitical modes of governance, in where biopolitics represent modern means of exercising power characterized by politics of compassion. As Feldman and Ticktin contend, “to speak on behalf of humanity stakes out a powerful position” (Feldman and Ticktin 2010, p. 1). Nonetheless, these biopolitical efforts often “oscillate between sentiments of sympathy on the one hand and concern for order on the other, between a politics of pity and policies of control” (Fassin 2005, pp. 355-366). Thus, humanity can be linked to both compassion and security, as “there is no care without control” (Agier 2011, pp. 4-5).

This presents us with a paradox of EU border control, when migrants classified as ‘at’ risk become ‘a’ risk for border policing agencies (Arendt 1973, pp. 267–302). Accordingly, the anomaly of the duty to protect, between protection of the asylum seeker and the protection of borders, demonstrates conflicting priorities between the need to protect the welfare of a migrant and the need to manage migration (Bigo 2006, pp. 89-90). Thus, in order to observe securitization one must begin the study with the analysis of the practices and not the speech act. This goes in favour with the Paris School of thought as discourse on the problem of migration has changed while practice has remained the same.

In light of this thesis the **hypothesis** is presented as follows:

- ❖ Despite the shift of humanitarian discourse towards the problem of migration the practice of security is persistent.

# Chapter Four

## *Methodology*

This thesis employs a critical discourse analysis along with a secondary data analysis to investigate how the securitization of EU border management practices has evolved. This thesis adopts an interpretive case study of the on-going migration crisis in the Mediterranean. The following subsections provide clarification and justification of the appropriate tools of analysis selected for this thesis.

### **Research Design**

This thesis is an interpretive case study with EU migration and border management practices as object of analysis. The case study is “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly defined” (Yin 2003, p. 13). The study process is one of qualitative research, whereby the analysis of a social problem is carried out in a natural setting to grasp an understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Creswell 1998). Accordingly, from an interpretive perspective, the researcher can generate a well-founded comprehension of the nature of current processes (Orlikowski & Baroudi 1991). Interpretive research presumes “that our knowledge of reality is gained only through social constructions such as language, consciousness, shared meanings, documents, tools, and other artefacts” (Klein & Myers 1999 p. 69). As a result, the researcher’s interpretations play a significant role by bringing “such subjectivity to the fore, backed with quality arguments rather than statistical exactness” (Garcia & Quek 1997, p. 459). Due to the fact that the EU is a unique actor within international politics, it is rather difficult to apply the result of the study in other contexts. Thus, the focus of this case study will be on drawing a credible interpretation of EU policy practices, followed by a critique of the securitized responses to the migration crisis.

### **Method**

Because securitization theory assumes security is a socially constructed term, discourse analysis is considered as the appropriate method under this section. Accordingly, discourse analysis must be

considered not just as a method, but also as a perspective “on the nature of language and its relationship to the central issues of the social sciences” (Phillips & Hardy 2002, p. 222). Due to the ‘linguistic’ nature of the theory of securitization, this thesis adopts two different strands of the theory, the Copenhagen School and the Paris School approach. The Copenhagen School suggests that discourse analysis is an appropriate tool to discover securitizing languages in, for example policy documents, while Paris School demands an additional investigation of policy practices because not all policy proposals come into force. As a result, the use of discourse analysis by securitization conforms to the tradition of critical discourse analysis (CDA) (Fairclough 1992). CDA focuses on how “discourse actively structures the social space within which actors act through the constitution of concepts, objects and subject positions” (Phillips & Hardy 2002, p. 25). In line with the securitization theory and its constructivist approach, CDA offers an extensive description of the social practices involved in the evolution of representations of a threat image. Thus, CDA is a powerful tool of scrutiny of other textual and non-textual practices of securitization to uncover unequal relations of power (Hansen 2000).

Due to the fact that the securitization theory represents the theoretical framework of this thesis, one must establish the extent to which discourse of humanitarianism and migration is linguistically connected in terms of securitized measures (Fairclough 2010, p. 234). Thus, the thesis borrows from CDA’s analytical dimensions, including the study of the characteristics of the texts, the uses of dialogue in texts, and the context (social practice) that is produced in the official language (Fairclough 1992). The official documents will be examined through intertextual chains to map out similar features between EU practices, in particular looking for overarching vocabulary. Next, a contextual analysis will be applied to comprehend what kind of ideology depicts the EU dialogue on migration management. Through the contextual analysis one is able to determine the connection between the discursive and social practices. Thus, a critical discourse analysis allows the researcher to describe, interpret and explain social processes. This will offer insights into what security implications EU prioritizes in its migration and border policies, and how this is the outcome of discourse.

The critical discourse analysis is applied to show a shift in speech act articulating the problem of migration, however to show that the EU migration practice remains securitized it is important to conduct a secondary data analysis. Preferably, the thesis would base its analysis on ethnographic or participant observation research but due to time and budget constraints of the present thesis, secondary analysis offers a beneficial feature of the study. It involves the process of re-examining qualitative data derived from, for example previous research studies on the topic under investigation. In principle, secondary analysis can be used to investigate additional research questions, or it can be used to verify the findings of previous research (Heaton 2008, pp. 34-35).



## **Case Selection**

The “primary criterion for case selection should be relevance to the research objective of the study” (George & Bennett 2005 p. 83), the refugee crisis and EU external border control represent one of the most interesting cases to investigate the concept of security. The European Commission views the “fight against illegal migration of third country nationals” as a central component of EU common migration policy (European Commission 2006a, p. 2). Mixed flows of migration create a special kind of political challenge, as it threatens state sovereignty, as well as undermines legitimacy of state actions (Huysmans 2006, p. 49). Since the enactment of the Schengen agreements, external borders and irregular migration have become critical subjects of analysis in the context of migration-security nexus (Hayes 2009, p. 33). Therefore, the current refugee crisis offers a most-likely case for prevalence of securitized practices.

Furthermore, the period under study should not be too limited, since the logic of policy-making is expected to evolve over the course of time. Considering that the policy document of the Global Approach to Migration and Mobility (GAMM) has been revised in 2011, it is a good starting date for analysis. The following years marked increasing deaths of migrants attempting to cross the Mediterranean, which kept the situation high on the agenda. Moreover, 1,255,640 of migrants applied for asylum in 2015, which amounts to 123% more asylum applicants than in 2014. Also, Europe became the victim of brutal terrorist attacks in Paris and Brussels, which stimulated talks on the possible danger of irregular migration. Hence the period under study will roughly cover the period from 2011 until the time when the empirical analysis is carried out in 2016.

## **Data Selection**

Since the focus of this thesis is on the official discourse, expressed in policy practices, the main source of material are official publications by EU agencies. The argument for this decision is the high level of relevance of official texts, and the easy accessibility to data disclosed by EU bodies. Because of the political significance and influence over Member States, the EU is an interesting object of scrutiny. The material is strategically chosen with the aim to create a general picture of EU migration and border management policies. To improve generalizability a wide range of official EU documents have been analysed ranging from communications, to press releases and reports on EU migration policy. Presently, there are two main policy documents that oversee the EU responses to migration, namely GAMM and the ‘European Agenda on Migration’. Since its creation in 2005, GAMM has been promoted by the European Commission as the overarching framework of EU external migration and asylum policy. On the other hand, the Agenda offers long-term initiatives designed exclusively to deal with the refugee crisis. Although this thesis focuses on EU policy-making with regards to the Mediterranean crisis, it is reasonable to start the initial analysis with Commission’s

Communications. Rather than presenting primarily EU citizens, like the European Parliament, the European Commission strives to represent the interests of the Union. Therefore, the Commission can be viewed as the least influenced by national interest, but also the most genuinely ‘European’ body. Further data includes the ‘Action Plan on Migration’ along with official documents linked to the website of Frontex, which serves as the driving logic of policy-making in the realm of migration and border control.

## **Operationalization**

Building upon the Copenhagen School’s emphasis on speech acts and the Paris School’s emphasis on administrative practice and technological responses, the study is based on the idea that migration does not have to be explicitly defined in terms of security. This supports the earlier argument that despite the shift in articulation of the political discourse towards compassionate border work, the practice remains to hold a concept of security. The process of securitization may initiate the manner in which a social problem is framed and implemented in administrative and institutional set-ups highlighting securitized logic (Huysmans 2006, pp. 3-4), as well as technological responses to migration (Bigo 2002). Thus, the main aim of the following analysis is to illustrate that justifications of exceptional responses to the refugee crisis may be embedded in political and institutional domains based on a humanitarian discourse.

# Chapter Five

## *Analysis*

The following section includes the main analysis of EU border and migration policies with regards to the refugee crisis. The EU responses to the problem of migration will be examined through a CDA and secondary data analysis, described in the Methodology chapter. To recall, the aim of this thesis is to illustrate that despite the shift of humanitarian discourse towards the problem of migration the practice of security is persistent. The research question is: What has been the effect of the shift from a securitizing to a compassionate discourse on practices of security at the EU border?

### **EU Responses to the Problem of Migration**

Three years ago, on October 2013, 366 people drowned off the coast of Italy's Lampedusa Island as a result of a shipwreck, causing one of the highest death tolls in the Mediterranean Sea. The Lampedusa tragedy was met with an international outcry for greater safeguarding of refugees and asylum seekers. In April 2015, President of the European Council Donald Tusk has stated that we "cannot accept that hundreds of people die when they try to cross the sea to Europe" (Tusk 2015). Despite Tusk's call, the EU has responded to the crisis through a containment approach, which is based on the logic of compassion. This shift has evolved dramatically over the course of the refugee crisis to the extent that compassionate border control is now widely visible in the official policy documents of the EU.

#### *'Global Approach to Migration and Mobility'*

It can be agreed that the Commission's 2011 'Global Approach to Migration and Mobility' (GAMM) displayed some of the first characteristics of the humanitarian logic in practices of border security. The revised GAMM programme emphasized a migrant-centred approach "with the aim of empowering migrants and strengthening their human rights in countries of origin, transit and destination" (European Commission 2011b). It states that "migration governance is not about "flows", "stocks", and "routes", it is all about human beings (European Commission 2011a, p. 6). Therefore, GAMM strives to promote human rights for migrants irrespective of their legal status with special

attention “paid to protecting and empowering vulnerable migrants, such as unaccompanied minors, asylum-seekers, stateless persons and victims of trafficking” (European Commission 2011a, p. 6).

Moreover, GAMM promotes the rights of migrants by stressing the need to “increase cooperation with relevant non-EU countries (...) to offer a higher standard of international protection for asylum-seekers and displaced people who remain in the region of origin of conflicts or persecution” (European Commission 2011a, p. 17). Also, the Commission acknowledges that the processes for legal migration are often over-bureaucratic, which forces many asylum seekers to seek illegal means of migration. As a result, it emphasizes the need to counter human trafficking by “focusing on prevention, prosecution of criminals and protection of victims” (European Commission 2011a, p. 16). Therefore, the overarching goal of the revised GAMM is to “address, more systematically, migrant rights and the empowerment of migrants” (European Commission 2011a, p. 19).

### *‘Ten Point Action Plan on Migration’*

The first document to illustrate the change in discourse can be found in the ‘Ten Point Action Plan on Migration’ produced by the Joint Foreign and Home Affairs Council of the European Commission. The Action Plan is marked by humanitarian references to “the dire situation in the Mediterranean” urging the European community to “make a difference” based on securitized and military responses (European Commission 2015c). It calls for an “EU wide voluntary pilot project on resettlement, offering a number of places for persons in need of protection”, but to do so it requires “fingerprinting of all migrants” to manage the “rapid return of irregular migrants coordinated by Frontex” (European Commission 2015). Moreover, it justifies the reinforcement of Joint Frontex Operations – Triton and Poseidon – as means to “capture and destroy vessels used by the smugglers” (European Commission 2015).

Correspondingly, the European Council has declared the Mediterranean crisis as a “human emergency” stating that the EU’s “immediate priority is to prevent more people from dying at sea” (European Council 2015). In a statement following its Special Meeting of 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2015, the Council has “therefore decided to strengthen our presence at sea, to fight the traffickers, to prevent illegal migration flows and to reinforce internal solidarity and responsibility” (European Council 2015). This discourse illustrates an emphasis of security-based measures to “undertake systematic efforts to identify, capture and destroy vessels before they are used by traffickers” (European Council 2015), facilitating EU military intervention on the cost of North Africa.

### *‘European Agenda on Migration’*

On 13<sup>th</sup> of May 2015, the ‘European Agenda on Migration’ was published in response to the “plight of thousands of migrants putting their lives in peril to cross the Mediterranean” (European

Agenda on Migration 2015, p. 2). It sets out to offer solutions “based on a holistic approach that takes into account all dimensions of the issue (...) which would also have positive effects on internal security” (European Parliament 2015). The Agenda offers an approach to better manage a common migration policy with a “consensus for rapid action to save lives and to step up EU action” (European Commission 2015a, p. 3).

The European Commission states that in addition “to the relocation of those already on EU soil, the EU has a duty to contribute its share in helping displaced persons in clear need of international protection” (European Commission 2015a, p. 4). The document illustrates the moral discourse of the tragedy of vulnerable migrants crossing the Mediterranean, while also making references to the need for strengthened border security. Under this section, the humanitarian argument used is one of vulnerable persons “who cannot be left to resort to the criminal networks of smugglers and traffickers” (European Commission 2015a, p. 4). According to the European Commission, the management of the problem of migration is first and foremost an action of the well-being of the displaced persons “to prevent the exploitation of migrants by criminal networks” (European Commission 2015a, p. 8). In order to assist Member States in “helping to save lives of migrants at sea”, the European Commission has announced a tripling of the funding of Frontex “coordinating operational border support to Member States under pressure” (European Commission 2015, p. 3).

Moreover, to restore “the level of intervention provided under the former Italian ‘Mare Nostrum’ operation” (European Council Conclusions 2015, p. 3), the Commission adopted the new Triton Operation Plan extending Frontex’s role in search and rescue operations. And although Frontex states that the duty to save lives is its prime concern, “the focus of Joint Operation Triton will be primarily border management” (Frontex 2014). This statement is a clear example of EU’s securitized approach to managing external borders. In 2015, Operation Sophia was created under the prism of “ending the human tragedy in the Mediterranean Sea” (de Rousiers 2015), however its main tasks included the searching, capturing and return of boats suspected of belonging to traffickers. Furthermore, Operation Sophia targets traffickers’ vessels that are often overcrowded with migrants which could potentially endanger their lives (ECRE 2015). Thus, one could argue that containment measures are ineffective in managing migration flows, by forcing migrants towards more hazardous and illegal routes of reaching Europe.

Despite an emphasis on the need to save lives, the focus clearly lies on border security. In terms of ‘saving lives’, the Agenda calls for closer cooperation with coastguards, as they “have a crucial role for both saving lives and securing maritime borders” (European Agenda on Migration 2015, p. 11). Therefore, it could be argued that border management is not so much concerned with saving lives but strengthening the EU’s external borders. For instance, the Agenda introduced the ‘Smart Borders

initiative', which sets out to improve the efficiency of border crossings "in the fight against irregular migration" (European Agenda on Migration 2015, p. 11).

What is more, the Agenda mentions Frontex cooperation with "key African and neighbourhood countries" to strengthen their capacity to secure EU borders but also to save more lives (European Agenda on Migration 2015, p. 11). However, it is important to point out that stronger border controls in transit countries reduce the number of people entering the EU in an irregular manner, which in turn undermines one's chances to seek international protection. The externalization of migration management displayed in the Agenda stresses the need to cooperate with transit countries, including Libya and Turkey, to both prevent irregular migrants and return failed asylum seekers from Europe (Wolff 2014). In 2013, the EU has signed the Readmission Agreement with Turkey set out to improve joint efforts on stemming the flows of migration (European Council 2015). However, few days after signing the deal 1,300 asylum seekers have been detained by Turkish authorities whose claims for international protection have been pushed back (ECRE 2015). Furthermore, some of the partnership countries are themselves producing refugees, for example the Eritrean regime has been accused of systematically abusing human rights (Human Rights Watch 2015). It is practices like these that raise concern about the values that the EU corresponds in its policies in the context of the refugee crisis.

With the sea arrivals of migrants rising rapidly, the European Commission produced a further priority action plan listing short-term and long-term initiatives (European Commission 2015d). The document justified the militarization of Operations Poseidon and Triton stating that every "life lost is one too many, but many more have been rescued that would have been lost otherwise" (European Commission 2015d, pp. 3-4). Furthermore, the action plan sets out to resettle 160,000 persons "in need of international protection", and offer €3.9 billion in aid to Syrians and host countries, all under the prism of humanitarian discourse of "strong border control" practices (European Commission 2015d, p. 4). This document reinforces the idea that in light of the ongoing refugee crisis, the EU migration management practices are framed almost exclusively in terms of compassionate border control.

## **Concluding Remarks on the Analysis**

What makes the European refugee crisis a curious case to study is the evolution of militarised border security responses placing all aspects of border security under compassionate rubric. In this context, the EU's emphasis on smugglers is a critical aspect of the EU border security practices that distances itself from the cause of the crisis and the plight of thousands of migrants. As a consequence, the 'European Agenda on Migration' and the 'EU Action Plan against migration smuggling 2015-2020' (European Commission 2015e) have been used to justify military action that would otherwise produce international opposition.

Apart from the problems of having to distinguish between a smuggler and a migrant and the possible dangers that this creates, the Commission fails to acknowledge that the creation of smuggling networks have in part been triggered by the 1990's closure of regular channels for migration. This re-problematisation allows the EU to present the problem of migration as an outcome of criminality rather than as a by-product of coercive border security and migration practices. As a consequence, the EU has depoliticized the political context in which the Mediterranean crisis is situated. Moreover, the discourse of 'crisis' allows for military responses to be paired with compassionate border control to better manage irregular flows of migration. As stated by the Vice-President Commissioner, Dimitris Avramopoulos, the "unprecedented influx of migrants at our borders (...) is unfortunately the new norm and we will need to adjust our responses accordingly" (European Commission 2015b).

The EU's response to the refugee crisis refers to Ticktin's "armed love", where "brutal measures may accompany actions in the name of care and rescue – measures that ultimately work to reinforce an oppressive order" (Ticktin 2011, p. 5). Therefore, what can be observed in the EU's response to the refugee crisis is a new form of governmentality including compassionate border control, which depicts the asylum seeker as the 'victim', the smuggler as the 'criminal', and the EU as the 'rescuer'. Despite the EU's urgency of the problem of migration, this thesis adopts a view that the EU policies do not offer systematic solutions that would allow for legal migration of asylum seekers under international protection. This analysis reinforces the argument that although a humanitarian discourse has been adopted by the EU, the practices remain securitized through the focus on border security and the externalization of border controls.

# Chapter Six

## *Conclusion*

This thesis has analysed the paradox of humanitarian logics in EU border control practices. Although a shift towards compassionate border controls can be observed, the securitized measures pose a serious threat to the well-being of migrants. The argument of this thesis is that the use of humanitarian rhetoric in EU responses to the Mediterranean crisis fundamentally serves to reinforce securitizing practices. As this thesis has illustrated, the EU seeks to employ a form of humanitarianism that focuses on the criminality of smugglers as means to justify securitized responses. In doing so, the EU envisions itself as the ‘saviour’ of vulnerable migrants who must be managed appropriately. This thesis elaborates on earlier body of research, particularly Wilkins (2015) and Horsti (2012), which investigate the linguistic and conceptual procedures that border practitioners use to justify their actions relating to border control.

The analysis section documents the recent shift towards compassionate patterns in EU responses to the problem of migration, by studying how this shift progressed during the Mediterranean crisis. The results of this thesis further contribute to the wider research by displaying that the use of humanitarianism as a justification for securitization is notable at the EU policy-making level. Furthermore, by examining the use of humanitarian logic in the case of the refugee crisis, this thesis offers an important insight into the manner in which the EU border regime defends migration management from international critique. To date, the majority of studies within the securitization literature have concentrated on discourses alone, whereas this thesis incorporates the former with a study of EU practices. This thesis argues that while the Copenhagen School of thought offers a useful account of how discourse can legitimize security practices, it cannot explain the more varied patterns of securitization that have emerged since the Mediterranean crisis. This goes in favour of the Paris School of thought as discourse on the problem of migration has changed from securitized to compassionate, while the practice of security has remained the same. This provides a new perspective on the political uses of compassionate rubric during the management of the refugee crisis.



## Discussion

The use of compassion in border control policies raises questions about its potential to offer a counter-narrative. As previously stated, a number of scholars have contended that humanitarianism is often politicized by elites who wish to escape moral criticism for actions they deem ill-suited. Scholars, such as Dauvergne (2013), have claimed that humanitarianism has a pragmatic quality in trying to ensure that liberal countries respect the norms and values they profess to obey. However, in reality humanitarianism is constructed by states maximizing their relative interests. Thus, the humanitarian governmentality of the EU reflects the “profound contradiction between the noble goals of humanitarianism (saving endangered lives and alleviating suffering everywhere in an indiscriminate manner) and concrete terms under which humanitarian agents have to operate (producing inequalities and hierarchies” (Fassin 2010, p. 244).

Due to the fact that humanitarianism is employed by states in emergency situations, efforts to oppose the violation of human rights should begin with a critique of the routines in which securitization neglects human lives. The emphasis of security and military practices is not only ill-suited but it is also ineffective in saving lives of displaced persons (Duncan Breen 2016, p. 21). Security measures do not succeed in stopping irregular flows of migration, but instead divert them towards more hazardous routes, often relying on smuggler’s networks, which the EU made its mission to combat (Healy 2015). Under the prism of compassion, the EU has been able to produce militarized policies, whereby the lives of migrants identified as vulnerable can also become targets by security agencies.

Nonetheless, a potential weakness of this study is the focus on a policy based perspective. Instead, future analysis could be extended to the persons directly affected by these policies. Preferably, such analysis would base its design on ethnographic research through the use of methods, such as participant observation and face-to-face interviewing. A recommended avenue for further research into the problem of migration is that focusing on the need to open more legal routes to Europe. Through improving legal channels of migration, the EU could reduce the incentives for migrants to rely on smugglers, and thus prevent more tragedies in the Mediterranean. What is more, the externalization of border and migration management should be challenged by researchers. Border management and readmission agreements with third countries should be enacted only with partner states whose legislative framework for asylum is in line with the fair and humane Common European Asylum System (CEAS). Accordingly, more research should be dedicated to promoting democratisation and conflict resolution in refugee-producing regimes, instead of the overarching focus on the EU containment approach to irregular migration. Therefore, this thesis concludes that the security paradigm under the prism of compassionate border control needs to be challenged by further research.

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