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**The Role of Emotions in the Construction of the EU's
External Borders: A Discourse Analysis of Fear and Pity in
the Securitization of Migration in 2015-2016**

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Master in International Studies

Supervisor:

PhD João Malagueta Terrenas, Invited Assistant Professor,
ISCTE-Lisbon University Institute

July, 2024



SOCIOLOGIA
E POLÍTICAS PÚBLICAS

History Department

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“Fear is the power by which the community is preserved.”
– Nietzsche, Notes (1880-81)

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Abstract

This dissertation unpacks the power of emotions in the securitization of migration during the 2015 refugee crisis, shedding light on how pity and fear affected the European integrated border regime. Building up on the Securitization Theory developed by the Copenhagen School, the dissertation studies the role of emotions in the discursive construction of threats and the entailed policy responses. It sets out to trace registers of emotions in the EU's discourses to understand whether and how such elements are relevant for the securitization of migration and the construction of a strict border regime. Unlike most of the literature on emotions in the securitization of migration, I argue that pity, instead of fear, is the predominant emotion through which the EU frames refugees and asylum seekers. Using a poststructuralist-inspired discourse analysis framework in the speeches of the European Commission between 2015 and 2016, when multiple border policies were formulated and altered, the frequency of pity-inducing content paradoxically appears at odds with the restrictive actions proposed by the European Agenda on Migration. However, drawing upon Securitization Theory, it can be argued that pity is the element that allows the EU to effectively construct the refugee crisis as an existential threat to which extraordinary policy responses are produced and justified. On the other hand, by directing fear-inducing content to individual and disaggregated responses of Member States towards the crisis, the EU was able to subvert it into a securitized discourse that justifies the reinforcement of the EU's integrated border regime.

Keywords: Borders, Securitization, Copenhagen, Migration Crisis, Emotions, Discourse Analysis, Post-structuralism

Resumo

Essa dissertação explora o poder das emoções na securitização das migrações durante a crise de refugiados de 2015, focando em como a pena e o medo afetam o regime integrado de fronteiras da União Europeia (UE). Usando a teoria da securitização proposta pela Escola de Copenhaga como base, a dissertação propõe a análise do papel das emoções na construção discursiva de ameaças e as consequentes políticas estabelecidas. O estudo então procura por registos de emoções nos discursos da UE para entender como tais elementos são relevantes para a securitização das migrações e a construção de um regime de fronteiras reforçado. É então argumentado que pena, em vez de medo, é a emoção predominante através da qual a UE enquadra refugiados e requerentes de asilo. Usando análise crítica de discurso de inspiração pós-estruturalista nos discursos da Comissão Europeia entre 2015-2016, quando mutiplas políticas de fronteira foram formuladas e alteradas, a frequência de conteúdo indutor de pena é paradoxalmente incompatível com as ações restritivas propostas pela Agenda Europeia para as Migrações. No entanto, usando a teoria da securitização é possível observar que pena é o elemento que permite a UE efetivamente construir a crise de refugiados como uma ameaça existencial para a qual políticas extraordinárias são formuladas e justificadas. Por outro lado, direcionando conteúdo indutor de medo a repostas individuais e desagregadas de seus Estados Membros relativamente à crise, a UE subverte a crise num discurso securitário que justifica o reforço da gestão integrada de fronteiras.

Palavras-chave: Fronteiras, Securitização, Copenhaga, Crise Migratória, Emoções, Análise de Discurso, Pós-estruturalismo

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List of Acronyms

CEAS – Common European Asylum System

EC – European Community

ECHR – European Convention on Human Rights

ECtHR – European Court of Human Rights

EU – European Union

EUAA – European Agency for Asylum

EUROSUR – European Border Surveillance System

IOM – International Organization for Migration

IR – International Relations

JHA– Justice and Home Affairs

SAR – Search and Rescue

SBC – Schengen Borders Code

TCN – Third Country Nationals

ST – Securitization Theory

Introduction

The establishment of a free movement zone within the space of the European Union (EU) is arguably one of the greatest achievements of the European integration project. The removal of borders between the EU's Member States during the 1990's and 2000's represented, for the nationals of those states, the possibility of free travel, work, and residency in any EU country. Concomitantly, this process institutionalized a common EU external border, established with the aim of guaranteeing the security of the free movement zone and of European citizens.

The evolution of the EU external border led to many criticisms over the years, particularly in the context of the 2015-2016 refugee crisis in the Mediterranean. The crisis unveiled how the nature of the EU's border regime is significantly based on the control over the entry of Third Country Nationals (TCNs), and how the boundaries between Europe and the rest of the world became a highly fortified construct. The gradual reinforcing of the EU's external borders has been represented by practices that go beyond ordinary checks at the frontiers when a TCN enters a Schengen country. The EU has focused on agreements with third countries, defined as practices of externalization of border control, and the deployment of military in the Mediterranean, geographically expanding its border regime with the aim of curbing irregular migration.

As a result, the EU's common external borders evolved as a highly surveilled system of practices and mechanisms that intend to keep unsolicited arrivals of migrants in check, under the banner of assuring the Union's security. This system encountered strong censures when conflicts in the Middle East and the North of Africa led to an increase in migration towards Europe. Refugees and asylum seekers¹ were welcomed with physical, technological, and bureaucratic walls, designed to prevent their entry. As legal pathways of entry did not accompany the evolution of the EU's border regime, migrants were left with no choice but paying smugglers to cross them into the EU through alternative, often dangerous, routes. This led to the EU's external border being labeled as 'the deadliest border in the world'², for in such journeys many individuals lost their lives.

¹ Throughout the dissertation I use the terms *asylum seekers* to define individuals who seek international protection but do not enjoy the status of refugee as established by the 1951 Geneva Convention, *refugees* referring to individuals who meet the eligibility criteria and were ultimately granted the status of refugee according to the same legal instruments, *irregular migrants* as individuals who breached the legal conditions of entry and/or stay in the territory of a host or transit state, and *migrant* as a broad category encompassing, *inter alia*, all the ones specified above.

² The IOM estimates more than 5,000 casualties in the Mediterranean during the refugee crisis (IOM, 2017). In a project called Missing Migrants, the IOM counts more than 29,000 migrants missing in the Mediterranean since 2014 to the day of writing (IOM, n.d), suggesting a continuum in how the trend has evolved.

In this way, the European integrated border management (Raimondo 2024) has been associated with multiple exclusionary practices, justified by the frequently evoked mantra on security. Historically, this trend has been legitimized by the transformation of international migration into a security discourse, whereby migrants are associated with potential threats. This discourse was strongly reinforced by the terrorist attacks of 9/11, raising concerns about security threats posed by individuals crossing borders, and resulting in the propaganda connecting international mobility with terrorism, human trafficking, and other forms of cross-border crime.

The transformation of migration into a security threat has been explored by Security Studies scholarship, which understands the end of the Cold War as catalyst for the identification of multiple issues, until then not belonging to the realm of international security, as potential threats. In this post-war transition, human mobility has drawn particular attention. Scholars contributing to the Copenhagen School (Wæver, 2011, 2015; Buzan & Wæver, 2003; Balzacq, 2011) have explored how the framing of issues like migration as security threats is a product of discursive practices that socially construct them as such. This framework became known as Securitization Theory (ST), and suggests that security policies, such as the reinforcement of borders, are essentially the product of discursive construction of threats.

The process of threat construction defined by ST often mention emotions, such as fear. For something to be successfully defined as a threat, it depends on certain perceptions generated in the public that involves affects and emotions. However, the emotional dimension of ST has remained largely descriptive. This breach was explored by Erik Van Rythoven (2015, 2021), arguing that something is only effectively framed as a security threat when the audience perceives it as such at the emotional level. Building up on that, this dissertation aims to enrich the literature on emotions in ST, which remains underexplored.

Writing about the 2015 refugee crisis, Bauman (2016) states that refugees and asylum seekers are constantly framed under categories of threat because they tend to cause fear and anxiety in European societies. Drawing upon this idea, the objective of this dissertation is to propose a viewpoint on the role played by emotions in the discursive framing of migration as a threat during the 2015-2016 refugee crisis in Europe. The study aims to identify the presence of emotion-inducing content in the EU's discursive framing of refugees and asylum seekers, and how emotions connect with the policies proposed by the Union. Therefore, the dissertation explores the extent to which the transformation of migration into a security discourse in this period was enabled by emotion-inducing discourses.

During the crisis, the evolution of the European integrated border management was seen as a reactive process related to threat perceptions to internal security, whereby migration was identified as an external threat and securitized with the aim of protecting the integrity of the Schengen zone (Huysmans, 2000). However, despite the extensive literature on the securitization of migration in the EU, and how it contributes to fortify the EU's external borders, the emotional components within this process remain, to a large extent, little-known. To fill this gap, the research questions explored in this dissertation are: How do emotions contribute to the shaping of border policies in the EU? How can this be observed in the case of the 2015 refugee crisis? What emotions are displayed in the European Commission's speeches and what policies they entail?

At the operational level, the analysis uses ST to unpack how certain modalities of managing migration and borders are rendered possible through the discursive construction of the migration crisis as an existential threat to the EU. The emotional component is analyzed through the observation of emotion-arousing content in the European Commission's discourses during 2015-2016. The presence and frequency of the emotional element is explored through the poststructuralist inspired discourse analysis framework developed by Lene Hansen (2006). The data was gathered through the analysis of a discursive *corpus* of 46 official speeches published on behalf of the European Commission during the selected period, observing both the emotional components and the border policies presented by the EU in these speeches.

The analysis and discussion of the collected data allowed the identification of three main conclusions. Firstly, a significant amount of emotionally charged content in the EU's speeches was recognized, categorizing refugees, asylum seekers, and the broader crisis within an emotional imagery. Contrary to the expectations of finding prevalent fear-inducing content, the analysis revealed a predominant use of pity rather than fear. This compassionate framing appears incongruent with the EU's border policies established during the crisis, illustrated by the militarization and externalization of the EU's common external borders that resulted in increased vulnerabilities faced by individuals seeking asylum in the EU.

However, a second conclusion, based on the study of politics of pity and risk. as proposed by Claudia Aradau (2004), suggests that the employment of pity towards refugees and asylum seekers is precisely what allows the EU to appropriate the refugee crisis into a securitizing discourse whereby strict border policies are naturalized and justified. The humanitarian narrative, embedded in pity-related content, enables the EU to exercise its agency in the Mediterranean, controlling and disciplining flows of forced migration while reasserting its own identity as a humanitarian actor responsible for the well-being of those who are

portrayed as defenseless migrants. Furthermore, although the analyzed speeches initially included more pity-arousing content, there was a noticeable shift as the crisis progressed. Pity gradually gave way to fear in the representation of migrants, particularly after the 2015 terrorist attacks in Paris. However, when comparing the policies proposed by the Commission, whether related to pity or fear, the reshaping of the EU's border regime was strictly focused on strengthening borders. The evolution of border and migration policies proposed by the EU observed in contrast with the emotional content of the speeches analyzed thus indicates that politics of pity and politics of fear are not mutually exclusive, but rather mutually constitutive and, to some extent, mutually reinforcing. Both emotional registers are often uttered to justify the same: the strengthening and externalization of the EU's borders, while protecting the EU's identity as a normative power and authorizing a series of discourses and practices that render migrants even more vulnerable.

The last conclusion underscores a distinct articulation of European identity, which is shaped by the emotional portrayal of the European past as a threatening Other. The presence of fear-inducing content when discussing the ramifications of Member States' independent actions during the crisis suggests that the emotional construction of the EU's borders extends beyond the physical realm. It also involves a temporal dimension, depicting Europe's past as its own adversary. This further indicates that emotions play a pivotal role in producing and reproducing the EU's external borders in multiple dimensions. It forms a complex narrative that encompasses not only Europe's geographical boundaries, but also its myths and conceptualizations.

The dissertation is structured as follows: chapter 1 explores the construction of the EU's common external borders and the evolution of the European integrated border management, focusing on how this process has evolved and projected Europe's borders far beyond its physical boundaries. Chapter 2 introduces the securitization framework provided by the Copenhagen School, followed by an explanation of how migration has become a security issue throughout the years and how this process has been embedded in the EU's border policies. Chapter 3 proceeds to unpack the emotional component of this study, debunking the historical introduction of emotions in international politics in general and Security Studies in specific. Chapter 4 explains the methods used in the dissertation, presenting the poststructuralist framework of discourse analysis developed by Hansen (2006), and justifying the selection of discursive body of texts chosen for the analysis. Chapter 5 presents the analysis and discussion of the selected speeches of European Commission published in 2015-2016, debunking the intermingling of emotions, securitization, and the construction of the EU's common borders.

Finally, the conclusion summarizes the main findings of this study and suggests further guidelines for the research of emotions in ST and border studies.

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Chapter 1 - The Construction of the EU's External Borders

The construction of a common EU external border, resulting from the incorporation of the Schengen Agreements into EU law via the 1999 Treaty of Amsterdam, has sparked numerous debates involving issues of sovereignty, security, and identity (Huysmans, 2000; Mezzadra & Neilson, 2013; Dias & Freire, 2023). These discussions are particularly pertinent in times of crisis (Perkowski *et al.*, 2023). The 2015-2016 refugee crisis, and the policy responses established by the EU, emphasized the idea of a Fortress Europe characterized by the free movement of EU citizens within the Union's borders while Third Country Nationals (TCN) face heightened surveillance and multiple entry procedures, creating a paradox between liberalization of intra-EU movement and the stringent control over non-EU nationals. This chapter sets out to unfold the historical and political construction of the EU's common external borders, tracing from the establishment of the Schengen area to policies that challenge the traditional notion of borders as mere physical demarcations between territories. Drawing on European borders in specific, and in the general literature on Border Studies more broadly, the chapter sheds light on the various mechanisms through which the EU's borders have been produced and managed hitherto, taking shape in different ways and expanding far beyond what would normally be considered the physical territory of the Union.

1.1 - The EU's common external borders

During the 1990's and early 2000's the European Community (EC) sought to deepen integration through the creation of a free movement zone where borders between Member States would be abolished, allowing the free movement of people within the space of the community. As internal borders were dissolved, the EC drove attention to the management of its common external border, which was gradually reinforced under the premise that a zone of free movement would require strong control over the external border (Huysmans, 2000; Wolff, 2008; Dias & Freire, 2022; Raimondo, 2024). In this way, as the establishment of a free movement zone resulted in disaggregated borders between Member States (Vaughan-Williams, 2008), the construction of Schengen presupposed a set of compensatory measures to "secure the external frontiers of the Union through tougher border controls and more restrictive immigration and asylum policies" (Bosilca, 2021, p. 476), as well as the base for a Common European Asylum System (CEAS).

Currently, the common laws governing the Schengen space are codified in the Schengen Borders Code (SBC) and fall under the EU's jurisdiction concerning the area of freedom, security and justice. This provision forms the legal foundation for the shared competences between the EU and its Member States in the managing migration. Article 77 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) serves as the legal foundation for the EU's authority over border management. It establishes "the absence of any control on persons, whatever their nationality, when crossing internal borders" (*Art. 77, TFEU*), but also "the gradual introduction of an integrated management system for external borders" (*Ibid.*), as well as checks on people crossing the external border and a common policy on visas and residence permits.

However, since border control is deeply intertwined with state sovereignty, the treaties also include measures to limit the EU's competences in the matter, such as article 4(2) of the Treaty of the European Union which establishes that the EU shall respect Member States' national identity inherent to their political and constitutional structures, and Articles 72 and 73 of the TFUE regarding internal security of Member States (Raimondo, 2024). In this way, the EU's authority regarding border and migration controls is shared with Member States, for despite the Europeanization of migration, asylum, and border policies observed in the past years, Member States remain free to decide the number of migrants allowed in their territories. Furthermore, the SBC establishes exceptional conditions upon which temporary internal border controls can be implemented, namely article 25, which reads as follows:

Where, in the area without internal border control, there is a serious threat to public policy or internal security in a Member State, that Member State may exceptionally reintroduce border control at all or specific parts of its internal borders for a limited period of up to 30 days or for the foreseeable duration of the serious threat if its duration exceeds 30 days. The scope and durations of the temporary reintroduction of border control at internal borders shall not exceed what is strictly necessary to respond to the serious threat. (European Parliament and the Council of the European Union, 2016, Article 25[1])

The temporary reintroduction of internal border controls was implemented during the COVID-19 Pandemic, for example. Between 2020 and 2022 more than 180 notifications of temporary reintroduction of internal border controls were presented by the EU's Member States (European Commission, n.d - c), resulting in the temporary closing of multiple internal borders.

Despite the circumstances under which Member States call for article 25 of the SBC being clearly illustrated by the pandemic, Member States also frequently reintroduced internal border controls during the 2015-2016 refugee crisis. Countries such as Germany, Austria, Hungary, Sweden, Norway, and Denmark called for article 25 under the premises of threats posed by “Unprecedented influx of persons” and “Continuous big influx of persons seeking international protection” (*Ibid.*), revealing how migration was equated to a security threat during the crisis. The framing of immigration as a security threat, however, was not a phenomenon introduced in the EU exclusively by the refugee crisis. The links between migration and threat became part of the EU’s security agenda after the terrorist attacks of 9/11, when the perceived threat of terrorism increased the focus on external border controls. This resulted in further Europeanization of border management, namely through the establishment of Frontex in 2004 as a “pan-European model of integrated border security” (Vaughan-Williams, 2008, p. 65).

Frontex is currently the agency responsible for, in collaboration with Member States, implementing the European integrated border regime, and acts in support of national governments upon request. This shows how the Europeanization of border controls consists of “soft integration methods” (Raimondo, 2024, p. 14) where Member States remain responsible for the portion of the EU external border respective to their territory. In this regard, Frontex has been described as a result from “the unreconciled relationship between member states’ sovereign responsibility for border control on behalf of Schengen, and attempts at solidarity, facilitation, and coordination in border control at the European level [...]” (Pallister-Wilkins, 2015, p. 58), meaning that albeit border control remains under individual member states’ sovereignty, Frontex overlaps this regime and creates “divergent regimes of control and responsibility” (*Ibid.*). The creation of Frontex paved the way for the militarization of the EU’s external borders and, in tandem, the creation of technological mechanisms of surveillance such as EUROSUR and Eurodac, as well as flying drones along the south borders to prevent irregular migration (Milivojevic, 2013). Thus, the EU’s promotion of an area of freedom, security and justice evolves simultaneously with the regulation of TCNs entry and an appeal for cooperation in border management, resulting in what has been called a Fortress Europe (Geddes & Scholten, 2016).

The European Commission defines the EU’s external borders as “The parts of a Schengen Member State’s border, including land borders, river and lake borders, sea borders and their airports, river ports, sea ports and lake ports, that are not common borders with another Schengen Member State” (European Commission, n.d - a). However, the practices of

border management employed by the EU since the early 2000's indicate that its borders are no longer placed where they would be according to territorial grounds (Vaughan-Williams, 2008). The military operations carried out by Frontex have crossed over what would be the EU border according to Commission's definition. For instance, operations HERA I and HERA II involved surveillance over African territories with the aim to "deter would-be migrants from making the journey to the EU" (*Ibid.*, p. 68). The EU has also built a ring of extraterritorial processing camps (shoreside sites of detention and screening) for migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers through agreements between Member States, Frontex and the European Neighborhood (Levy, 2010). These actions illustrate how the European integrated border management stretches outwards from the EU's actual frontier and consist in "European border performances albeit hundreds of miles away from Europe [...] in spaces other than we might conventionally understand to be 'border areas'" (*Ibid.*).

Against this backdrop, it is suggested that the European integrated border management is composed by different universes and practices. Bigo (2014) argues that the European border regime can be analyzed in three different perspectives. The first one concerns the military-strategic field, defined by the militarization of border regime through operations conducted by Frontex and national agencies to defend "an imaginary line dividing the Mediterranean Sea between North and South" (Bigo, 2014, p. 212). The second is defined as the external dimension of internal security, where borders are defined as 'liquid' places kept open to flows of mobility while simultaneous filtering wanted from unwanted migrants based on the criteria of what border guards perceive as legality/illegality (*ibid.*, p. 214). The third universe consists of cyber-surveillance, where borders are mobile, "digitalized through computer knowledge" (*Ibid.*, p. 217), and constructed through digital databases that track personal information of individuals travelling. Through global cyber-surveillance border control, the EU borders have become increasingly deterritorialized, projecting their shadows beyond the EU's territory.

Shachar (2020) argues that the classic Westphalian configuration of borders as static frontiers, linked to territoriality, is no longer the exclusive reality of boundaries between states. As territorial borders establish the scope of states jurisdiction according to their territory only, in a world where international migration cannot be deterred by national borders (Mezzadra & Neilson, 2013) states seek other forms of border control that bleed inward and stretch outward of their territory, aiming to regulate mobility before and after migrants cross the physical border. This new 'shifting border', as describes Shachar, consists in disconnecting mobility control from the state's territory to other states and actors, allowing the states to regulate

migration before individuals cross the territorial border³. The EU's shifting border can be illustrated by practices of externalization that sub-contract non-European states to "preempt migratory movements before they ever reach European territory" (De Genova, 2017, p. 12). This allows the Union to control migration through pre-entry controls, readmission agreements and strengthening asylum capacity in third countries such as Türkiye and Libya (Casas-Cortes et al. 2015; Müller & Slominski, 2021). In the EU-Africa border context, for instance, the EU exercises its border management through performative practices exercised by border management agencies, while non-state actors resist such practices and thus also participate in the shaping of the EU's external borders (Vammen *et al.*, 2022). Thus, contrary to the Commission's definition, there is a larger array of practices and techniques that place the EU's borders far beyond the territory of its Member States, which allows the EU to exercise multiple forms of mobility control in places other than its territory.

In brief, the European integrated border management encompasses a complex structure of legislation, policies, and agencies established with the aim of controlling migration in general, and irregular migration in specific, at the EU's external borders as well as in origin and transit countries. This process illustrates how the EU's border regime was reinforced since the implementation of the Schengen agreements into EU law, based on the premise of assuring internal security. Events such as the 9/11 terrorist attacks and the 2015-2016 refugee crisis further perpetuated the notion that border reinforcement was necessary to preserve the Union's internal security, resulting in enhanced surveillance mechanisms over TCNs.

1.2 - The (in)security paradox in the EU's border and migration management

As seen in the previous session, the construction and management of European borders is highly linked to migration governance, and a strong concern regarding the consequences of migration to internal security. During the 2015-2016 refugee crisis, however, the framing of migration as a threat was not only constructed based on the EU as the referent object of security, but also migrants themselves. The EU's humanitarian narrative constantly emphasized the vulnerabilities migrants faced in crossing the Mediterranean, in particular when smugglers were involved. Building up on that, Hein de Haas (2023) claims that the association of irregular

³ Shachar (2020) illustrates this control through visa screenings and security checks in airports before passengers embark on international flights, as well as interdiction abroad, carrier sanctions, and other legal mechanisms that allow states to control mobility outside of their territory.

migration with a threat is mostly related to the smuggling rhetoric, which is based on the notion that smuggling is the root cause of irregular migration. This idea, however, was the base for many actions that resulted in the strengthening of the EU's external borders, such as military operations in the Mediterranean. These actions, in turn, encouraged smuggling by restricting entry channels to the EU.

Smuggling is defined as “the use by migrants of paid or unpaid intermediaries (smugglers) to cross borders without prior authorization, either as part of human transaction or humanitarian activism.” (De Haas, 2023, p. x). In this way, different from abduction and exploitation of individuals, smuggling consists in a voluntary “service delivery” (*Ibid.*) that migrants are willing to pay to cross the EU's borders without being arrested. Hereof, it is suggested that the anti-smuggling rhetoric employed by the EU to reinforce its external borders is what encourages it: as it becomes increasingly difficult to cross borders legally, migrants seek for alternatives for doing so, namely through contracting smugglers (Sales, 2005).

The policies employed by the EU with the aim of fighting smuggling, therefore, contradicted the humanitarian discourse which praises for the security of migrants. As perceived insecurity originating from the threats associated with migration results in the reinforcement of the EU's external borders, these policies often result in insecurities faced by migrants, in specific refugees and asylum seekers, trying to cross borders (Dias & Freire, 2022). The lack of possibilities for legal entry makes refugees and asylum seekers resort to contracting smugglers that often expose these individuals to risks, culminating in the thousands of casualties and missing migrants in the Mediterranean.

Nonetheless, smugglers are not the only factor related to migrant vulnerability. Often omitted from the EU's official discourses are the accusations against Member States and Frontex of exposing migrants crossing borders to violence. The Evros river region, for example, has been largely commented since 2015, where multiple reports from pushbacks suggest that border polices and coast guards have made use of force to stop refugees and asylum seekers to cross into the EU (Pallister-Wilkins, 2015; Waters et al., 2020; Rankin, 2020; Smith, 2020; Council of Europe, 2022). This indicates that migrant insecurity is not only a product of smuggling, but rather of the very border regime employed by the EU.

These practices are defined as pushbacks, measures taken by states to force migrants outwards of its borders without giving them a chance to claim international protection (European Parliament, 2021). Pushbacks are associated with violent techniques of deportation that violate international law (Lorenz & Etzold, 2022, p. 212), in particular the principle of *non-réfoulement* prohibiting states from returning individuals to a country where they may be

subjected to violence, and the prohibition of collective expulsion of aliens (article 4 of protocol n.4 of the ECHR)⁴. These practices, in contrast with the EU's humanitarian discourse on refugees, represent a paradox whereby the humanitarian narrative is constantly at odds with the actual border policing exercised by the Union and its Member States (Pallister-Wilkins, 2015). Increased humanitarian justifications for border management mechanisms are constantly reiterated in the EU's discourses, specifically justifying the development of Frontex and its military operations. However, the growing accusations of Human Rights violations at the EU's external borders suggests that the humanitarian narrative remains merely as an ornament, suggesting a "tension between the need to care for migrant welfare and the need to control migrant mobility." (Pallister-Wilkins, 2015, p. 54). In this regard, despite the narrative on Human Rights protection, as soon as migrants cross the border, the ultimate goal and duty of national and European border police is to protect the 'borders of Europe', and as a result "humanitarian governance operates in conjunction with territoriality fixated border policing which produces, at its extreme, the contradictory practice of push-backs" (*Ibid.*, p. 57). This conflicting narrative is also illustrated by the cases where irregular migrants are effectively rescued by European and national agencies but then arrested and kept held in detention centres, showing how quickly they are transmuted from being 'at risk' to being 'the risk'.

Building up on that, it is suggested that the 2015 refugee crisis was, to a certain extent, a result of the very European integrated border management. To some extent, the crisis was made possible by everyday practices that restrict legal ways of entry, leaving "few alternatives other than unsafe and irregular forms of transport for those fleeing conflict and poverty" (Jeandesboz & Pallister-Wilkins, 2016, p. 316). For this reason, migration crises are produced by routine to the extent that the EU's border regime is a condition *sine qua non* for refugees and asylum seekers to resort to alternative, dangerous ways of crossing borders. On the other hand, migration crises produce routine to the extent that they trigger political responses that would normally not be possible. Thus, the two dimensions are related to each other and appear as "mutual conditions of possibility" (*Ibid.*, p. 317).

Seeking to contextualize the empirical terrain and the debates in which this thesis unfolds, this chapter provided an overview of the European integrated border management, its

⁴ A very illustrative case of such measures was the case of *Hirsi Jamaa and Others v. Italy* (2009), where the Italian government was brought to court on the grounds of violation of article 4 of protocol n.4. The facts say that about two hundred individuals on board of three vessels leaving the Libyan coast towards Italy were intercepted by Italian military ships in the Maltese Search and Rescue (SAR) region and taken back to Libya without being given the chance to claim asylum. The individuals were further handled to Libyan authorities against their will (ECtHR, 2012).

legal basis, and how it has expanded over the years to borderlands that exceed the EU's territory. It was explained how the creation and evolution of the EU's external borders is largely contingent upon the systematic reification of a link between migration, risk, and insecurity. This link will be explored in the next chapter through the Securitization framework proposed by the Copenhagen School, focusing on how social practices and discourses make possible specific modalities of security policies based on the social construction of threats.

Chapter 2 - Securitization of migration and the EU external border

The framing of migration as a security threat to the EU and the integrity of Schengen was essential to the emergence of a strict border regime since the establishment of the free movement zone. To better understand how the link between security and migration has come about in the EU context and how it resulted in the strengthening of the EU's external borders, this chapter delves into the Securitization Theory (ST) developed by the Copenhagen School. ST was selected as this dissertation's theoretical framework because it focuses on how security threats are socially constructed through practices and discourses. The first part of the chapter provides an overview of the theory, explaining its core concepts and the divergences in the academic debate. The second part sets in frame how migration has been studied through the lenses of ST in the European context, and how the establishment of specific border policies may be a product of the social construction of migration as a security threat to the Union.

2.1 - Securitization Theory: the speech act and discursive construction of threats

Buzan and Wæver (2003) argue that immigration has increasingly become part of the European security agenda after 1989. This was a result of the end of the existential threat represented by the Soviet Union to the West, which drew attention to other issues not considered security problems until then. Attention to these issues and their integration into the West's security agenda prompted Security Studies scholars to explore with further depth the concept of security. As a result, Security Studies scholars developed a rich palette to understand what exactly security is.

Buzan and Hansen (2009) suggest that security can be epistemologically subdivided in three categories: objective approaches, subjective approaches, and discursive approaches. The first is related to strategic studies and is based on the idea that security is about objective external threats to a referential object – the state. Subjective approaches, on the other hand, highlight the significance of historical context and societal norms, the psychological dynamics of fear and how perceptions can be distorted, shaping how threats are perceived and framed (Buzan & Hansen, 2009, p. 33). The discursive approach states that security threats, whether objective or subjective, do not exist as given facts. Instead, it claims that threats are socially constructed through discourses. Hansen (2006) describes the discursive approach in the following words: “For problems or facts to become questions of security, they need therefore to be successfully constructed as such within political discourse” (Hansen, 2006, p. 33-4). This

approach, however, does not aim to undermine security or select what constitutes a legitimate security issue, but to deconstruct the “discursive and historic specificity” (*ibid.*) of security, disclosing its discursive and performative aspects.

The discursive approach was developed by the Copenhagen School, exploring the discursive construction of threats as a central element for the occurrence of security policies. Drawing upon the Speech Act theory developed by John L. Austin (1970), Wæver (1995, 2011, 2015) claims that issues become security threats through speech acts. Ruth Wodak (1996) defines speech acts as instruments that “designate an action and simultaneously carry it out.” (Wodak, 1996, p. 17), suggesting that specific policies formulated in response to a security threat and the discursive construction of that threat are mutually constitutive. For Wæver, thus, security is about the utterance itself instead of a given fact of the international order. The speech act allows the speaker to designate a threat and, as a result, formulate security policies to deal with that threat. The speech act, therefore, provided the grounds for ST, highlighting how security is made possible through discursive statements. ST highlights the role of language and the way it is used to produce security, claiming that speech acts produce effects in the hearers that “can affect feelings, attitudes, and subsequent behaviour [...]” (Vuori, 2016, p. 66).

According to ST, when an actor in a position of power (e.g. state representatives) says ‘security’, a state of emergency is declared, and upon the declaration of such state of emergency the deployment of extraordinary political measures is justified, making political responses that would not be acceptable in everyday politics be interpreted as natural and/or necessary. Using a poststructuralist framework to analyze security, Hansen (2006) states that “Policy discourses construct – as do discourses in general – problems, objects, and subjects, but they are also simultaneously articulating *policies* to address them” (Hansen, 2006, p. 21). In this way, ST argues that security policies are simultaneously created and legitimized through discourses that depict a particular issue as an existential threat.

For the Copenhagen School, speech acts, instead of merely descriptive statements, are discursive practices that have a productive power that shapes social reality by framing something as a threat. For this reason, in ST it is claimed that speech acts consist in how “the strategic action of discourse operates at the level of persuasion and uses various artefacts (metaphors, emotions, stereotypes, gestures, silence, and even lies)” (Balzacq, 2011, p. 2) to define something as a threat and thus produce or reproduce a social reality in which the issue is taken as a security threat. ST thus uncovers how security has a dimension of discourse and performativity, suggesting that language is a central piece around which international actors define what counts as security and what does not. In a deeper analysis, this process includes a

binary logic whereby identities of the Self and the Other are (re)produced. The production of the Other as a threat emphasizes its identity and subjectivity, justifying the transition of the Other to the realm of an existential threat via security discourses (Abrahamsen, 2005; Hansen, 2006).

ST understands that the discursive construction of an existential threat occurs in a process constituted by a securitizing actor, a referent object, and a relative audience. The securitizing move happens in the following way: the securitizing actor depicts the referent object as an existential threat to the audience, and the acceptance of the audience of the relevant object as a security threat justifies the use of extraordinary policies, designated as security policies, that exceed the realm of everyday politics (Wæver, 1995).

This process, however, has in powerful political results as it establishes a particular reality in which an issue is taken as a security threat and justifies the use of extraordinary political means to curb that threat. Abrahamsen (2005) argues that instead of merely a symbolic or linguistic act, securitizing processes have clear political implications: “Identifying something as a security issue is not an innocent practice: it changes the legitimate modes of engagement with a particular problem” (Abrahamsen, 2005, p. 68). This is exemplified by Abrahamsen in her study on the securitization of Africa after the 9/11 attacks, arguing that the position established through Tony Blair’s speeches contributed to the shifting of a “development/humanitarianism” approach towards Africa to a “risk/fear/insecurity” (*Ibid.*, p. 55), shaping the ways in which the UK participated in the global war on terror.

In brief, this process exemplifies how the securitization framework works in practice: it consists in a) the discursive construction of a threat and b) the establishment of extraordinary security policies to fight that threat. The process of shaping and reshaping policies upon the discursive construction of a threat resumes ST and reveals how the framing of issues as threats results in significant political implications.

2.2 - Securitization variants: from the speech act to the sociological approach

While the original, now defined as the philosophical, variation of ST focuses on the role of language in the process of threat construction, a second variant suggests that beyond speech acts security is also a product of social practices. This approach is defined as the sociological variant of ST and claims that albeit discursive practices are important to the construction of threats, securitization may happen with little or no discursive practices at all (Balzacq, 2011). The sociological variant sheds light on everyday practices and professional communities that

are essential to the process of securitization. Specifically, it focuses on what is often invisible in discourses, such as risk assessment, official documents, military operations, and other policy outcomes that occur without a discourse justifying them. Hence, the linguistic dimension of security may be overlapped by non-discursive practices that socially construct threats as much as speech acts do.

Case studies have been eager to use the sociological variant of ST as it provides a larger scope for understanding how security comes about. Léonard and Kaunert (2022), while agreeing with speech act theory, explore how non-discursive practices employed by Frontex played an important role in the securitization of migration in the EU. The authors claim that the deployment of military means in the Mediterranean generates the message that irregular migration is a security threat, socially constructing it as such (Léonard & Kaunert, 2022, p. 1420). Therefore, while using the speech act theory to understand how migration has become securitized in the EU, they add that non-discursive practices are also an essential element in this process.

The sociological variant, however, received criticisms grounded on the extent to which it continues to contribute to the theoretical framework originally proposed by the theory. Wæver (2015) argues that the introduction of the idea of co-production of security between the securitizing actor and the audience broadened the debate beyond its original focus on discourse. While agreeing that the role of material conditions must not be left behind, Wæver criticizes the sociological variant arguing that it falls of the scope of the theory. By attempting to define securitization as practices rather than speech acts, the sociological variant excludes the co-productive character of securitization by suggesting that securitization may occur without the role of the audience.

However, regardless of the way that something is constructed as a security threat, whether exclusively through discourse or ensemble with non-discursive practices, both variants of ST converge in the idea that the response to the perceived threat falls into the realm of politics of the extraordinary. In this regard, the common denominator of ST is the “declaration of existential threat and (if successful) the generation of the capacity to break free of the rules of ‘normal’ politics” (Williams, 2015, p. 115).

In sum, ST puts forward two different ways of analysing the social construction of threats and the entailed policy responses. While the original version of the theory developed by the Copenhagen School claims that threat construction occurs primarily through speech acts, the sociological variant contests such premise and suggests that threat construction may happen with no discourse, through social practices conducted by security actors. Nevertheless, both

approaches converge in the response that is given to that threat, whether this process has been linguistic or practical. Both approaches understand that security policies are made possible essentially through the social construction of threats, and these policies often represent actions that would otherwise not be possible without framing something as a security threat in the first place, indicating that rather than given facts ‘out there’, threats are rather socially produced and reproduced through discourses and practices.

2.3 – Unearthing the migration-security nexus

The increasing association between migration and security, henceforth defined as the migration-security nexus (following Huysmans and Squire, 2016) has been examined from various perspectives. Overall, these analyses can be divided between traditional and critical approaches. Whilst the first takes the link between migration and security at face value and seek to explain why migration represents a security threat, the latter questions this link and, instead, seek to investigate how the migration-security nexus is socially constructed.

Traditional strategic views focus primarily on the state as the referent object, analyzing the security implications of migration from a national standpoint (Buzan, 1991; Buzan & Hansen, 2009). This approach focuses on how migration influences the state and its population, both negatively as well as positively, in national development, social cohesion, and economic growth (Huysmans & Squire, 2016, p. 163). In this context, migrations are often framed as a threat based on the notion that immigrants may overburden the state’s economic and environmental sectors, particularly in countries where these sectors are fragile or limited (Buzan, 1991).

A different perspective posits that migration becomes associated with a security threat primarily at the societal level, suggesting that culturally and/or ethnically different groups may conflict with the native population of the host country, raising “local fears about cultural and ethnic purity” (*ibid.*, p. 94). Huysmans (2000) explores both arguments, stating that in the 1980's there was a shift in how migration was framed in policy circles, depicting it as a potential threat to public order and domestic stability, specifically concerning states' welfare and cultural identity. At the EU level, it is argued that the migration is not only used as a base for polarization over national identity, but also as the foundation for debates over European identity, where we observe strong disagreements between EU officials and national government representatives (Newsome et al., 2021, p. 443).

Bigo (2002) unpacks the reasons behind the association of migration with security threats in the EU, arguing that it consists in a three-dimensional dynamic comprising states, politicians, and security professionals. In the first dimension, it is assumed that the legitimacy of the state comes from its citizens, meaning that the nature of states' identity and legitimacy is constructed on a binary relation between nationals and foreigners (or TCNs in the case of the EU). The second dimension is based on the legitimacy that politicians obtain from representing situations as security threats, which highlights how ST has been used to analyze the transformation migration-security nexus. This is essentially related to the worries of politicians in losing their power over the state's borders and, to the votes that they get by discursively creating problems that they can solve. In this way, terrorism, cross-border crime, unemployment, and loss of cultural identity become associated with immigration to produce unease in host societies and justify stricter border controls. The third dimension concerns the practices of security agencies working on the field of management of unease. Border agencies such as Frontex have played an essential role in producing and reproducing migration as a security issue through practices such as operations in the Mediterranean. The called 'experts of management of unease' have, through the authority given to them by their expertise, the power to tell the audience what counts as a threat and what does not. This last dimension also illustrates how the sociological variant of ST has been applied to the migration-security nexus.

Nonetheless, the study of the migration-security nexus is not limited to state-centric viewpoints. Recently, there has been consistent scholarly focusing on individual security of migrants, shifting the attention to the vulnerabilities experienced by such individuals in their journeys to and stay in the host country. The concept of Human Security, as suggested by the UNDP Human Development Report of 1994, redefines security by shifting the focus from territories to individuals, offering a framework that extends beyond the nation-state (UNDP, 1994). It emphasizes the importance of Human Security, suggesting it is as crucial, if not more so, than state security, encouraging a new approach in Security Studies.

This idea has been transposed to the subject of migration, highlighting the human dimension of migrants and how traditional approaches to security often result in insecurities to them. These lenses have been largely used by humanitarian groups and scholars to analyze migrant insecurity and border management in the European context: shifting the attention from the security of the EU towards the security of migrants crossing borders, arguing that the former often results in insecurities experienced by the latter (Dias & Freire, 2021).

Nevertheless, both approaches converge in equating migration to a threat, be that a threat to the state or to the migrant (Huysmans & Squire, 2016), and for this reason these

approaches pose limitations. Building up on that, critical approaches engage on how the articulation of migration as a threat is made possible through discourses and practices. Concerned with the effects of the political framing of migration as a threat on public perception and opinion formation (*Ibid.*, p. 164), critical approaches shift the attention to how migration is made to be understood as a security threat. These perspectives often use the framework provided by the Copenhagen School to understand how an issue comes about as a security threat. In this way, ST provides fertile ground to explore the migration-security nexus, as exemplified by Bigo's (2002) argument mentioned above.

2.4 - Securitization of migration in the EU

Up until now, this chapter explored what ST is, how it has evolved through the contribution of different approaches, as well as how it has been used to explore the transformation of migration into a security issue in the post-Cold War context. This section turns the focus towards the specific case of the construction of migration as threat in the EU. Using the securitization framework, the section discloses how this process is linked to the evolution of the European integrated border regime, reviewing the securitization-inspired literature that investigates the connection between re-bordering practices in the EU and the social construction of migration as a security threat.

Huysmans (2000) argues that as the EC evolved and eventually developed an area of freedom, security and justice, the drafting of common policies rapidly linked the dismantling of internal borders between Member States with a need to reinforce the Community's external borders. The gradual focus on strengthening external borders in the 1990's and 2000's is associated with the idea that the abolishment of border controls within the European Community would require the reinforcement of the common external border "to guarantee a sufficient level of control of who and what can legitimately enter the space of free movement." (Huysmans, 2000, p. 759). Dias and Freire (2022) argue that this was largely a product of the discursive construction of a threat that encompasses cross-border crime and irregular migration. Building up on that, the link between migration and the EU's border regime rests, on the one hand, in the narrative construction of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers as a risk (e.g. collapsing asylum systems, undermining state sovereignty through irregular border crossings, risks to societal insecurity), and on the other hand the premise that it is possible to control such risks through reinforced border controls (Huysmans, 2000).

The securitization of migration in the EU is also associated to cultural security, argues Huysmans (2000). As the European project seeks to integrate not only at the institutional level but also at the cultural one, immigration of TCNs to the EU has been transformed into a security discourse on the premise that large numbers of migrants may threaten cultural homogeneity. Such discourses represent migration as a "cultural challenge to social and political integration" (Huysmans, 2000, p. 762), and, therefore, mobilize a security rhetoric in migration and asylum policies.

Aydın-Düzgit (2014) argues that the securitization of migration, particularly coming from the EU's southern neighborhood, is part of the construction of European identity through the creation of the Mediterranean as a highly securitized space that enables an Insider/Outsider articulation of identity. The shaping and reshaping of the EU's external borders produced by the enlargement process solidifies such borders through their securitization, using the rhetoric on smuggling, terrorism, and irregular migration. This is sustained by Wæver's concept of societal security (1995), whereby threats are not necessarily represented by the outside through other states but more so by the inside through threats to society, culture, and national identity. In this regard, securitization of migration in the EU trespasses the border dilemma and is materialized under a domestic security discourse portraying migrants living in EU Member States as a threat to cultural homogeneity.

Applying the ST framework, it could be argued that the construction of a reinforced common EU border was made possible by a threat construction based on the way irregular migrants, and migration more broadly, are framed by politicians and European leaders (Ibrahim & Howarth, 2018). Drawing upon that, the constant association between migration, societal, and human insecurity evoked by the EU allowed the strengthening of external borders, revealing that securitization dynamics are deeply "anchored in the definition of the refugee/migrant as a threat" (Dias & Freire, 2022: 307). The idea of a socially constructed threat is sustained by the data indicating that most irregular migration in the EU does not occur through irregular border-crossings, but through individuals who legally crossed the border and overstay their visa or work permit (De Haas, 2023). In this way, instead of a response to a taken-for-granted threat, the evolution of the EU integrated border regime stems largely from discursively constructed threats related to migration.

Huysmans (2000) states that although the data indicates that most irregular migration in the EU does not take place at the borders, the migration-security nexus is essentially related to the prevalence of security discourses in the Europeanization of migration policy, through the institutionalized association of immigration and asylum with terrorism and cross-border crime,

which culminated in a highly preemptive logic in the EU's migration and border policies. This is not only related to border management, but also to an internal security project whereby the spillover of the securitization of immigration resulted in the implementation of the Third Pillar on Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) in the treaty of Maastricht (1992) and the introduction of Schengen into EU law in the treaty of Amsterdam seven years later. The Europeanization of migration and border policies was defined, therefore, as an external dimension of internal security. This dynamic intensified in the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, where migration was further intertwined within a security discourse that justified stricter border controls in the EU (Acer, 2004).

The evolution of Frontex also shows how the EU border regime has evolved based on the notion of an external threat represented by migration. Léonard and Kaunert (2022) delve into the role of Frontex in the securitization of migration, comparing two migration crisis – the one at Spanish southern borders in 2005-2006 and the refugee crisis of 2015-2016 – to exemplify how the agency has expanded. Whilst in the first case the agency had a more limited budget and scope of action, in the second case its involvement in larger areas of the Mediterranean as well as an increased budget and cooperation with other European agencies as well as NATO indicates that the evolution of the European integrated border management has rested significantly on the framing of migration as a threat against which the EU's borders need to be protected.

During the 2015-2016 refugee crisis, Frontex's operations in the Mediterranean were defined as a “facilitated agreement on new solutions that would otherwise have been unacceptable” (Bosilca, 2021, p. 477). The operations were sustained by the smuggling rhetoric, based on the premise that strengthening the EU's external border was necessary in order to fight smuggling – understood as the root cause of irregular migration. Thus, representations of migration are intertwined with security dynamics that shape how the EU conducts its border policies. The increased numbers of refugees and asylum seekers arriving in Europe in 2015-2016 were depicted as a threat to European societies. As a result, the fortification of the EU's external borders was rendered acceptable and necessary. This also served to justify multiple exclusionary practices against migrants in the name of ‘national security’, illustrating the consequences of securitizing migration not only at the external borders, but also within the EU (Huysmans and Squire, 2016).

Seven years later, the threat posed by migrants was no longer framed only in terms of terrorism, smuggling, and other forms of cross-border crime, but also by the risks posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The multiple pushbacks in the Greek islands registered in 2022 were

framed under the narrative of preventing the spread of COVID-19, further sustaining the idea that migration has been made into a security issue that justify the closing of the EU's external borders (Stierl & Dadusc, 2022). The practices of illegal pushbacks were made possible using the narrative of preventing the spread of the virus, resulting in extraordinary actions in the form of the closing of borders and the suspension of asylum application by the Greek government (Human Rights Watch, 2020). The framework of border management designed to prevent the spread of the virus allowed Member States to veto the entry of TCNs in the Union's territory "if they are considered a threat to public health" (Raimondo, 2024, 19). During the pandemic, multiple Member States notified the temporary closing of internal borders using article 25 of the SBC (European Commission, n.d. – c), further demonstrating how security threats are capable of shaping border dynamics.

Building up on that, the migration-security nexus in the European context can be analyzed through ST. As we constantly observe "the gradual move of migration issues from the realm of 'normal' politics into the realm of security" (Gray & Franck, 2019, p. 276), the migration-security nexus appears as a social construct in the EU. The extraordinary policies employed to deal with that threat, as suggests ST, are thus the strengthening of the EU's external borders through the multiple mechanisms mentioned in Chapter 1. Therefore, the evolution of the European integrated border management is essentially built upon the equation of migration to a potential security threat.

This chapter has explored ST, summarized its concepts and different approaches, and demonstrated how this framework has been used to study the transformation of migration into a security discourse in general and, more specifically in the context of EU. Building up on how threats are socially constructed through speech acts and security practices, it is possible to trace how such mechanisms make possible a narrative of threat represented by migration in the EU by using, on the one hand, political discourses framing refugees and asylum seekers as a threat and, on the other, the deployment of security practices such as those carried out by Frontex in the Mediterranean. Raimondo (2024) summarizes the securitization of migration in the EU as follows:

The perception of an immigration-related threat may simultaneously destabilise and unify a community. It can spread a disruptive sense of fear of the other, while improving the narrative of shared identity and concrete cooperation against the perceived external danger. The securitisation of the European external borders emerges as the result of a widespread sense of fear. A fear that may be politically manipulated in societies where

the majority of individuals live in precarious socio-economic situations, where the other is seen as an enemy or, at best, an unwelcome competitor. (Raimondo, 2024, p. 18)

This conceptualization explicitly underscores the pivotal role of emotions, particularly fear, in ST. Emotional elements are frequently integral to the process of defining something as a security threat, yet this emotional dimension has often been neglected in scholarly discourse. The forthcoming chapter will delve into the broader significance of emotions within International Relations and Security Studies, with a specific emphasis on ST. It will illustrate how a nuanced consideration of emotional dynamics can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the securitization of migration in the EU and highlight how emotions have been part of the construction of the European common external border.

Chapter 3 - The Emotional Turn in IR and the Role of Emotions in Securitization

Theory

As discussed in the previous chapter, much of the literature on the links between migration and security mentions emotions, particularly fear. However, these mentions are often descriptive and do not deeply explore the emotional component in ST. Van Rythoven (2015, 2021) highlights the role of emotions in ST asserting that threat construction is fundamentally “an emotional phenomenon” (Van Rythoven, 2015, p. 2). This chapter aims to explore the role of emotions in securitization processes in general, and of migration in specific. It first reviews the literature on emotions in International Relations (IR) and studies on security. Then, it illustrates how scholars have linked IR with psychology, exploring contributions from the intersection of psychoanalysis with Security Studies and the framing of migration as a threat. Finally, the chapter focuses on emotions in ST, illuminating the affective elements in the discursive construction of threats.

3.1 - From mainstream to the emotional turn in International Relations

The questions of emotions and passions in IR have been historically overlooked due to the prevalence of positivist methods in the development of the discipline. Such models approached emotions in contrast with reason and rationality, neglecting the former as a valid object of study (Coicaud, 2016). During the development of IR after World War II, the quest for mirroring IR methods in natural sciences and the role of behaviorism in the discipline resulted in a lack of attention to psychological elements and its influences in international politics (De Sernaculens, 2016). On the other hand, Coen Leep (2010) argues that emotions have often been left aside in the study of foreign policy due to the lack of a consensual definition, even in the field of psychology, of what emotions are.

However, despite the historical and epistemological neglect of emotions in foreign policy, IR theorists' ideas always implied, to some extent, that such elements do exist and affect the ways that international actors behave. In Realism, for instance, the struggle for power between states is driven by a lust for dominance and a fear of annihilation (Coicaud, 2016). Thus, despite the neglect of the study of emotions in international politics, emotions are recognized to play a key role in the field. Bleiker and Hutchinson (2008) argue that the significance of emotions in international politics is clearly demonstrated by the global war on terror, for example. The images of the terrorist attacks of 9/11 “have had a decisively emotional

impact on how people perceive issues of security and national identity” (Bleiker & Hutchinson, 2008, p. 115), which justified the Bush administration’s subsequent interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan. From a constructivist perspective, they contend that emotions do more than influence decision-making processes; they are crucial in shaping identities and communities.

Pierre de Sernaclens (2016) uses psychoanalysis to understand the “unconscious components of political discourse and behaviour” (De Sernaclens, 2016, p. 171-172) in international politics, arguing that libidinal drives and emotional impulses interact with institutional constraints and shape certain aspects of foreign policy. He posits that international actors’ behavior cannot be analyzed solely through rationality, but also considering affects and emotions. Building up on that, he identifies three areas in international politics that psychoanalysis can explore: the influence of political leaders’ psyches on their actions, the desires and needs underlying ideological discourses, and the role of institutions in shaping collective identities and world politics (*Ibid.*).

On the other hand, Buzan (1991), while acknowledging a psychological component in international security studies and citing Laswell (1965), argues that the integration of Freudian psychoanalysis into Security Studies remains vague, yet ambitious. Laswell’s work provided insights into understanding security as a symbol upon which unconscious elements may be projected, suggesting that personal and collective insecurities can be managed through the manipulations of significant symbols. This psychoanalytic framework was further expanded in international politics, proposing that foreign policy might be influenced by "the emotional themes and metaphors used by policy makers and intellectuals to legitimize their objectives" (De Sernaclens, 2016, p. 174). Consequently, extensive research has shown how political leaders use fear as a strategy to garner electoral support (Bleiker and Hutchinson, 2008; de Castella et al, 2009) and specifically to justify restrictive migration and asylum policies (Huysmans, 2006).

Freud (1991) argues that the clash between human instincts and the rules of society generates a sense of suffering in individuals. He suggests that one of the main causes of this suffering it’s the inadequacy of social regulations governing human relationships within family, state, and society (Freud, 1991, p. 274). Unlike the suffering caused by natural forces or bodily limitations, Freud contends that social structures, though often seen as protective, contribute significantly to repression and psychological distress. In this regard, “what we call our civilization is largely responsible for our misery” (*ibid.*). Building up on Freud, Laswell suggests that the uncertainties generated by the balancing process between states results in (at the personal level) “the emotional insecurities which culminate in the overwhelming demand

for security” (Laswell, 1965, p. 61). Likewise, Bauman (2016) suggests that neoliberal societies are dominated by sense of unpredictability that leads to a perverse feeling of insecurity. The anxieties arising from the uncertainties of the future are, in this way, a cause of insecurity that is then projected onto politicized subjects such as migrants.

In Laswell’s work, he contends that hostility and fear towards ‘strangers’ (foreigners/immigrants) is more likely acquired in infancy instead of a given of human nature. Building up on Freud’s personality theory, Laswell claims that as the child’s impulses are repressed, the anxieties generated by such repression can be projected onto the environment, and in this process “Strangers are very common and convenient targets for such projections since they are human, yet they are otherwise undefined in previous specific experience” (Laswell, 1965, p. 126). For Laswell, this is a process that occurs through vocabulary, the representation of foreign groups (that are out of the range of the child’s direct contact) as hostile.

On the other hand, Laswell also points out that hostility towards strangers can be a fabricated mechanism of projection of personal insecurities designed by a ruling elite to evade the direct acknowledgement that such insecurities are generated by the ruling system itself. In this regard, “A ruling group may need a scapegoat for the diversion of accumulated discontents and use an alien element in the community for this purpose” (*Ibid.*, p. 131-132). Sustaining this argument, De SernacLens draws upon Freudian texts and states that:

It is not rare that governments, partisan leaders and intellectuals use legal rules and procedures to stir people's instincts and libidinal drives to fulfil their own political ambitions and aggressive desires. (De SernacLens, 2016, p. 179).

Bauman (2016) illustrates this process through the case of the refugee crisis in Europe, stating that the imagery associated with refugees and asylum seekers, of terrorism, converting Europe to Islam, and taking profit of Europe’s welfare system, consists in strategies of political leaders to manage their power and control over the population deployed with the aim of causing fear and anxiety. According to Bauman, this occurs through the discursive dehumanization of incomers, therefore excluding them from the realm of Human Rights and transitioning the migration debate from an ethical one to a security one. For this reason, Bauman understands securitization of migration in the EU as:

[...] a conjurer's trick, calculated to be just that; it consists in shifting anxiety from problems that governments are incapable of handling (or are not keen on trying to handle) to problems that governments can be seen – daily and on thousands of screens – to be eagerly and (sometimes) successfully tackling. (Bauman, 2016, p. 30)

In this regard, it is suggested that emotions can be studied in international politics through the analysis of images and representations. Bleiker and Hutchinson (2008) argue that examining how emotions are communicated and represented in foreign policy discourse provides fertile ground for advancing the field of emotions in international politics. They identify political speeches, constitutional declarations, protests marchers, and televised imagery of terrorism as key discourses and practices through which emotions are conveyed. According to them, analyzing these depictions is the closest we can get to understanding emotions in IR.

In times of crisis, representations of emotions become even more prominent, revealing more about the values of those representing them than the represented objects or events themselves (Bleiker & Hutchinson, 2008, p. 129). Therefore, representations of emotions in foreign policy discourse are significant because they are inherently politicized. These representations are defined as “the process by which individual emotions acquire a collective dimension and, in turn, shape social and political processes” (*Ibid.*, p. 130). Specifically, the authors sustain that the aesthetic representation of emotions (visual images) is a powerful vehicle for this process.

In the realm of spoken and written representations, however, it has been studied how rhetorical elements such as the articulation of immigration with ‘invasion’ or ‘floods’, present in political discourses, shape the linguistic ways through which migration is approached as to justify restrictive political practices in asylum policies and border management (Huysmans, 2006; Huysmans and Squire, 2016; De Haas, 2023, 2024). As ST sheds light on the role of language in the social construction of migration as a threat, linguistic representations of emotions ought to be analyzed as a discursive element which is capable of constructing threats and shaping policies. Against this backdrop, Van Rythoven (2015) develops the idea of threat construction as an emotional phenomenon, based on the notion that the success or failure of securitizations depends on the emotional responses of the audience. According to Van Rythoven, a securitizing move succeeds when evokes emotions such as fear, disgust and

humiliation in the audience, and fails when triggers comedy and ridiculousness, for instance. The next session will delve deeper into these dynamics.

3.2 - Emotions in Securitization Theory

Seeking to understand the role of pity in the EU's humanitarian discourse on irregular migration and human trafficking, Aradau (2004) suggested that emotions are used to "re-structure the situation of trafficking and govern it to the benefit of trafficked women" (Aradau, 2004, p. 254). The use of pity to induce political outcomes that benefit trafficked women is thus defined by the author as 'politics of pity'. Politics of pity offers a counterpoint to politics of risk, defined as security policies established over an imagery of irregular migration and human trafficking as a threat to the EU. In this way, politics of pity are frequently induced by the humanitarian discourse of NGOs working in the field, trying to change the dominant narrative of politics of risk by emphasizing the vulnerabilities faced by irregular migrants and trafficked women.

If the representation of vulnerable subjects through pity-related content is capable of instigating politics of pity in their benefit, politics of risk do the opposite, generating politics that further increase the vulnerability of such subjects. In the EU's border regime, politics of risk are often established using the imagery of migration, in particular from the Middle East and North of Africa, as a risk (Ibrahim & Howarth, 2018). In this way, while the humanitarian discourse on trafficked women mentioned by Aradau (2004) works as a politics of pity, where the vulnerability experienced by trafficked women justifies policies that benefit such individuals, the security discourse on irregular migration configures a politics of risk where human trafficking is governed by surveillance technologies.

However, politics of pity and politics of risk are not mutually exclusive, but rather reinforce each other. In Aradau's study, albeit politics of pity try to detach the category of threat from trafficked women, it is "undercut by politics of risk that interiorizes danger, relocating it within trafficked women." (p. 254). This subversion of pity to risk occurs because the employment of pity in defining who trafficked women are is transmuted into a security discourse by professionals of risk management when assessing the risk posed by trafficked women in the EU. Much like Bigo's argument (2014), the definition of a threat belongs to professionals of unease that, despite understanding irregular migrants as vulnerable subjects,

turn them into security threats through risk assessment. In this way, the initial deployment of emotions to define vulnerable subjects in the EU is undermined by professional practices.

However, this premise is contested by Van Rythoven (2015) arguing that threat construction is essentially an emotional phenomenon. Van Rythoven draws upon appraisal theory of emotion, developed by Lazarus (1991a, 1991b) to explore emotions in ST. Appraisal theory of emotion states that emotions are essentially individual or collective appraisals of external phenomena, meaning that for us to feel fear, for instance, we need to appraise a certain situation as threatening. Appraisal theory, in the words of de Castella *et al.* (2009, p. 4) “postulates that specific emotional reactions stem not from situations, events, or objects but from cognitive interpretations or appraisals of these things”. That means that according to appraisal theory of emotion, emotions are essentially responses triggered by outside events.

To give an example of how this framework has been put in practice, de Castella *et al.* (2009) tracked the role of fear in the rhetoric about terrorism in the post 9/11 era, drawing upon appraisal theory to argue that terrorism itself is not what generates fear in the audience, but rather the way individuals perceive or assess the situation, interpreting it as threatening. Building up on that, Van Rythoven (2015) argues that the success of a securitizing move depends on the appraisals of the audience of the referent object as an existential threat, thereby establishing a theoretical link between emotions and ST.

If the securitization of an issue depends on the collective emotional response generated in the audience through its judgement of the issue, such emotional reaction must be not only complicit with the framing of an issue as a security threat, but it must also be powerful enough to justify the use of extraordinary political means to deal with that threat. In this regard, although it is methodologically challenging to assert that political leaders intentionally incorporate emotion-inducing content in their speeches to provoke emotional responses from the audience and thereby justify their actions, the presence of such content suggests that persuading the audience to react in a specific way to an event would be difficult, if not impossible, without it (de Castella *et al.* 2009).

Directing the analysis to fear, de Castella *et al.* analyze whether the speeches of Australian Prime Minister Howard between 2001 and 2007 included fear-inducing content that helped justifying Australia’s position in the global war on terror. Searching for fear-arousing content in Howards’ speeches, the authors not only were able to verify that in most of the speeches analyzed such elements were present, but also that their employment varied over time, confirming the use of fear-arousing content according to appraisal theory. However, Van

Rythoven adds that the occurrence of appraisals that validate the securitization of a subject also depend on a local security imaginary:

Securitizing moves do not succeed by invoking vague affective attachments, but by eliciting culturally specific fears whose emergence hinges upon the appraisal of recognizable memories, identities, images, metaphors, and other tropes to construct a plausible, yet anxiety inducing, future. (Van Rythoven, 2015, p. 9)

To sustain his argument, he claims that the success of the securitization of terrorism after 9/11 was based on the fear appraisal of the audience against the backdrop of a previously existing security imaginary, while the failure of the securitization of intellectual property theft attempted in 2008 by the US Attorney General Michael Mukasey was due to his discourse being seen as comic by the audience, a judgement generated in part by the lack of a link between international terrorism and DVD piracy in the local security imaginary. Hansen (2006) makes an important account that speaks to Van Rythoven's idea of a local security imaginary: "Foreign policies need an account, or a story, of the problems and issues they are trying to address: there can be no intervention without a description of the locale in which intervention takes place or of the peoples involved in the conflict" (Hansen, 2006, p. xvi). The difference here is that Hansen specifically seeks to emphasize how such narratives emerge and are replicated through the discursive construction of identity instead of emotional appraisals. However, Hansen's argument sustains the idea that the success of a securitizing move depends on an emotional component, the difference is that she claims that this component is based on a discursively constructed background that makes possible the understanding of a given subject as threatening.

Nonetheless, while most of the attempts to study emotions in ST specifically directed their focus to 'negative' emotions such as fear, Ganz (2023) builds up on Van Rythoven's argument and adds the study of pride. Ganz claims that through the analysis of pride in ST it is possible to obtain a more intricate portrayal of how threats are formed and how particular objects are understood as needing to be securitized. It is argued that pride is one of the essential constitutive elements of identity that allows certain subjects to be securitized. Analyzing how pride is intertwined with securitization of energy in Azerbaijan in both the discursive and the material realms, Ganz concludes that the mingling of emotions and securitization of energy is illustrated by the collective idea that menacing energy in the country would consist of an

existential threat to the country's identity and position of power acquired through energy. In this regard, Ganz claims that securitization and emotions are linked not only to the generation of negative emotions in the audience through the appraisal of a certain subject as threatening, but also how the determination of what should be protected (securitized) is deeply related to the feeling of pride as a constitutive of the identity of the community.

This chapter shed light on how the introduction of psychology in the discipline of IR broadened the analysis of multiple subjects and offered an alternative perspective to look at foreign policy and security studies. Specifically, it demonstrated how emotions are a relevant element in ST and how scholars have been using different frameworks and methods from social psychology to include the study of emotional content within the theory. Mingling discourse analysis and other methods used by the authors mentioned above, the next chapter delves into the methodology employed in this dissertation to analyse the role of emotions in the securitization of migration in the EU.

Chapter 4 – Methodology

This chapter sets out to explore the methodological questions in the study of emotions and Securitization Theory, describing how discourse analysis has been used to unpack the role of emotions in the construction of identities and threats, and explaining how the chosen methods for this dissertation are relevant and how they will be used in the context of the securitization of migration in the EU and border management. The methodology used in this dissertation is divided in two dimensions: first, the poststructuralist discourse analysis framework provided by Hansen (2006) to explore how identities are formed through the EU's discourses on migration and, second, the identification and study of specific emotional components in such discourses, in what Coen Leep (2010) describes as affective production of Others. Border policies are analyzed in contrast with these aspects to understand the extent to which emotions justify the shaping of the EU's external borders.

4.1 - Discursive construction of the EU border through Self/Other relations

In defining nation-states as “imagined communities”, Benedict Anderson (2016) stated that shared narratives and images play an essential role in shaping collective feelings that give rise to the idea of a nation-state. According to Anderson, collective imagery originating from multiple forms of storytelling is the base upon which individuals are able to mentally connect with each other and form a community. This is the precondition for the formation of a sense of collective identity. Building up on that, Triandafyllidou (1998) claims that national identity only makes sense with other identities, other nations, surrounding the Self. Transporting this to the European context, Eder (2006) argues that the construction of a common European border consists in an institutional model for producing ‘hard’ borders that is based on shared narratives and symbols that discursively construct ‘soft’ borders through social processes. The occurrence of institutionalized borders, such as the EU common external border, therefore, derives from the successful consolidation of such narratives at the social sphere. Hereof, the construction of a European identity aligned with the physical borders of the EU highly depended on identifying Others surrounding the Union. For this reason, the EU common external border is intrinsically related to “[T]he production of images of borders of Europe and the attribution of meaning to ‘objective borders’[...]” (Eder, 2006, p. 256).

In this way, identity formation is a pre-condition for border construction. By producing the sense of European identity necessary for the success of the integration process, the

emergence of boundaries between Europe and its neighborhood was naturalized. Eder posits that in this process, Russia, Türkiye, and the North of Africa played essential roles. At East, the communist threatening Other represented by Russia was the story needed for creating a formal boundary between the European Community and the East. Türkiye was also historically and narratively established as an Other to Europe's identity (Ertuğrul & Yılmaz, 2018). The North of Africa, and the narrative on the binary nature of religion as established by the Christian Europe vs. the Muslim south was a condition *sine qua non* for the institutionalization of the EU's common borders. At West, Eder argues that anti-American sentimentalisms in central Europe also contributed to the production of Europe's borders. In sum, by defining multiple Others in its surroundings, the EU defines what European identity is and establishes borders to protect and preserve this identity.

4.2 - Poststructuralist discourse analysis and the affective production of Others

According to de Castella *et al.* (2009), security discourses include displays of emotions capable of producing reactions in the audience. In this regard, it is argued that emotions are one of the means through which identities are (re)produced in foreign policy discourse. Hansen (2006) claims that the identities of Others are produced through processes of articulation and differentiation, building meaning through the linking and juxtaposition of signs. These processes are employed to legitimate political behaviors in approaching the Other, from the depicting of native Americans as uncivilized and barbaric in the conquering of the new world, to the framing of Saddam Hussein as an existential threat to the US in the early 2000s.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, the introduction of social psychology methods in the study of threat construction has shown that foreign policy discourses produce identities by attaching specific emotions to Others. Frameworks such as the emotionality of texts (Ahmed, 2004) have been used specifically in discourse analysis to explore the extent to which the production of identity is an affective process whereby emotions are bound to the Other and the Self in ways that shape foreign policy (Coen Leep, 2010).

Discourse analysis as a method stems from the premise that language can influence the view of things as to produce subjectivities that, in turn, shape the way foreign policy is formulated and conducted (Wodak, 1996, Hansen, 2006; Van Dijk, 2015; Fairclough, 2018). Like ST, discourse analysis states that by saying something, something is done. To define something as 'security' is thus not an innocuous narrative, but a way of producing and

managing meanings attached to a radical and threatening Other. For this reason, for foreign policy to come about, a relation of otherness is essential (Campbell, 1998; Hansen, 2006). In producing subjectivities and framing Others as a threat, foreign policy discourse not only constitutes Self/Other relations, but also articulates specific policies to deal with the Other (Hansen, 2006, p. 21).

Shedding light on the emotional dynamics in the process of (re)producing otherness, Coen Leep (2010) argues that the production of the Self and the Other's identities is essentially an affective process whereby emotions are discursively invested upon the Self and the Other's identities, producing the understanding of the Other as threatening. For this reason, in the process of producing identities, emotions are bind onto the Other and legitimates foreign policy "through a discursive logic of feeling" (Coen Leep, 2010, p. 332).

4.3 - Emotions, securitization, and discourse analysis: a framework

The framework provided by Hansen (2006) suggests that the (re)production of identities in foreign policy discourse consists in a process of linking and juxtaposition of signs as to articulate them as the Other and Self's identities. Following this premise, Hansen divides the construction of identities in foreign policy discourse in three dimensions (table 1).

Table 1

<i>Spatiality</i>	<i>Temporality</i>	<i>Ethicality</i>
The articulation of signs to identities occurs through the differentiation between the surrounding space and the state's territory. It has commonly the state as the referential Self, but can also be observed in other territorialities (e.g. Europe and the Soviet Union in the cold War). It is essentially tied to a geographical construction of identity.	Observed in the construction of Others as backwards. Usually in this dimension the Self is represented to be more evolved than the Other, something that was acquired over time. This is exemplified by the construction of native Americans as backwards and Europeans as advanced, or by the opposition between the European past torn by wars and the current EU.	Divide the Self and the Other on ethical grounds. It is verified in the narratives on Human Rights, whereby the Self is produced as ethically superior to the Other when the latter does not share compliance for the same ethical premises. (e.g.: Türkiye in the EU accession negotiations was often portrayed as an ethically backward Other based on Human Rights violations in the country.

Following Hansen's framework, there are three models for analyzing foreign policy discourse. The first one conducts the analysis in official foreign policy texts as drafted by governments, heads of state, international institutions, and other official organs of foreign policy making. The second model directs the analysis to a wider array of institutions shaping

foreign policy that might not be directly formulating or conducting it, such as political oppositions, the media, and corporate institutions. The body of intertextual analysis in this model uses political texts such as parliamentary debates and speeches, media texts, and public campaigns of corporate institutions. The third model focuses on discourses that are not explicitly framed as foreign policy but contribute to the construction of identities in ways to shape it at the level of policy making and public opinion. This model analyses cultural representations in both popular and high culture such as films, fiction and non-fiction books, photography, art in general, travel writing, memoirs, and other forms of autobiography.

Studying Human Trafficking in the EU, Aradau (2004) separates the categories concerning the framing of the subject as 'pitiful' and as a 'risk'. In the first category, discourses of humanitarian organizations often employ terms that evoke pity, such as 'vulnerability' and 'victims', whereas discourses reproducing the second category employ alarming terms such as 'threat' 'crime' 'prostitution', and 'risk'. Coen Leep (2010) explores the US position in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through affective elements in the construction of identities, identifying emotion words and other linguistic constructions in the US Congress discourses such as 'Holocaust'⁵, 'sacrificial nation', 'stalwart ally', 'our only true friend in the Middle East', 'small', and 'threatened'⁶ when referring to Israel, which indicates the "transformation of a state (Israel) and a people (Israelis) into an emotionalized Other – an elicitor and repository of positive emotions." (Coen Leep, 2010, p. 341). Following Ahmed (2004), Coen Leep argues that these emotions stick to identities and affect how Others are approached in the international arena. Furthermore, the author states that despite the empirical focus of his research be centered around the US's position towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the theoretical framework and the methodology used in his work can be applied to most of Self/Other relations.

In his study, Coen Leep searched for and verified explicit articulations of emotions and identities in the discourses of the US Congress. However, Hansen (2006) adds that explicit articulations of identity with symbols and signs does not need to be present in recurrent discourses over a subject. Identities may become so strongly established through previous discourses that they do not need to be explicitly articulated in all discourses. Once the threat has already been established by previous discourses, one does not need to reiterate them in

⁵ Coen Leep argues that using the word 'Holocaust' in foreign policy discourse creates an emotional response from the audience because to speak about Holocaust "demands feeling, or at least the recognition of appropriate feelings." (Coen Leep, 2010, p. 337). In turn, the Jewish identity is produced and reproduced through such feelings.

⁶ Coen Leep claims that "Articulating the Other as a victim, threatened and small, creates a sympathetic impulse necessitating action on behalf of the sympathetic Other, an impulse which is only resolvable through sympathetic treatment of the Other." (Coen Leep, 2010, p. 345)

detail to justify foreign policy. This is, in part, sustained by Huysmans (2000) in his argument that since immigration and asylum have been institutionally associated with terrorism and cross-border crime in the EU at first in 1990 with the Convention Applying the Schengen Agreement of 14 June 1985 and later with the institutionalization of the Third Pillar on JHA in the 1992 Treaty of Maastricht and the entering of force of the Schengen zone in 1999, the articulation of immigration as a threat needed not to be reiterated in further debates once it was already established in Europe's security imaginary.

4.4 - Research design

The research design of this dissertation follows the structure provided by Hansen (2006), selecting the EU as the single Self to be analyzed. Discourse analysis on EU institutions can be conducted in a variety of texts that go from parliamentary debates and official declarations (such as Council decisions) to political speeches and interviews (Aydın-Düzgit, 2014, p. 360). Considering articulation of identity, official declarations and policy documents arguably do not offer a significant scope for analysis, despite their formal authority. Parliamentary debates (European Parliament but also Member States' national parliaments once they can affect, to some extent, the formulation of EU policies), on the other hand, carry both authority and explicit articulation of identity in their speeches, but are not widely attended to. Political speeches by European leaders and Commission officials carry formal authority, articulation of identities, and reach a wider audience. These speeches, argues Aydın-Düzgit, are a particularly relevant object of study for they try to "make meaning of Europe" (*Ibid.*), articulating symbols and metaphors that strongly define European identity by stressing what Europe is and what Europe is not. The 'drawing of borders' is also strongly present in such speeches, materialized through inside/outside distinctions (*ibid.*). In the case of this dissertation, speeches on behalf of the European Commission are particularly relevant because of its proposal of a European Agenda on Migration in 2015, where multiple border reinforcing policies and mechanisms were implemented as a response to the refugee crisis.

The temporal perspective of this study is centered in one significant event: the 2015 refugee crisis. However, since the EU's actions regarding the crisis extended until 2016, namely with the EU-Turkey deal, the selection of speeches encompassed both years to obtain an accurate picture on how discourses have evolved throughout the crisis. A *corpus* of 46 speeches was selected, using the keywords "migrants", "refugees", "borders", and "asylum" on the Press Corner of the European Commission's website. These speeches were thus selected

based on the criteria of relevance considering a) the articulation of identity regarding migrants and the EU and b) the proposed policies and actions following the framing of the refugee crisis in categories of threat and/or vulnerability. All speeches meeting the criteria were analyzed. The methodological design for this dissertation is illustrated in Figure 1 (Adapted from the model provided by Hansen, 2006, p. 88).

To analyse emotional components in the Commission's discourses in the refugee crisis, a code system was developed, structured as follows: **1) Emotional categories:** divided into fear-related and pity-related categories. This includes direct mentions of fear, threat perception and security concerns on the one hand, and compassion, empathy, and humanitarian language on the other. **2) Tone and language:** divided into positive language (compassionate, supportive, and inclusive) and negative language (alarmist, exclusionary and dehumanizing). **3) Rhetorical devices:** for instance, presenting statistical data on migration flows and crime rates to evoke fear or pity, using personal elements to highlight individual experiences to evoke sympathy towards migrants, and metaphors and imagery that paint vivid mental pictures, either alarming or empathetic. **5) Contextual factors:** analyses the influence of external events such as terrorist attacks and humanitarian crisis that may increase fear or empathy in the audience. **4) Policy and Action Responses:** this category aims to identify policy proposals or actions taken in response to the emotional content, for instance strengthening border security evoked in response to fear and, humanitarian aid and refugee resettlement evoked in response to pity.

All speeches were analysed under the categories mentioned above and placed in a timeline where it was possible to observe how the employment of emotion-arousing content in the EU's speeches has evolved throughout the refugee crisis.

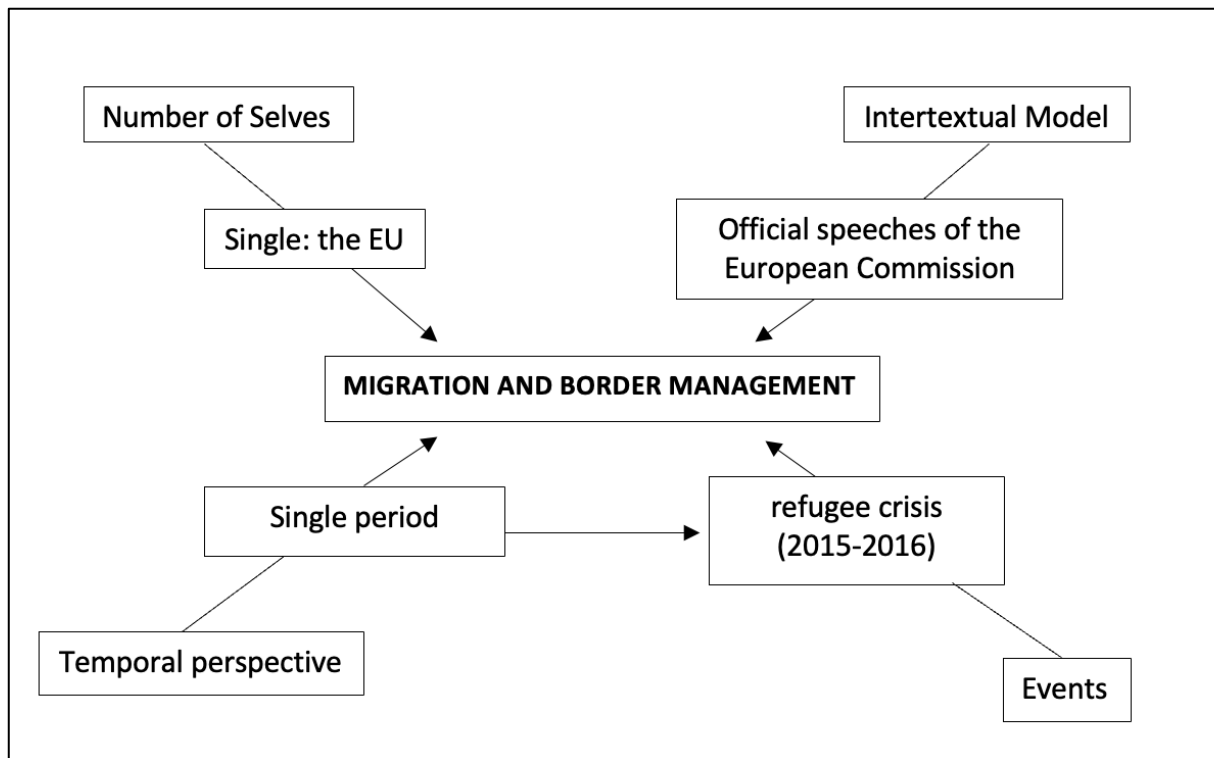


Figure 1

Chapter 5 - Analysis and Discussion of the Emotional Construction of the EU's External Borders

Having contextualized the empirical terrain, reviewed the academic literature, and presented the theoretical and methodological framework that orients this dissertation, this chapter sets out to present and discuss the data gathered from the 46 discourses analyzed under the critical discourse analysis and securitization frameworks. Focusing on the affective construction of Others, it analyses the registers of emotions present in the European Commission's discourses during the 2015-2016 refugee crisis. Firstly, the context to which the speeches analyzed relate to – the refugee crisis – is briefly explained. Then, the analysis section demonstrates how critical discourse analysis was employed on the selected speeches, categorizing the existence of emotions according to the code system shown in the previous chapter. The discussion session explores how the discourse analysis of the selected speeches illuminates the role of emotions in the discursive construction of threats during the refugee crisis, specifying what these emotions are (whether fear or pity), and illustrating how the employment of this element may have helped the EU justify its policy and action responses towards the crisis, (re)shaping the EU's external borders.

5.1. Context

In 2015, the EU faced a significant influx of individuals fleeing conflict zones in the Middle East and the North of Africa. Over one million people sought asylum in Europe, undertaking perilous journeys to reach safety (UNHCR, 2015). However, the so-called 'refugee crisis' was driven not only by increased migration flows, but also by inadequacies in the European asylum system, namely the Dublin regime, during 2015-2016. Frontline Member States such as Italy and Greece, initially responding with Search and Rescue (SAR) operations, soon began to demand a coordinated EU response as the number of arrivals surged. The Dublin regulation, which mandates that the state where the asylum seeker first arrives is responsible for processing their claim (European Commission, n.d. - d), faced intense criticism as frontline Member States became overwhelmed.

Calling for joint European action, frontline Member States aligned with the European Commission, that proposed the European Agenda for Migration - a plan including the reinforcement of Frontex's operations in the Mediterranean, support for origin and transit countries, and the reform of the Dublin system (CEAS) based on the principles of solidarity

and sharing. The aim of reforming the CEAS was to relocate 160,000 displaced individuals from Greece, Hungary and Italy between all the EU Members States according to a system of quotas. The plan was initially approved but encountered difficulties in its implementation. In January 2016 only 272 out of the 160,000 had been relocated, raising questions on whether Member States were really willing to implement the system (Geddes and Scholten, 2016, p. 160).

As the Agenda for Migration was not limited to the improvement of the CEAS, but also included changes and improvements in the EU's border regime, there was a strong appeal to stop irregular migration through the fight against smugglers, which resulted in the reinforcement of border management through Frontex and the establishment of the hotspot approach whereby the EUAA, Frontex, Europol and Eurojust would work together in the frontline member states to identify and register migrants, assess their need for international protection and coordinate their return in the cases where international protection was found not applicable. In face of the CEAS fiasco, these strategies were ultimately the EU's preferred response to the crisis.

Through a first analysis of the speeches chosen for the discourse analysis conducted in this dissertation, three major narratives were identified: one portraying refugees and asylum seekers as vulnerable subjects in need of help and protection, with frequent mentions of pity; one transforming refugees and asylum seekers from vulnerable subjects to potential risks to the EU, resulting in a securitizing discourse through the reduction of the frequency of pity-arousing content coupled with rhetorical devices evoking cross-border crime; and one explicitly constituting the EU's identity as an actor responsible for the protection of vulnerable asylum seekers and individual Member States' actions as a threat to the integrity of the Schengen zone in specific and to European integration more broadly. These three narratives varied over time as the crisis evolved, but co-existed in the discursive realm of the EU regarding the 2015 refugee crisis and appear as mutually dependent conditions of possibility for the reinforcement of border controls. The discourses are analyzed according to the code system explained in the previous chapter in the following sessions.

5.2 - 2015 – 2016 discourse analysis

a) Emotional categories

Direct fear-related content was identified in statements such as “it is clear that the threats Europe faces today go beyond national security” (European Commission, 2016j, paragraph 71)

and “The persistent threat of secondary movements puts at risk the overall functioning of the Schengen area” (European Commission, 2016k, paragraph 66). this category was further divided based on the specific object of fear: fear towards the number of asylum seekers reaching Europe, fear towards terrorist threats and other forms of cross border crime, and fear towards European disintegration.

In the first case, fear was predominantly conveyed through the presentation of numbers and statistics, as will be discussed under rhetorical devices. However, some instances revealed a direct fear-inducing vocabulary, such as “unprecedented migration crisis” (European Commission, 2016m, paragraph 7). Here, the word ‘unprecedented’ indicates an emergency, which may result in fear perceptions in the audience. Fear of terrorism and cross-border crime became particularly prominent after the November 2015 terrorist attacks in Paris, in statements like “we are confronted with a blind brutal extremism that is indifferent to human life” (European Commission, 2016i, paragraph 25). Fear of European disintegration was frequently mentioned, as illustrated by phrases such as “This puts the Schengen zone, one of the greatest European achievements in question” (European Commission, 2015m, paragraph 10), and “we have no time to lose when it comes to preserving the Schengen area of free movement.” (European Commission, 2015q, paragraph 4). The identification of secondary movements within the EU as a threat to the integrity of Schengen is also identified through fear-inducing sentences, for instance: “The persistent threat of secondary movements puts at risk the overall functioning of the Schengen area.” (European Commission, 2016k, paragraph 68).

On the other hand, direct pity-inducing content was identified by sentences such as “we are duty-bound to offer a new home to those fleeing war and violence.” (European Commission, 2016c, paragraph 24), “ [...] human beings, to reach Europe, take a gamble on their lives, putting them in the hands of people smugglers who cynically exploit human misery.” (European Commission, 2016e, paragraph 5), and “ I have seen it yesterday on the ground when visited Idomeni. More than 12,000 people are stranded there. A third of them are children, living in dire health and sanitary conditions.” (European Commission, 2016e, paragraphs 5,6, and 7). Pity was also identified in sentences which do not refer refugees and asylum seekers as the subjects of pity, but rather countries such as Greece:

We are here to express the European Commission’s solidarity with the people of Kos and Greece. They have shown a remarkable amount of humanity vis-à-vis the refugees. Today we spoke to officials, to NGOS and to entrepreneurs. Whatever their anxieties, the overwhelming sentiment is one of humanity, of wanting to do the right thing. But

Kos can't be asked to do the right thing alone. It's been too long from the demands of Kos to the reaction of the outside world. (European Commission, 2015i, paragraph 4)

Türkiye, in the event of the terrorist attacks in Istanbul, was also a subject deserving of pity in the Commission's speeches: "I want to extend my commiseration to the friends and relatives of those who were killed, and my solidarity and support to the Turkish authorities who have to face these issues." (European Commission, 2016a, paragraph 21). The same happened with Austria, as demonstrated by "Austria has been directly impacted by the crisis, with the situation reaching a peak this weekend. And I can only praise your country for the relentless efforts to deal with the situation." (European Commission, 2015j, paragraph 10).

More direct mentions of pity regarding refugees and asylum seekers in specific were identified in sentences such as "many more people have risked their lives coming in numerous small boats or difficult journeys via land borders." (European Commission, 2015a, paragraph 4), "two cargo boats with around 1200 migrants on board were abandoned and left to drift dangerously in the Mediterranean." (European Commission, 2015b, paragraph 2), and "people will continue to come as long as they are not safe at home, and as long as they have no perspective there." (European Commission, 2015c, paragraph 5). As will be explained in the discussion section, such strategies depicting the rough realities faced by refugees and asylum seekers in their origin countries as well as on their journey towards Europe transform these individuals into repositories of pity, which is then used by the EU to intervene in the Mediterranean.

b) Tone and language

In this category, fear-related content was identified through the use of negative language, which is understood as alarmist, exclusionary, and dehumanizing. Examples include statements such as "We urgently need to strengthen the protection of our external borders" (European Commission, 2016c, paragraph 18), and "if we fail to better protect our external borders, especially the border between Greece and Turkey, we will never manage to overcome this crisis" (*Ibid.*). Additionally, statements such as "Europe is facing an unprecedented migratory crisis which is becoming more and more acute; Its cohesion, solidarity, core values and principles are under pressure, if not at stake." (European Commission, 2016f, paragraph 3) also comprise some of the elements included in this category.

Dehumanizing language was particularly noted when describing smugglers, with phrases like "ruthless smugglers" (European Commission, 2015a, paragraph 6) and "the dark

side of this is also organised criminal networks involved in smuggling and trafficking in human beings will continue to abuse and profit from this situation.” (European Commission, 2015c, paragraph 6). Alarmist language was identified in references to the terrorist threat, such as: “When foreign terrorist fighters – very often EU citizens – can move from one Member State to another and in and out of our external borders to plan their terrorist acts, it is clear that our problem is transnational.” (European Commission, 2016j, paragraph 72). This type of language was also noted when evoking the numbers of refugees arriving at the EU’s shores or drowning in the Mediterranean.

Conversely, positive tone and language were frequently used when portraying refugees and asylum seekers, especially those deemed ‘legitimate’ refugees as opposed to ‘bogus’ asylum seekers. An example of this can be seen in the statement, “Europe will extend a helping hand to those in need and will strive to attract those we need” (European Commission, 2015g, paragraph 32). This statement begins with a positive and compassionate tone towards refugees, emphasizing the EU’s willingness to support those in genuine need. However, it concludes with a more negative tone regarding “those who try to abuse our system” (*Ibid.*), indicating a clear distinction between ‘deserving’ refugees and those perceived as economic migrants exploiting the system. This juxtaposition highlights the dual narrative within the EU’s discourse on migration, balancing the humanitarian concern with a stringent stance on preventing abuse of asylum processes.

c) Rhetorical devices

Rhetorical devices are here understood as persuasive elements such as statistics, metaphors, and imagery. These elements might be employed to induce fear or pity. As noted, the speeches analyzed often mobilize statistical data to support fear-inducing content. This was specifically observed in two dimensions: presenting the numbers of refugees and asylum seekers arriving in Europe to evoke a mass-migration narrative (De Haas, 2024), and presenting the number of deaths in the Mediterranean Sea to frame the situation as a humanitarian crisis.

Firstly, the numbers of refugees and asylum seekers arriving in Europe were often highlighted to construct the idea of an “unprecedented influx of migrants at our borders and in particular, refugees” (European Commission, 2015e, paragraph 17). Instances of this include statements such as “The arrival of more than 7000 migrants” (*Ibid.*, paragraph 7), “Last year over 620.000 persons have asked for protection in Europe” (European Commission, 2015g, paragraph 5), “2015 has been the year of many records. More than one million people arrived at the Greek and Italian shores. More than 1.2 million people applied for asylum in the EU.”

(European Commission, 2016b, paragraph 7), and “70,000 asylum applications are already lodged every month in the EU since the beginning of 2015. More than 80,000 migrants have reached our shores” (*Ibid.* paragraph 6). These statistics were used to emphasize the scale of migration and to invoke a sense of urgency and crisis, what ST would understand as the declaration of a state of emergency that supports the adoption of exceptional policy responses.

Conversely, the numbers of deaths in the Mediterranean Sea were presented to define the situation as a humanitarian crisis. Examples include statements such as “We were deeply moved by those events, in which two cargo boats with around 1200 migrants on board were abandoned and left to drift dangerously in the Mediterranean” (European Commission, 2015b, paragraph 2), “Last year, 3,000 persons are estimated to have lost their lives attempting to reach Europe by crossing the sea” (*Ibid.*, paragraph 7), and “3,771 lives were lost at sea” (European Commission, 2016b, paragraph 7). These figures were used to highlight the human cost of the crisis and, possibly, to generate empathy and concern. This suggests that whether in a pitiful or in a fearful sense, numbers are always used to demonstrate the existence of a crisis.

Rhetorical devices were also identified regarding smuggling, in sentences such as “We must do everything in our power to win the war we have declared against the smugglers” (European Commission, 2015j, paragraph 37), and defining smugglers as “criminal gangs who make fortunes by exploiting the misery of desperate people, with not even the slightest regard for the safety or well-being of the people they have robbed their possessions.” (European Commission, 2015k, paragraph 21), “evil smuggling networks that trade in desperation and death” (European Commission, 2015o, paragraph 15), and “networks that take advantage of desperate migrants” (European Commission, 2015p, paragraph 45). The smuggling rhetoric also explicitly calls for action, for instance, “Behind the dramatic images hide the well organized criminal networks. So we have to do everything possible to neutralize them.” (European Commission, 2015i, paragraph 40), “crack down these networks that take advantage of desperate migrants” (European Commission, 2015p, paragraph 45), and “There will be no longer an incentive for Syrians to pay criminals to smuggle them across the Aegean” (European Commission, 2016d, paragraph 40).

Furthermore, rhetorical devices were also encountered in promoting more open asylum policies towards refugees and asylum seekers, for example “We must open the door to stop people coming in through the windows.” (European Commission, 2015f, paragraph 15), or to elicit more tolerant behaviour towards migrants, “Have we forgotten that Freddy Mercury was a refugee? Mo'Nique was a refugee. Zlatan Ibrahimovic was a refugee. Albert Einstein was a refugee. Steve Jobs was a refugee.” (European Commission, 2015k, paragraph 16), or directly

emphasising the physical struggles of individuals travelling to Europe: “we saw refugees wading through freezing rivers. We saw them sleeping in the rain and mud. Soon, this will be snow and ice. Winter is approaching and every day counts.” (European Commission, 2015n, paragraph, 2).

Regarding the consequences of the crisis and the 2015 terrorist attacks in Paris to European integration, namely the integrity of Schengen, rhetorical devices were found in sentences such as “Our vulnerabilities are shared. It is the fragmentation that makes us vulnerable. Fragmentation in legal instruments, in operational methods and mind-sets, prevents us from dealing with terrorism effectively.” (European Commission, 2016j, paragraph 74), “[...] the political cost of non-Schengen would be much more important still; it would be a highly symbolic reversal of a major achievement of European integration.” (European Commission, 2016k, paragraph 58), and “We Europeans no longer have many borders – we have one and we have a shared responsibility to protect it.” “We want to defend everything that Schengen represents.” (European Commission, 2015q, paragraph 15). Mentions to a threatening ‘European Past’, represented by the conflicts between states pre-European integration, were also identified as rhetorical devices, such as “We are seeing shadows from our recent past, which we never thought we would see again.” (European Commission, 2016b, paragraph 40).

d) Contextual factors

This category encompassed the analysis of specific events such as terrorist attacks and humanitarian crises that may have increased fear and/or pity in the audience. For example, pity may have been induced through references to events like Christmas/New Year’s eve in 2014, during which the lives of 1,200 migrants were saved by the Italian coast guard and Frontex (European Commission, 2015a). Other notable references include the humanitarian tragedies in Lampedusa (European Commission, 2015c), ongoing conflicts in countries of the Middle East (European Commission, 2015e), and the crises in Syria and Libya (European Commission, 2015h).

Specifically, regarding Syria, statements such as “hell on earth in Syria” (European Commission, 2015k, paragraph 26) and “the terror of the Islamic state” (European Commission, 2015l, paragraph 6) may have been employed to elicit a specific imagery of pity and compassion in the audience’s repertoire. These vivid descriptions aim to highlight the dire situations that refugees are fleeing from, thereby generating empathy and support while constructing them as vulnerable subjects.

On the other hand, references to terrorist attacks in Paris (European Commission, 2015r) and Istanbul (European Commission, 2015a) were likely to induce fear in the audience by connecting such events with the migration crisis. These references serve to underscore perceived security threats associated with uncontrolled migration, thereby justifying stricter border controls and other security measures.

e) Policy and action responses

This category analyzed what policies and other initiatives proposed by the Commission in the speeches were represented as the most appropriate ways to tackle the crisis. This was particularly relevant for the observation of how the EU's external borders were affected by such policies. In the beginning of 2015 the initial proposals of the Commission were extending Operation Triton, implementing information campaigns in origin and transit countries to alert about the risks of migration, as well establishing resettlement programs (European Commission 2015a). Financial aid to Member States facing greater migratory pressure such as Italy and Greece also appeared as the Commission's tactics to address the situation (European Commission, 2015c). The idea of encouraging development in origin countries to stop migration before it even starts also appeared in some speeches (European Commission, 2015d).

As the crisis evolved and the actions proposed by the EU proven to be insufficient to address the situation in an effective way (Geddes and Scholten, 2016), the European Commission proposed the Agenda on Migration, a plan including the reinforcement of Frontex's operation in the Mediterranean, support for origin and transit countries, and the reform of the CEAS based on the principles of solidarity and sharing. It was a result of the situation's urgency illustrated by the migratory pressures faced by Italy and Greece, that together with the Commission called for a joint action to manage the crisis.

In July 2015, the EU introduced an additional measure: the hotspot approach. It consisted in coordinated efforts between the EU Agency for Asylum (EUAA), Frontex, Europol, Eurojust, and frontline Member States at designated high-arrival points on the EU's external borders. These agencies collaborated with Member States' authorities to identify and register migrants, assess their need for international protection and coordinate their return when international protection was refused.

However, as the crisis progressed, it became evident that the actions proposed by the EU (especially the system of quotas) were facing significant challenges as Member States were reluctant to share the 'burden' of refugees and asylum seekers. This led to a shift in the EU's discourse from improving the CEAS to strengthening border controls. For example, in

September 2015, Timmermans and Avramopoulos characterized the crisis as a result of a dangerous European neighborhood, emphasizing the need to reinforce the EU's external borders: "A Europe without borders can't survive in the present conditions. Our society is built on certain premises of organised solidarity that would be undermined if we simply would say that everybody can come in." (European Commission, 2015i, paragraph 8).

Ultimately, in 2016 the EU put forward an agreement with Türkiye, the EU-Turkey statement that eventually became known as the 'refugee-deal', which involved the provision of 6 billion euros. In return, Ankara agreed to accept the return of irregular migrants who crossed the border from Türkiye to Greece. The deal also included a controversial resettlement scheme, wherein for every Syrian refugee returned to Türkiye from the Greek islands, another Syrian would be resettled from Türkiye to the EU. Alongside the financial support, the EU promised visa liberalization for Turkish citizens and the unblocking of accession negotiations with Ankara (European Council, 2016).

f) Victims, mass migration, and the future of European integration

The analysis of the elements illustrated in the previous section facilitated the identification of three distinct narrative groups, which coexist in the EU's discursive realm regarding migration and are mutually reinforcing, each of which directly influenced the drafting and implementation of policies that reinforced the EU's external borders. The first group, defined by the migrant-victim narrative (De Haas, 2024), includes content that induces pity by referencing the harms and violence migrants face on their journeys to Europe, primarily at the hands of smugglers. It centers on a narrative framing the crisis as a humanitarian problem caused by malicious smugglers who exploit vulnerable migrants. The EU specifically used this discourse to justify border actions such as the reinforcement of Frontex's military operations. The second group concerns a mass migration narrative (*Ibid.*), whereby the use of alarming language and numbers contributes to the discursively production of a apocalyptic scenario which requires extraordinary intervention. The third discourse identified revolves around the fear of the crisis's consequences for European integration. This fear is not necessarily attributed to the sheer number of refugees arriving, but rather to the unilateral actions taken by individual Member States, which in turn result in a fragmented Europe. The analysis can be summarized as follows (table 2):

Table 2

	Pity	Fear
Direct mentions	“[...] human beings, to reach Europe, take a gamble on their lives, putting them in the hands of people smugglers who cynically exploit human misery.”	“it is clear that the threats Europe faces today go beyond national security”, “The persistent threat of secondary movements puts at risk the overall functioning of the Schengen area.”
Tone and language	“Europe will extend a helping hand to those in need and will strive to attract those we need.”	“We urgently need to strengthen the protection of our external borders”, “if we fail to better protect our external borders, especially the border between Greece and Turkey, we will never manage to overcome this crisis.”
Rhetorical devices	“We must open the door to stop people coming in through the windows.”, “Have we forgotten that Freddy Mercury was a refugee? Mo Forah was a refugee. Zlatan Ibrahimovic was a refugee. Albert Einstein was a refugee. Steve Jobs was a refugee.”	“unprecedented influx of migrants at our borders and in particular, refugees”, “70,000 asylum applications are already lodged every month in the EU since the beginning of 2015. More than 80,000 migrants have reached our shores”
Contextual factors	“hell on earth in Syria”, “the terror of the Islamic state.”	Reference to terrorist attacks in Paris.
Policy and action responses	Reinforcing military operations in the Mediterranean to combat smuggling, Blue Card Directive	Reform of the Dublin system, hotspot approach, partnership with origin and transit countries.

5.3 – The politics of pity and the EU’s border regime

In the 26 speeches analysed regarding the year of 2015, 16 included emotion-arousing content. Three speeches included exclusively fear-related content, six speeches included exclusively pity-related content, and seven speeches included both fear and pity. Therefore, the predominant emotion identified in these speeches was pity.

The employment of pity-arousing content was identified when framing refugees and asylum seekers, constructing them as vulnerable subjects fleeing violence and war, and in this process falling into the hands of evil smugglers who abuse them and subject them to dangerous journeys across the Mediterranean. There is, at times, an emphasis on the physical suffering migrants experience, such as the imagery presented by President Jean Claude-Juncker in the conclusions of the European Council meeting of 15 October 2015: “[...] we saw refugees

wading through freezing rivers. We saw them sleeping in the rain and mud. Soon, this will be snow and ice. Winter is approaching and everyday counts.” (European Commission, 2015n). This statement directly constructs refugees as repositories of pity through the employment of compassionate language, vivid images, and migrants’ personal experiences.

Contextual factors invoking pity appear mostly through references to war scenarios in migrants’ origin country, as well as a general depiction of the Mediterranean Sea taken over by smugglers. The “hell on earth in Syria” (European Commission, 2015k, paragraph 26) and “the terror of the Islamic state” (European Commission, 2015l, paragraph 6), coupled with the often-invoked imagery of bodies drowning in the Mediterranean, define refugees and asylum seekers as Others affectively constructed through pity.

The projection of pity onto migrants is explicitly associated with smuggling, which attributes to smugglers the cause of irregular migration. Smugglers are defined as threats to migrants and to the EU. They undermine the sovereignty of Member States by evading border procedures and threaten the integrity of migrants. For this reason, most of the policies and actions established by the EU during the refugee crisis allegedly focus on fighting smuggling. Not only are elements of pity employed to indicate the vulnerability of migrants on the hands of smugglers, but smuggling is also portrayed as a threat to the EU, demanding specific political responses. An interesting example is observed in the speech of Commissioner Dimitris Avramopoulos on February 19, 2015, where smugglers are presented as “reckless criminals” who point guns to European coast guard officers (European Commission, 2015c, paragraph 7).

In September 2015, Avramopoulos starts using the rhetoric of a ‘war against smugglers’, justifying it through the violence faced by migrants trying to enter Europe. The imagery of a humanitarian catastrophe in the Mediterranean that uses of pity-inducing content towards asylum seekers and refugees is directly associated with smuggling, allowing the EU to evade the role of its routine practices in migrant suffering and subvert it to smugglers (Jeandesboz & Pallister-Wilkins, 2016). The persistent emphasis on the smuggling rhetoric, combined with pity-inducing content when framing migrants, successfully constructed refugees and asylum seekers as vulnerable subjects in need of protection. Following Aradau (2004), this can be seen as a method of inducing politics of pity, where this emotion becomes a tool of governance capable of shaping political outcomes.

Building up on how pity can shape the way the audience approach victims, the EU’s depiction of the physical suffering of migrants would, in theory, serve as a means to formulate policies in benefit of refugees and asylum seekers. Aradau argues that representing the physical suffering of victims can “promote understanding and sympathy for their situation.” (Aradau,

2004, p. 261), which is strongly present in the EU's discourses during 2015. For example, the words used by Juncker to describe the situations refugees experienced mentioned above, or the imagery mentioned by Avramopoulos of "71 asphyxiated bodies" in his remarks following his visit to Austria in September 2015 (European Commission, 2015j, paragraph 8), specifically highlight migrants' physical suffering. By doing that, the EU places refugees and asylum seekers beyond the category of illegal migrants, dissociating them from criminals and defining them as vulnerable subjects in need of help.

However, the EU's policy responses to the crisis strengthens its border regime, which paradoxically results in the reinforcement of smuggling networks. Before the Agenda on Migration, actions included extending Operation Triton, cooperating with origin and transit countries, providing financial support to front-line Member States, and raising awareness about the risks of irregular migration. As shown in Chapter 1, these actions militarize migration control in third countries, driving migrants to rely more on smugglers to cross the EU's external borders. In this regard, some actions were later deemed inefficient in keeping migrants in their country (De Haas, 2023), as migrants continued to attempt crossing the EU's fortified borders, increasingly resorting to smugglers.

Therefore, despite the presence of pity-inducing content towards migrants in the first year of the crisis, the actions proposed by the EU, despite justified by pitiful language, may not consist in politics of pity. As they do not benefit migrants crossing the Mediterranean, and arguably generate more risks for them in their journeys, they cannot be considered proposals invested by the EU's attention to migrants' well-being. This reveals a paradox between how the EU frames migrants crossing the Mediterranean and its policy and action responses.

On the other hand, the deployment of pity towards refugees and asylum seekers seems to justify the EU's 'war on smugglers'. Thus, this emotion plays a significant role in the securitization of migration in the EU. Pity enables the EU to take extraordinary measures against human smuggling in the Mediterranean, yet smuggling can be considered a reaction to the EU's border regime. Consequently, by framing refugees and asylum seekers as the referent object of security, the EU transforms human smuggling into a security threat, paradoxically resulting in stricter border policies.

5.4 - From pity to risk: the securitization of migration in the EU

In May 2015, the Commission presented the European Agenda on Migration. Multiple rhetorical devices, as well as direct content evoking either pity or fear, sustain this policy

outcome. Increased numbers of asylum application, boats arriving at the Italian and Greek shores, as well as numbers of deaths at sea serve to create an emergency situation which requires extraordinary policies, in this case the Agenda on Migration. These devices, added to alarming language, successfully constructed the situation as a crisis. With this framing, the initial picture of migrants as essentially vulnerable subjects is gradually replaced by an alarmist rhetoric whereby the EU constructs a crisis imagery that is presented to the audience. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the framing of a situation as a crisis necessarily entails the need for extraordinary policy responses (De Vries & Guild, 2019), and constitutes the core of securitization practices.

The Commission clearly depicts frontline Member States as facing a significant challenge. As debates in Europe grow increasingly polarized, alarmist language frequently emerges when discussing Member States managing the situation individually. This shift in rhetoric contributes to reframing the vulnerability from being faced by migrants to being faced by the EU itself. Against this backdrop, it was observed a reduction of pity-inducing content regarding migrants over time, as the crisis progressed. On September 4, 2015, Avramopoulos mentions the island of Kos as a welcoming a beautiful place, with a very friendly population, but that “[...] this enormous wave of irregular migrants and refugees has overwhelmed its management capacities” (European Commission, 2015i, paragraph 23). In this speech, it is evident that pity is directed towards the island of Kos instead of migrants. Moreover, the adjective ‘enormous’ helps construct a notion of invasion threatening this ‘welcoming and beautiful place.’ Similarly, in a speech in Austria shortly thereafter, Avramopoulos expresses compassion and empathy towards Austria, emphasizing how the country was overburden by asylum seekers (European Commission, 2015j).

In the year of 2016, only three of the 19 speeches analyzed included pity-arousing content towards migrants, indicating that the EU altered the framing of migrants as vulnerable subjects as the crisis progressed. This shift could stem from an initial solidified identity construction, as argues Coen Leep (2010), that once an emotional framing is established, it need not be reiterated in every discourse, as the audience already learned how to feel about the subject. Conversely, the decrease in pity content over time was accompanied by increasing fear content, illustrated by frequent mentions of growing numbers of asylum applications and

imagery of unease in frontline Member States. This suggests a shift from viewing migrants as ‘at risk’ to viewing them as ‘the risk’⁷.

The risk is articulated through the potential impacts on the EU, particularly European integration and the integrity of the Schengen area. As Frans Timmermans stated on September 4, 2015, “A Europe without borders can’t survive in the present conditions. Our society is built on certain premises of organised solidarity that would be undermined if we simply would say that everybody can come in.” (European Commission, 2015j, paragraph 8). Here, the migration/security nexus appears as concerning not only internal security, but also European integration more largely. Such statements, along with discussions on cross-border crime, terrorism, organized crime, and cybercrime, especially after the terrorist attacks in Paris in November 2015, likely led to a reduction in pity-arousing content towards refugees and asylum seekers. Post-November 2015 speeches included more references to security and counter-terrorism measures, and direct links between the refugee crisis and terrorism were made, exemplified by statements like “The challenges of the refugee flows as well as the terrorist attacks have shown that no country can do this alone,” (European Commission, 2015r, paragraph 9), and “[...] as with migration, terrorism knows no borders.” (European Commission, 2016l, paragraph 33).

Moreover, since the Agenda on Migration was presented, the Commission has increasingly tried to distinguish refugees from irregular migrants or ‘bogus’ asylum seekers. Here, pity is reserved for ‘legitimate’ refugees, while irregular migrants are described as ‘those who have no right to be here’, leading to return and readmission policies as proposed by the Agenda. The Commission also attempted to establish legal entry routes to discourage asylum seekers from paying smugglers. However, these measures, such as the Blue Card Scheme⁸, were limited to high-skilled migrants.

Concurrently, the Agenda on Migration’s efforts to establish legal entry routes and reduce human smuggling, Commissioner Avramopoulos stated that these measures “[...] will be balanced by strong and targeted action for those who try to abuse our system” (European Commission, 2015h, paragraph 36), where is not clear whether ‘those who abuse our system’ are smugglers or irregular migrants themselves. In the same speech, shortly after presenting the proposals, Avramopoulos used alarming language to highlight cross-border security threats,

⁷ See, for instance, Gray and Frack (2019) for a more detailed description of how refugees were simultaneously constructed as ‘at risk’ and ‘the risk’ in the EU during the refugee crisis.

⁸ The Blue Card Directive “establishes the conditions of entry and residence of highly qualified non-EU nationals in 25 EU countries. The related residence and work permit is called EU Blue Card” (European Commission, n.d - c)

linking the refugee crisis to security issues and transforming pity into a perception of risk. In his opening remarks at the European Parliament Plenary Session published on April 12, 2016, Avramopoulos described migratory flows as “irregular and dangerous” (European Commission, 2016h, paragraph 5), again leaving it unclear whether the danger was to migrants or EU Member States. These articulations, associations, and omissions contribute to gradually shifting the discourse from pity to security concerning migrants, turning them into repositories of fear and anxiety⁹.

In her study of politics of pity and risk, Aradau explains how trafficked women who knowingly accept to work in the sex industry and become illegal migrants are deemed undeserving of pity, precisely because of their choice (Aradau, 2004, p. 261). Likewise, in the EU’s discourses on the migration crisis, a distinction is made between ‘legitimate’ refugees and ‘bogus’ asylum seekers who need to be returned. Here, irregular migrants who knowingly engage smugglers for unsolicited entry into the EU are exempt from deserving pity. Building up on that, Aradau traces how politics of pity transforms into politics of risk, arguing that representations of suffering alone are insufficient to establish a sustainable politics of pity. According to the author, politics of pity must be supported by additional knowledge about risks. Using a Foucauldian framework, Aradau posits that these individuals “metamorphose from suffering beings worthy of pity into risky beings who are to be contained and disciplined.” (*Ibid.*, p. 255). In this way, risky identities are constructed through risk assessment, which overcomes depictions of pity and justifies disciplinary political outcomes such as surveillance over migrants.

Risk assessment involves practices such as “pathological categorisations and a statistical calculation of the incidence of certain factors in a population group” (*Ibid.* p. 268). For example, identifying that “children of alcoholic parents are also ‘at risk’ of being alcoholic” (*Ibid.*) creates dual identities of being ‘at risk’ and ‘the risk’ to a community. This leads to therapeutic and disciplinary measures aimed at practices to “lower the dangers posed by their risk.” (*Ibid.* p. 269). Risk assessment of migratory flows to the EU is handled by professionals in the management of unease, as noted by Bigo (2014). In our case study, factors like “the terror of the Islamic state” and “hell on earth on Syria” may heighten terrorism concerns in the EU, alongside fears of ‘economic migrants disguised as asylum seekers’ using smugglers.

⁹ Even if direct fear-related content is reduced in such statements, by omitting who is the object of security and what is the threat, the EU constructs certain disorders of discourse (Wodak, 1996) that may encourage the audience to identify migrants as the threat due to previous security imaginary of the audience (Van Rythoven, 2015).

These associations make possible a link between cross-border crime to the refugee crisis, socially constructing migrants as both ‘at risk’ and ‘the risk’. This duality transforms these individuals into subjects to be contained and governed. As a result, the Agenda on Migration establishes strict screening and profiling policies upon migrants’ arrival in the EU.

The hotspot approach shows how discipline mechanisms are implemented at the EU borders to assess potential risks posed by migrants. In a speech published on October 17, 2015, Avramopoulos mentions the non-compliance of migrants in hotspots in Lesbos. He states that migrants’ refusal to get fingerprinted reduces the efficiency of hotspots, urging for migrants’ compliance in these procedures (European Commission, 2015m). This statement not only suggests that migrants are undermining the EU’s agency in controlling the entry of TCNs, but also depicts migrants as a threat to the integrity of the CEAS. As Avramopoulos mentions in the same speech, smugglers instruct migrants not to get fingerprinted to avoid being sent back. This non-compliance at hotspots shifts the perception of migrants from pity-deserving subjects to ‘stubborn’ individuals undermining the EU’s efforts to manage the crisis.

De Vries and Guild (2019) argue that hotspots can be defined as “geographical sites and as mechanisms: border zones marked by the containment and fracturing of mobility through mechanisms of identification and sorting [...]” (De Vries & Guild, 2019, p. 5). The authors suggest that, in practice, the selection criteria of hotspots are not always conducted according to International Refugee and EU Law. For example, selecting who is allowed to apply for asylum based on paper questionnaires (not translated to the applicant’s language) to be filled and given back to the authorities, or based on racial profiling (an applicant of determined country is more likely to receive a negative decision than others). In this perspective, hotspots function as *de facto* deportation sites. Refugees and asylum seekers are submitted to risk assessment and disciplining technologies such as the fingerprinting mechanism, resulting in a strengthened external border.

Risk assessment technologies, thus, transform migrants from vulnerable, pity deserving subjects into bodies to be contained and disciplined. The EU’s humanitarian discourse, embedded in pity-arousing content, is restructured in a securitizing narrative whereby migrants shift from being ‘at risk’ to being ‘the risk’. This allows the EU and its agencies to govern these individuals through politics of risk. The paradox between the EU’s humanitarian narrative and its actual border regime, as argued by Pallister-Wilkins (2015) and Moreno-Lax (2018), sustains this idea. Pity and humanitarian concerns are mobilized towards migrants in SAR operations, but as soon as they cross the border, they become risky beings to be contained and disciplined by the EU. In this regard, the use of pity-related content in the EU’s discourses

allows the humanitarian discourse to be “gradually taken up by the EU itself.” (Aradau, 2004, p. 253).

The transformation of politics of pity into politics of risk offers a holistic viewpoint to explore how the EU establishes strict border policies, despite constructing migrants as vulnerable subjects through pity-arousing content. Although it can be argued that risk approaches fall out of the scope of the securitization framework proposed by the Copenhagen School, because they do not consist in existential threats, the study of risks within ST has been defended due to the “historical evolution of threats into risks” (Aradau, 2004, p. 264). This is articulated by Aradau in her use of Foucault’s concept of governmentality to explore how pity is transfigured into risk. Foucault (2007) describes power not just as what is being forced upon onto subjects by the army and the police, but also produced and reproduced by institutions. In this way, Foucault coins the concept of governmentality as:

[...] the ensemble formed by institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, calculations, and tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific, albeit very complex, power that has the population as its target, political economy as its major form of knowledge, and apparatuses of security as its essential technical instrument. (Foucault, 2007, p. 108).

Building up on this, modern security practices trace back to the appropriation of risks by neoliberal societies through tactics of power over populations (Aradau, 2004; Husymans, 2004). Risk assessment becomes the key vehicle for securitization, treating populations as objects to be secured against perceived threats. Applied to our study, refugees and asylum seekers are assessed through risk categories in transit zones such as hotspots by professional managers of unease, transfiguring pity and vulnerability into security threats.

It could be argued, therefore, that despite the presence of pity-inducing content in the EU’s discourses on refugees and asylum seekers, this content does not influence, at a practical level, the way that the EU constructs its external borders. On the other hand, the definition of migrants’ identity as vulnerable is precisely what allows the EU to exercise its agency at its external borders and beyond. By framing refugees through pity, the EU becomes responsible for these individuals’ well-being and, in turn, acquires legitimacy to develop extraordinary border policies, which paradoxically generates more risks for migrants. This suggests that emotions do play a role in securitization strategies, with the EU using pity to justify border actions like military operations in the Mediterranean under the guise of rescuing migrants in

distress. Moreover, this approach reinforces the EU's identity as a normative actor committed to the well-being of those excluded from the international system, despite in practice creating more insecurities to them.

5.5 - The Emotional Borders of Europe

The final discursive realm identified involves the construction of the EU's external borders in both physical and temporal dimensions. In 13 discourses analyzed, European identity is explicitly articulated as a normative actor concerned with well-being of vulnerable Others. This is evident through the use of pity-inducing content to describe refugees, as well as the EU's self-imposed responsibility to protect them. Statements such as "This is our moral duty" (European Commission, 2016k, paragraph 4) and "To deal with this situation we need to stick to our common values of pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, and solidarity." (European Commission, 2016f, paragraph 11) underscore the EU's identity as a compassionate and responsible actor willing to help those in need. This identity is also highlighted by contrasting the EU with its neighboring regions. Phrases such as "war-ravaged persecuted communities in our neighbourhood" (European Commission, 2016k, paragraph 3) contribute to an imagery of unease surrounding Europe, reinforcing the boundaries between Us and Them.

This imaginary bordering of Europe, where its identity is shaped by contrasting itself with neighboring countries, supports Eder's (2006) argument that 'hard' European borders are a product of 'Soft' borders constructed through narratives and symbols that socially define boundaries between the EU and the rest of the world. This is exemplified by the Commission's discourses on the refugee crisis, which constructs Europe as a compassionate actor advocating for the well-being of those victimized in Europe's 'violent' neighboring countries. The success of this narrative legitimizes the establishment of institutionalized borders, as shown by the numerous border reinforcement policies proposed under the Agenda on Migration. For instance, the Entry-Exit system introduced in the SBC under the EU Travel Information and Authorization system mandates that individuals crossing an EU external frontier are checked against a database. Justifying this initiative, the Commission stated: "Today we propose to make our borders smarter and stronger, creating an EU entry-exit system to improve our external borders management, by better monitoring over-stayers." (European Commission, 2016g, paragraph 70).

Interestingly, despite being part of a speech largely focused on the refugee crisis, proposing a measure targeting overstayers underscores the argument that irregular migration

often involves overstaying visas and work permits rather than unsolicited border crossings associated with the refugee crisis. These disorders of discourse, as termed by Wodak (1996), suggest that while the refugee crisis has significantly shaped the evolution of the European integrated border regime, it is not the sole factor. The construction of the EU's common external border has evolved gradually over the years of integration and the liberalization of movement within the Union, and this process was strongly influenced by a security imaginary concerning external threats and efforts to establish or reaffirm the EU's identity.

In the speeches analyzed, the construction of the EU's identity is often emphasized through calls for solidarity among Member States, highlighted by phrases like 'we can only do this together' and 'this is a crisis that's affects all of Europe'. The frequent use of words such as 'together', 'us', and 'we' collectively refers to the EU as a unified entity. Interestingly, the existential threat posed by the crisis is not portrayed solely by the refugee Other or smugglers undermining the EU's border regime, but is framed as the fragmented response of Member States to the crisis. This fragmented response is the object which poses an existential threat to the EU, precisely by reviving the "ghosts of the European past" (European Commission, 2016l, paragraph 5).

Buzan and Wæver (2003) suggest that European integration became a securitized subject in the post-Cold War era, in a process that discursively depicted Europe's past as an existential threat. By framing Europe's past as an existential threat, European integration emerges as an exceptional response to that danger. According to the authors, "In this discourse, Europe's Other is neither Russia nor Islamic fundamentalism: Europe's Other is Europe's past" (Buzan & Wæver, 2003, p. 356). This is emphasized through alarmist language about the rise of nationalism and extremism in the EU's Member States resulting from the refugee crisis. The Commission consistently invokes the threatening image of a fragmented Europe, thereby underscoring the urgency of a common solution. This represents a temporal construction of identity, as suggested by Hansen (2006), and sustains the idea developed by Buzan and Wæver (2003) that states that Europe's Other is Europe's past. Focusing on the role of emotions, we observe that in the EU's discourses on the migration crisis, it is an emotionally charged construction, characterized by fear-inducing content. There is a clear articulation of the European past as a backward and threatening Other which is affectively constructed.

The portrayal of a violent past contrasted with a peaceful present and future demonstrates the construction of identity through temporality as well as emotionality. The Schengen area is represented as the pinnacle of the European project and must be safeguarded. Consequently, the reintroduction of temporary internal border controls is perceived as a threat

to the Schengen zone's integrity. The resulting border mechanisms are designed to protect the Schengen space by focusing on reducing secondary movements within the EU and reforming the Dublin system.

Therefore, this last discursive realm closes the discussion on how the EU's external borders are emotionally constructed through the securitization of migration. In conclusion, the analysis of the selected speeches, viewed through the lens of ST and emphasizing the role of emotions, reveals three mutually reinforcing narratives. First is the migrant victim narrative (De Haas, 2024), which portrays migrants as vulnerable subjects in the hands of violent smugglers using pity-inducing content. Second, pity is transformed into fear through the depiction of an unprecedented wave of migration threatening to overwhelm Europe, a mass migration narrative (*Ibid.*). Third, the European past is constructed as a threatening Other, emphasized by the focus on reintroducing border controls between Member States and the risks posed to the integrity of the Schengen area, using fear-inducing content.

These narratives contributed to the (re)shape the EU's integrated border management during the 2015-2016 refugee crisis. The migrant victim narrative allowed the EU to reinforce its military operations in the Mediterranean to combat smuggling, revealing how pity is used to reinforce the EU's external border. The transformation of pity into risk further strengthened the EU's external border through the mass migration narrative, where fear plays a significant role. Finally, the threatening European past narrative enables the EU to enhance the Europeanization of migration and border policies, thereby reinforcing its external borders.

Conclusion

This dissertation has proposed a study of the role of emotions in the securitization of migration during the 2015-2016 refugee crisis in Europe, focusing on how this process influenced the strengthening of the EU's external borders. The study aimed first to explore the productive role of emotions in framing migration as a threat to the EU, drawing upon Securitization Theory and the emotional production of Others. Secondly, using the case of the 2015 refugee crisis, it explored what emotions were used by the EU to frame the crisis, identifying pity and fear as the main emotional content employed. These emotions were analyzed in contrast with the border policies proposed by the EU as a response to the crisis, revealing how the employment of registers of emotions on migration discourses may have contributed to the reinforcement of the EU's border regime. At a broader level, the dissertation intended to contribute to the literature on emotions in Securitization Theory, introducing pity as an essential emotion for the securitization of migration in the EU.

The construction of the common EU's external borders is a complicate process involving various policies and technologies within the framework of a European integrated border regime. This framework establishes the borders of Europe not only at the limits of Member States, but also extends to its neighboring regions through agreements with third countries, carrier sanctions, and a visa regime. The projection the EU's borders was evident during the refugee crisis through several measures proposed by the European Commission, including the expansion of Frontex's military operations in the Mediterranean, the European Agenda on Migration, partnerships with countries like Türkiye and Libya, the reform of the Dublin system, and the establishment of an entry-exit system at Schengen crossing points.

As argued in this dissertation, the reinforcement of the EU's external borders over the years is closely linked to the transformation of migration into a security discourse in the post-Cold War era, particularly following terrorist attacks of in the early 2000s. On the other hand, the framing of migration as a security threat to the EU is also part of the broader integration process, where external borders are strengthened to ensure internal security and maintain the integrity of the Schengen area. This dynamic was evident during the refugee crisis, especially after the 2015 terrorist attacks in Paris, when migration and security increasingly became intertwined in the EU's discourses about internal security.

The migration/security nexus was explored in this dissertation under the securitization framework provided by the Copenhagen School, which contends that security threats are not taken-for-granted issues of the international system, but rather discursively constructed dangers

(re)produced through speech acts. The employment of this theoretical framework established a starting point for our study based on the understanding that migration has become associated with a security threat in the EU primarily by discursively representing the migrant Other as a risk to the Union's internal security. Building up on that, whether justified upon terrorist threats or threats to societal security and cultural identity, migration is used by the EU to justify the strengthening of its external borders.

The study of emotions in the securitization of migration was inspired by Van Rythoven's (2015, 2021) concept of threat construction as an essentially emotional phenomenon. Drawing upon the idea that the securitization of an issue depends on the audience's emotional appraisals, scholars were able to explore the role of emotions within the securitization framework provided by the Copenhagen School. The role of emotions in securitization has been sustained by studies on the representation of emotions in political discourses, which contributed to the selection of a poststructuralist inspired discourse analysis as the methodology employed in this dissertation. Since it is not possible to measure whether politicians consciously include emotion-inducing content in their speeches, this study focused on the presence of such components in the EU's official speeches and the policy and action responses that took place in the context analyzed. This approach allowed the identification of the existence of emotional content in the European Commission's Speeches, as well as the development of a strict border regime that may be associated with it.

Through the analysis of the Commission's discourses published in the years of 2015-2016, three main narratives were identified, each employing different emotional constructs and advocating for the strengthening of the European integrated border management. These narratives varied in their affective portrayal of Others, yet all contributed to the same political outcome: the reinforcement of the EU's external borders. Consequently, these three discourses represent distinct securitizations that collectively support the strengthening of the EU's border regime.

The first narrative securitizes migration through the association of smuggling as the root cause of irregular border crossings. This securitization emphasizes the security of smuggled individuals, through an affective logic of pity, but also the security of the EU by portraying smugglers as 'evil' and 'violent' agents undermining the EU's borders. This narrative was verified primarily at the beginning of the refugee crisis, and justified the implementation of border-reinforcing policies such as the expansion of Frontex's military operations in the Mediterranean and agreements with third countries. The frequent use of pity-inducing elements in the EU's discourses regarding refugees and asylum seekers during this

period suggests that pity may be a powerful component for securitization. However, this aspect remains underexplored in most literature on emotions in Securitization Theory, which typically focus on fear.

The second securitization concerns the interaction between politics of pity and risk management. This narrative transforms refugees and asylum seekers crossing the EU's external borders from vulnerable subjects into risky bodies who need to be contained and disciplined. This realm of discourse was complex to unravel, and the methodology employed in this dissertation could not surely assert whether emotions played a role in the securitization of refugees and asylum seekers in the EU during 2015-2016. In other words, the question of how the EU was able to reinforce its external borders despite using pity-arousing content when framing migrants remains open. However, some insights were gained by observing the increasing frequency of fear-related content as pity-related content decreased. This emotional interplay may have contributed to framing the refugee crisis as a security threat, thereby justifying the implementation of strict border policies. Furthermore, the data suggests that portraying migrants as vulnerable subjects and as security threats are not mutually exclusive. Instead, these representations coexist in the EU's speeches, shaping specific policies that (re)produce borders. Both registers of fear and pity appear in the analyzed speeches, depicting migrants as vulnerable and migration as a threat to the EU.

The third securitization, which concerns the temporal aspect of the European past as a threatening Other, was explicitly observed in the Commission's discourses during the refugee crisis. Elements of fear – evident through alarming language and rhetorical devices – were frequently invoked to depict a hostile European past and emphasize the dangers of reverting to a disaggregated Europe. This affective construction of a threatening European past reinforces the idea that the EU's security agenda is strongly focused on preserving and reinforcing European integration, which includes the advancing of a European integrated border regime. The articulation of a normative identity in contrast to an aggressive past thus mutually constructs identities in a temporal dimension, which, in the discursive *corpus* analyzed includes emotional components, specifically fear, when representing the European past.

Therefore, in addressing the research questions 'How do emotions contribute to the shaping of border policies in the EU? How can this be observed in the case of the 2015 refugee crisis? What emotions are displayed in the European Commission's speeches and what policies they entail?', the answers obtained from our study are as follows:

The employment of emotion-inducing content within the EU's discourses on its common external border enables the Union to justify and legitimize border reinforcement

policies. These policies include the militarization of the Mediterranean and the externalization of the EU's common external borders. This was notably evident during the 2015 refugee crisis, where emotional content concerning migrants, smugglers, and the integrity of the Schengen space served as a foundation for advancing policies like the European Agenda on Migration. These policies included measures that ultimately reinforced the EU's common external borders, suggesting how the construction of the EU's borders may have an emotional component. Specifically, the emotions conveyed in the speeches analyzed were marked by fear and pity, articulated through language, context, and rhetorical devices.

Policies driven by pity focused on combating smuggling networks, highlighting the physical, mental, and emotional suffering refugees and asylum seekers endured in the hands of smugglers. Measures such as the reinforcement of Frontex's military operations in the Mediterranean with the aim of breaking down smuggling routes and rescuing lives illustrate how pity towards migrants contributed to the reshaping of the EU's external borders.

On the other hand, policies driven by fear were largely framed around a narrative of mass migration, suggesting that a disaggregated response from the EU's Member States lacked the capacity to manage the crisis. This led to measures such as establishing partnerships with origin and transit countries to deter migrants from coming to Europe. Additionally, the Europeanization of migration and border policies, exemplified by the hotspot approach and the reform of the Dublin system, also stemmed from fear-inducing content in the Commission's speeches. Here, fear was directed towards a European past marked by disunity and fragmentation. Therefore, the actions resulting from the employment of fear-arousing content regarding the European past were characterized by the constant reiteration that the refugee crisis could only be tackled by the EU as a whole.

The identification of emotional content in the analyzed speeches does not claim that these elements were deliberately crafted by politicians to justify the strengthening of the EU's common external borders, nor does it ascertain the effects that such emotional content has on the audience. Thus, despite identifying specific emotions employed by the EU in relation to border-reinforcing policies, this area warrants further exploration. Specifically, it would be important to better understand how the audience responds to these emotional stimuli in order to verify whether discursive registers of emotions in the EU's discourses on migration and borders effectively persuade individuals to accept or not the strengthening of the EU's border regime. However, the study proposed by this dissertation has identified that pity, more so than fear, may play a significant role in securitizing moves, thereby introducing a new research direction for the study of emotions in Securitization Theory.

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