Elite Level Securitization of Migration and the 2016 EU-Turkey Statement

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1. Introduction

Migration into the European Union has been subjected to a securitization process caused by the securitizing acts of various actors, including politicians and media organizations. This process is advanced through frequent hyperbolic claims about the disproportionate threat immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers pose to Europe. Some argue that refugees and asylum seekers threaten the welfare state by requiring services to facilitate integration, care for physical and psychological injury, and basic necessities such as shelter. Others are driven by xenophobia and Islamophobia and as a result perceive refugees and asylum seekers from outside of Europe as a threat to European society and culture (Huntington, 1996, p. 53). Refugees are also constructed as a threat to the labour market, driving down wages by potentially offering employers a surplus of vulnerable workers to exploit in both the formal and informal economy. The nature of this political discourse which Europeans are exposed to often consists of politicians proposing national level responses to the perceived threat posed by these population groups. The 2016 EU-Turkey statement, however, represents a supranational policy to stem migration flows into the Union. The 2016 EU-Turkey Statement is therefore more-so the product of decision makers within the structure of the European Union as opposed to national level securitising actors. This thesis argues that Presidents of the European Commission have contributed to the ongoing securitization of migration into the European Union, both discursively and through the supranational policies they promoted. It will address the following research question through the lens of securitization theory: In what ways has the speech of the President of the European Commission contributed to the securitization of migration resulting from the Syrian civil war? The President of the European Commission was selected for analysis as they represent the head of the European Union's executive branch, which has the exclusive right to propose legislation and represent the EU in external affairs (Tömmel, 2013, p. 793). It is therefore one of the most influential positions in the European Union. Considering the European Commissions influence in the formulation of legislation relating to asylum and refugee policy, studying the speech of its President serves as the most relevant case study of elite level securitization of migration.

To further this argument, a discourse analysis will be performed on a corpus of European Commission president's speeches. All speeches mentioning Syria by the Presidents of the European Commission from the start of the Syrian Civil War in March 2011 to the formulation of the 2016 EU-Turkey Statement will be analysed to identify securitising practices. This topic is important to study as the world is facing a future with an ever-increasing number of migrants

and refugees resulting from to the climate crisis, conflict, and socio-economic turmoil resulting from the pandemic. It is therefore important to understand the influence the head of the European Union's executive branch has on the refugee and asylum policy, and to evaluate whether they personally contributed to the securitization of migration while in one of the most influential positions in the European Union. The remainder of this introductory section will introduce important concepts and definitions, provide background information relating to the securitisation of migration in the European Union.

1.1 Defining Important Terms

When discussing irregular migration, it is important to set out clear definitions for the people being discussed. Three terms are most frequently used to categorise externally displaced people: migrants, refugees, and asylum-seekers. Definitions provided by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR, 2022) in its master glossary of terms will be adhered to in this regard, which are as follows:

- *Refugees*: "persons outside their countries of origin who are in need of international protection because of feared persecution, or a serious threat to their life, physical integrity or freedom in their country of origin as a result of persecution, armed conflict, violence or serious public disorder."

- *Migrant*: The UNHCR stresses that there is no universally accepted definition of this term, and that its use as a catch-all to describe all forms of international movement should be avoided. The use of this term will therefore be avoided, with terms such as refugees, asylum seekers, and variations of 'internationally displaced people' being used instead.

- *Asylum-seeker*: "A general term for any person who is seeking international protection."

Other important terms:

- *Principle of non-refoulement*: "prohibits States from transferring or removing individuals from their jurisdiction or effective control when there are substantial grounds for believing that the person would be at risk of irreparable harm upon return, including persecution, torture, ill-treatment or other serious human rights violations" (OHCHR, 2022a).

- *Informalisation*: Describes the shift away from formal, legally binding agreements to flexible tailor-made partnerships. Some scholars spell the term as 'Informalization' (Ott, 2020).
- *Externalisation*: Refers to the process of outsourcing migration management to third countries. Some scholars spell the term as 'Externalization' (Spijkerboer, 2018).

1.2 Historical Context of the Securitization of Migration in Europe

The securitization of migration within Europe predates the formation of the European Union in 1993. Huysmans (2000, p. 753) writes how migration was not highly politicised within the European Economic Community (EEC) before the 1980's and European governments generally viewed migrants as a supplement to their workforces. This started to change in the 1980's, however, with what Huysmans (2000, p. 756) identified as the "problematization of migration" in policy debates where migrants were depicted as a threat to public order, domestic stability, and the cultural composition of European nations. Citing the seminal texts of securitisation theory (Buzan et al., 1997; Waever, 1995), Huysmans (2000, pp. 757–758) makes the argument that the securitization of migration is the result of a multiplicity of practices effected by many actors including national governments, institutions such as police forces, and political actors. The motivations of each actor can be distinct or overlap with those of another. For example, right wing political groups may be motivated by xenophobic discourse which describes multiculturalism as a fatal condition which can tear states apart (Huntington, 1996, p. 53). Police forces on the other hand, with a mandate concerned with the internal security of the state, tend to address every issue with security measures regardless of whether or not such an approach is optimal (Huysmans, 2000, p. 757). As the adage goes, to a hammer every problem is a nail. This dissertation will make the argument that the multiplicity of practices effecting the securitization of migration in Europe are still ongoing to this day, with Presidents of the European Commission engaging in some of said practices.

In terms of legislation, many scholars identify the Schengen agreement of 1985 and the subsequent 1990 Schengen Convention as laying the foundation for the securitization of migration present in Europe today (Goldschmidt, 2006, p. 37; Huysmans, 2000, p. 756; Stępka, 2022, pp. 69–71). This is due to the "compensatory security measures" which began to be introduced at the EU's external borders in response to the perceived vulnerabilities associated with the abolishment of internal border checks (Stępka, 2022, p. 69). There have been several instruments used to effectively securitise migration into the EU since then, which fall under the Global Approach to Migration and Mobility (GAMM) (European Commission, 2011). The

GAMM sets out to establish an "overarching framework of the EU's external migration policy" (European Commission, 2011, p. 21). Under this framework, two types of agreements with third countries are of relevance to this project, namely mobility partnerships and re-admission agreements. Mobility partnerships are defined as cooperative arrangements which provide a "prime bilateral framework to address relevant migration and mobility issues of mutual concern primarily with EU neighbourhood countries, including, where appropriate, short- and long-term mobility" (Council of the European Union, 2012, p. 12). Since 2008, nine mobility partnerships have been concluded with third countries. Tittel-Mosser (2019, p. 239) lists them in order: "Cape Verde and Moldova in 2008, Georgia in 2009, Armenia in 2011, Morocco and Azerbaijan in 2013, Tunisia and Jordan in 2014 and Belarus in 2016". Readmission agreements "[establish] rapid and effective procedures for the identification and safe and orderly return of persons" (European Commission, 2022b). They are generally negotiated in exchange for visa facilitation programmes through mobility partnerships. As of July 2022, the EU (European Commission, 2022c) has signed readmission agreements with the following third countries: Hong Kong and Macao in 2004, Sri Lanka in 2005, Albania in 2006, Russia in 2007, Ukraine, North Macedonia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, and Moldova in 2008, Pakistan in 2010, Georgia in 2011, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Turkey, and Cape Verde in 2014 and Belarus in 2020. Furthermore, legally non-binding informal readmission agreements have been reached with Afghanistan, Guinea, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, the Gambia, and the Ivory coast. Later developments include the European Agenda on Migration (EAM) (European Commission, 2015a) and the Migration Partnership Framework (MPF) (European Commission, 2016) in which the Vice-President of the Commission declared that "Migration is a positive thing for the world, but we need to do it in a regulated way". If any of these agreements is either directly referred to in the Speech of a President of the Commission, or if the agreement goes unmentioned but is contextually relevant, it will be referenced and discussed in the results section of this dissertation.

1.3 Background to the 2016 EU-Turkey Statement

The Republic of Turkey is geographically positioned to serve as a natural migratory route towards the EU for people fleeing conflict, injustice, and economic deprivation in North Africa, West Asia, and South Asia. FRONTEX (2022) identifies Turkey as part of the Eastern Mediterranean route, recording crossings of migrants hailing primarily from Afghanistan, Syria, and Iraq. Figure 1 shows the significant spike in illegal crossings recorded by FRONTEX

in the run up to the 2016 EU-Turkey statement, as well as the subsequent drop in recorded crossings.
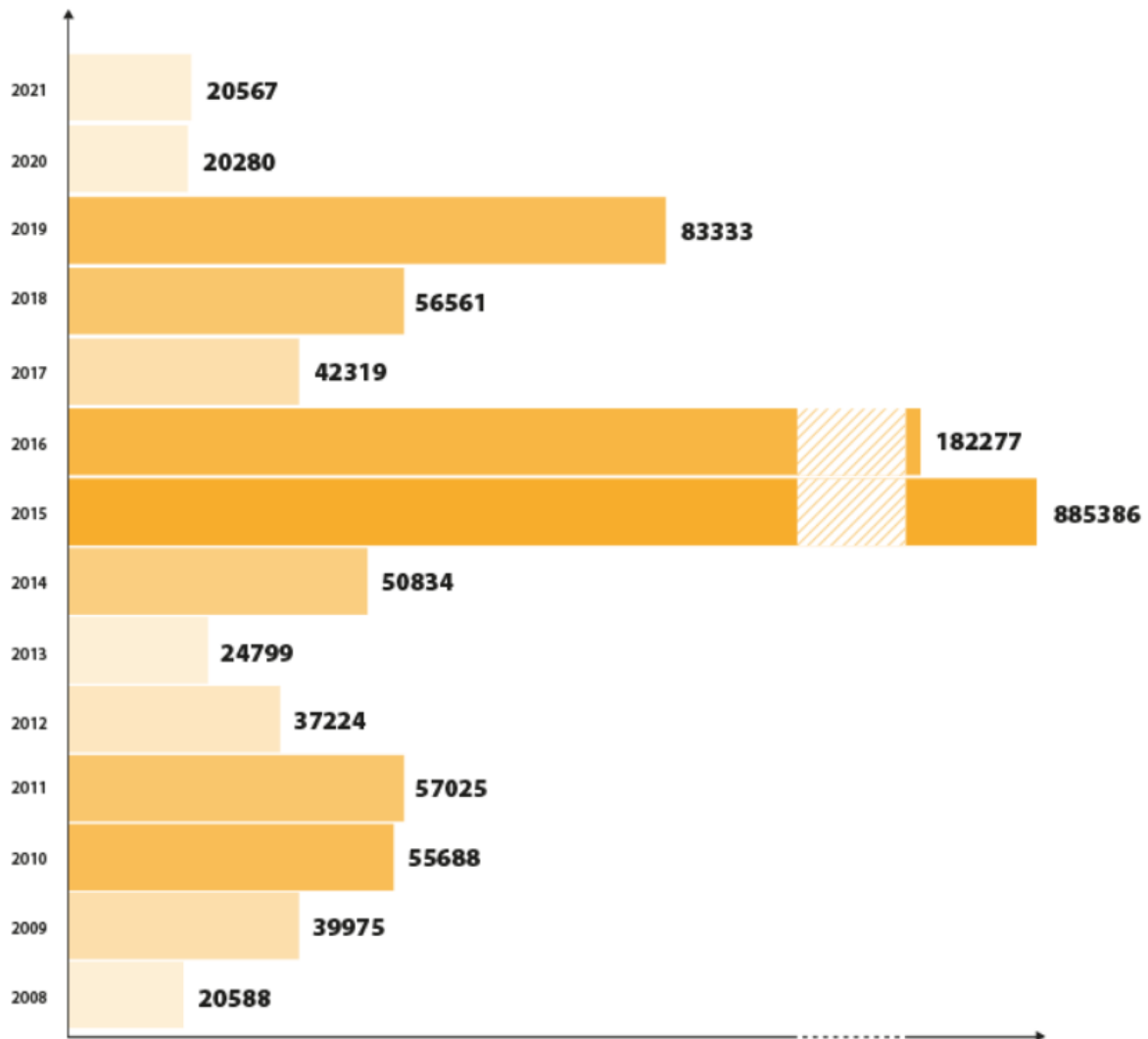
Figure 1. Number of Illegal border crossings recorded by FRONTEX from Turkey from 2008-2021 (FRONTEX, 2022).

In 2015, the tragic death of over eight hundred migrants in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea in less than a week led then President of the European Council Donald Tusk to convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council (Ineli-Ciger & Ulusoy, 2020). In relation to the EU's relationship with Turkey, this meeting resulted in the European Council (2015) committing to "step up cooperation with Turkey in view of the situation in Syria and Iraq" and to "set up a new return programme for the rapid return of illegal migrants from frontline Member States, coordinated by FRONTEX". This led to the formulation of the *EU-Turkey joint action plan* in October 2015, through which the EU set out to support Syrians under temporary protection

within communities in Turkey and strengthen cooperation with Turkey to prevent further irregular migration. To accomplish the latter, the EU would reinforce the Turkish Coast Guard's capacity, organise returns, and increase communication between FRONTEX and the Turkish government (European Commission, 2015b). This agreement attracted criticism for allegedly violating its human rights commitments by permitting the denial of entry to refugees entering the European Union by way of the Aegean Sea (Gürkan & Coman, 2021, p. 277). Ultimately, this plan failed to achieve any measurable decrease in irregular migration flows from Turkey to the EU and was limited in scope by only targeting asylum seekers of Syrian origin (Ineli-Ciger, 2018, p. 128). This failure prompted the formulation of a more extensive agreement between Turkey and the EU.

1.4 The 2016 EU-Turkey Statement

On the 18th of March 2016, the European Council (2016) reached an informal agreement with The Republic of Turkey with the aim of halting irregular migration from Turkey into the European Union. The following actions were agreed upon, as summarised by Perchoc (2022):

1) All new irregular migrants crossing from Turkey to the Greek islands as of 20 March 2016 will be returned to Turkey;

2) For every Syrian being returned to Turkey from the Greek islands, another Syrian will be resettled to the EU;

3) Turkey will take any necessary measures to prevent new sea or land routes for irregular migration opening from Turkey to the EU;

4) Once irregular crossings between Turkey and the EU are ending or have been substantially reduced, a Voluntary Humanitarian Admission Scheme will be activated;

5) The fulfilment of the visa liberalisation roadmap will be accelerated with a view to lifting the visa requirements for Turkish citizens at the latest by the end of June 2016. Turkey will take all the necessary steps to fulfil the remaining requirements;

6) The EU will, in close cooperation with Turkey, further speed up the disbursement of the initially allocated €3 billion under the Facility for Refugees in Turkey. Once these resources are about to be used in full, the EU will mobilise additional funding for the Facility up to an additional €3 billion by the end of 2018;

7) The EU and Turkey welcomed the ongoing work on the upgrading of the Customs Union.

8) The accession process will be re-energised, with Chapter 33 opened during the Dutch Presidency of the Council of the European Union and preparatory work on the opening of other chapters to continue at an accelerated pace;

9) The EU and Turkey will work to improve humanitarian conditions inside Syria.

Figure 1 demonstrates that the implementation of this agreement correlated with a sharp decrease in the number of illegal border crossings from Turkey into the European Union. To determine whether this relationship is causal, it is necessary to evaluate what exactly the agreement achieved. From the signing of the EU-Turkey Joint Action Plan in 2015 to the fourth year of the EU-Turkey statement in 2020, nearly two hundred thousand people were intercepted by the Turkish coast guard while trying to cross into Greece illegally (Oztig, 2020, p. 78). This activity alone, however, does not fully account for the drop in illegal border crossings shown in Figure 1. Van Liempt et al (2017, p. 8) note how other factors such as the closure of the Balkan route, seasonal factors, and the possibility that the statement took affect after most migrants seeking to enter Greece from Turkey had already done so, played a significant role. Furthermore, the return and resettlement provision of the statement was applied to relatively few people. Early analysis performed a year after the implementation of the statement noted the small number of returns from Greece to Turkey, and that the resettlement scheme from Turkey to Europe was proceeding at a similarly slow pace (van Liempt et al., 2017, p. 10). An evaluation of the agreement conducted by a consortium of international development consultancies at the behest of the European Commission (Landell Mills, 2021, p. 21) found that the "pace of returns to Turkey from the Greek islands has been very slow". The evaluation describes how 28,621 Syrian refugees had been resettled to the EU compared to the 2,735 migrants that were returned to Turkey in what was supposed to be a one for one scheme. While at first glance this depicts the EU as outperforming Turkey, there are several nuances to consider. First of all, according to the text of the EU-Turkey Statement the EU was not close to reaching the maximum number of resettlements agreed upon in the EU-Turkey statement, falling significantly short of the maximum limit of 54,000 set out in the Statement, especially when considering the fact that 18,000 of the resettlements were performed under the framework of the 2015 agreement (European Council, 2016, sec. 2). Secondly, the slow pace of returns to Turkey is due in part due to the initial reticence of Greek authorities to systematically recognise Turkey as a safe third country (van Liempt et al., 2017, p. 10), leading to bureaucratic delays as each case was processed individually according to European and international law (Landell Mills, 2021, p. 21).

1.5 Turkish Foreign Policy in the EU-Turkey Statement

This is not to say that Turkey did not play a role in slowing down the returns process. The previously mentioned evaluation of the agreement (Landell Mills, 2021, pp. 127–131) arrived at several broadly positive conclusions. These included claims that the EU's funds were mobilised and contracted rapidly to assist refugees in Turkey and that the EU's facility for refugees in Turkey partnered well with the Turkish government. This is notable as the Turkish president has consistently made complaints relating to the dispersal of the EU's funds through the agreement (Smith & Busby, 2020) which came to a head in late February of 2020 when the Turkish government encouraged migrants to cross into Greece (Oztig, 2020, p. 79). This was followed by a moratorium on accepting returns from Greece in March, allegedly due to concerns over the spread of COVID-19 (Landell Mills, 2021, p. 21). Turkish forces continued to facilitate irregular migration into early March 2020, with close to 25,000 migrants accumulating at the Greek-Turkish border (Landell Mills, 2021, p. 33).

This decision to encourage irregular migration into Greece was associated with the Turkish presidents repeated complaints about the massive disparity between the 3.6 million Syrian migrants and asylum seekers hosted by Turkey and the roughly 1 million hosted by EU member states (UNHCR, 2021), gripes about the nature, size, and timeliness of payments made to Turkey through the EU-Turkey Statement (Tantardini & Tolay, 2020, pp. 146–147), and dissatisfaction with the lack of EU support for Turkey's plan to re-settle up to 2 million Syrian refugees in Turkish-occupied Northern Syria (Ihlamur-Öner, 2022, p. 307). This plan has been described as an attempt at ethnic cleansing by several political analysts and commentators (Chulov & Shaheen, 2018; Hall, 2019; van Wilgenburg & Holmes, 2019) who allege that the Turkish government aims to displace Kurdish people, who have traditionally organised against the Turkish government through organisations like the Kurdish Workers Party, in favour of Syrian refugees who may be more sympathetic to Erdogan's regime. While addressing this accusation, Erdogan's spokesperson argued that the Turkish government is merely undoing a previous act of ethnic cleansing performed by Kurdish armed forces (Evans, 2019).

In response to the sharp increase of attempted illegal border crossings from Turkey, Greece's Prime Minister accused the Turkish government of using migrants and refugees as "geopolitical pawns" (Euronews, 2020). The president of the European Commission used similar language, accusing Erdogan of using "people as a means to reach a goal" (von der Leyen, 2020). The response of Greek authorities, including the suspension of asylum applications for a month and the use of force to repel attempted crossings, attracted criticism

from the UN human rights commission (UNHCR, 2020) for its flagrant disregard for the 1951 Refugee Convention and EU refugee law. Ultimately, however, this incident has not prevented the European Commission from expressing interest in renewing the agreement (Albanese, 2021), although it will undoubtedly influence the course of negotiations between Turkey and the EU. This demonstrates the exploitation of the EU's securitization of migration by a third country (Léonard & Kaunert, 2021b, pp. 745–746) and serves as an example of "migration-driven coercion" (Greenhill, 2010, p. 2). This phenomenon was the primary inspiration for the choice of this dissertations topic, which seeks to contribute to understanding the process of securitization which has resulted in the EU negotiating from a place of weakness with its neighbours. The case of Turkey was particularly interesting, considering it has violated core principles of the European Union through democratic backsliding (Tansel, 2018, p. 197), suppression of academia (Sertdemir Özdemir, 2021, p. 937) and the press (Pukallus et al., 2020, p. 1444), poor human rights provisions for refugees (Kaya, 2020, pp. 106–107), an aggressive and destabilizing foreign policy agenda (Ihlamur-Öner, 2022, p. 307), and its serious unresolved disputes with EU member states such as Greece and Cyprus (Grigoriadis, 2022, p. 4). This dissertation will address the following research question through the lens of securitization theory: In what ways has the speech of the President of the European Commission contributed to the securitization of migration resulting from the Syrian civil war? This will provide insights into the role played by the head of the EU's executive branch in the ongoing process of securitization which culminated in the 2016 EU-Turkey statement and Turkey's subsequent attempts at migration-driven coercion.

2 Literature Review

This dissertation's research question is fundamentally embedded in securitisation theory, which proposes that securitizing actors use heuristic artefacts to designate a phenomenon, the referent subject, as constituting a threat to something valued by the audience, the referent object. Policy makers then act on this perceived threat (Balzacq, 2010, p. 3). The first section of this literature review will explore how the existing body of academic literature applies securitisation theory to migration in the EU by highlighting the key debates which define the field. This section will also be used to situate the contribution this research seeks to make to the broader academic discussion. The second part of this literature review will explore the literature which is directly concerned with the EU-Turkey Statement, without necessarily requiring a direct link to securitization theory.

2.1 The Securitization of Migration Into the EU

In the wake of the September 11 attacks, Boswell (2007, pp. 606–607) argued that the absence of the securitization of migrant controls in Europe called into question the theoretical assumptions underpinning securitization theory. Karamanidou (2015, p. 40) disagreed, however, arguing that "a securitising approach has dominated migration policy since 9/11, both at EU and individual state levels". Today, however, the securitisation of external migration is apparent across Europe. The debate has therefore shifted accordingly, with scholars seeking to understand this change and its consequences. As evidence for the increased importance of immigration within the field of securitization theory, a corpus-based review performed by Baele and Jalea (2022, p. 5) found that migration, second only to health, has attracted the most attention from scholars employing securitization theory as demonstrated in Figure 2. This section of the literature review will examine the role played by internal actors, external actors, and EU legislation in the securitization of migration in the European Union.
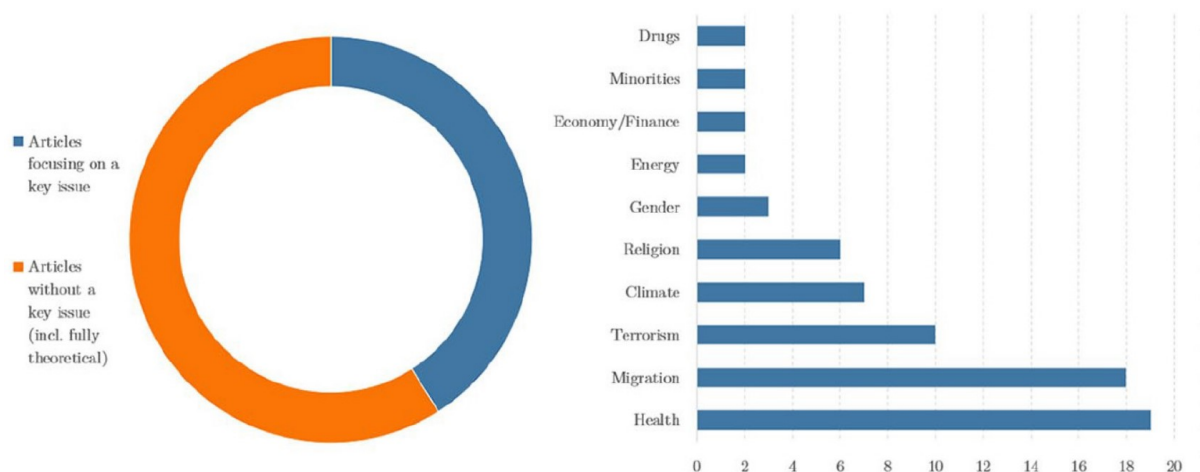
Figure 2. Proportion of Securitization Theory Articles with/without a Clearly Identifiable Empirical Issue (Left), and the most Prominent Empirical Issues in Securitization Theory Scholarship (Right) (Baele & Jalea, 2022, p. 6).

2.1.1 The Role of Internal-European Actors in the Securitization of Migration

Some scholars have focused on the role a myriad of internal-European actors play in securitization of migration, from European agencies and institutions to private companies. Neal (2009, pp. 351–352) uses the case of FRONTEX to critique the value of securitization in the context of the European Union, arguing that the "structural complexity of the EU and its agencies" makes it unclear and unlikely that securitizing discourse has an impact on institutional outcomes. Conversely, when Bigo (2014, p. 210) performed a series of meetings and interviews in the headquarters of FRONTEX with academics and professionals, he arrived

at a different conclusion. Bigo (2014, pp. 220–221) asserts that European border controls have been influenced by a process of "(in)securitization", which has resulted in the institutional dehumanisation of migrants and often in situations where they are "forced to live in places where they do not want to live and where they can be forgotten". Stępka (2022, p. 71) identifies Frontex as being one of the key securitising actors at the EU level in relation to migration, with both its wide range of activities and discourse being driven by security concerns. Lalić and Ćeranić (2019) instead address the role of private security firms. They argue that neoliberal policies seeking to privatise migrant detention centres have created an opportunity for private security firms to profit off the successful securitisation of migration in the European Union (Lalić & Ćeranić, 2019, pp. 57–58). Pianezzi et al (2022, pp. 152–153) continue in this tradition of examining the link between neoliberalism and how states respond to irregular migration. Using the case of Italy, they find that "immigrants are expected to become the 'ideal citizen' of the neoliberal State" by meeting the demands of the Italian labour market. This inevitably causes conflict with humanitarian principles, as the most vulnerable migrants are likely also the least economic productive due to the characteristics which make them insecure in the first place. Considering the strength of this logic, examining how the ideology underpinning the dominant global free market-oriented economic system interacts with and influences policy responses to irregular migration has not been extensively explored in academic literature. Focusing on the case of Greece, Karyotis and Patrikios (2010, pp. 52–55) argue that religious elites were able to wield relatively more influential discursive power than political actors regarding the securitization of immigration. Despite de-securitizing discourse being employed by political elites to facilitate the "shifting of the [issue] out of the emergency model and into the normal bargaining process of the political sphere" (Karyotis & Patrikios, 2010, p. 45), securitizing discourse by religious elites was able to maintain the security frame on migration in Greece. Hirschler (2021) examines the role of Austrian and German populist radical right political parties in the securitisation of asylum policy, a logical choice since these political parties are often responsible for the dissemination of blatantly xenophobic discourse. In the case of Austria, she found a strong causal relationship between the activities of these parties and the securitisation of asylum policy, while the results from the German case study were less certain but did not rule out a causal relationship (Hirschler, 2021, pp. 128–130). This dissertation's research question sets out to examine the role of an understudied actor. As opposed to examining the role of EU institutions and agencies, such as the work by Neal (2009), Bigo (2014), and Stępka (2022) on FRONTEX, this dissertation sets out to examine the role of the President of the European Commission as a securitizing actor in relation to migration into

the European Union. As will be discussed in the theoretical and conceptual framework, there is an expansive literature theorizing the role of the President of the Commission, but there is a significant paucity of literature which examines the role of the President of the commission as a securitizing actor of migration beyond small references such as in the work of Geddes (2018, pp. 124–125) on the political dimensions of EU migration governance. This projects research will set out to respond to this gap in the literature. Together, the above authors cover a wide array of internal actors within the European Union who either act on, contribute to, or profit off the securitization of migration forming a distinct branch of the literature on the subject.

2.1.2 The Role of External Actors in the Securitization of Migration

Another branch of scholarship examines the role of external actors. Goldschmidt (2006) provides an early example of this tradition, exploring Morocco's relationship with Europe's anti-migration policy. She argued that the European Union has induced states in its neighbourhood to help reduce migration into the EU (Goldschmidt, 2006, p. 39). Goldschmidt (2006, p. 37) insists that this was not a rational position, as EU member states stood to benefit from labour and population growth but was instead informed by the popular association of criminality and terrorism with immigration. The case of Turkey, which is central to this dissertations research question, has been approached in several ways. Before the advent of the 2016 EU-Turkey statement and its 2015 precursor, Yüksel (2014, pp. 183–184) came to a similar conclusion as Goldschmidt (2006) by holding the EU responsible for the negative effects of its securitisation of migration, going further to say that Turkey was a victim of this process. This is justified by the claim that European politicians served as securitizing actors by implying that Turkey's admission into the European Union threatened three referent objects by permitting large scale migration from Turkey into EU member states: Europe's internal security, cultural identity, and the welfare state. Yüksel (2014, p. 170) argues that this securitization of Turkish accession into the EU was counterproductive, as Turkey's relatively young population could help ameliorate the burden posed to EU welfare systems by its demographic aging. Léonard and Kaunert (2021b, pp. 745–746), on the other hand, focus on the role of Turkey as an opportunistic actor which has been able to extract both financial and political advantages by exploiting the EU's vulnerability to migration flows resulting from the EU's securitization of migration. Indeed, this alleged exploitation is not unique to Erdogan's Turkey, with Greenhill (2010, p. 2) identifying more than fifty attempts at migration-driven coercion since 1951, of which more than half were successful in achieving their objectives to some extent.

2.1.3 Securitization Through Legislation

The role of EU legislation and discourse also garners significant academic attention, particularly concerning the debate as to what degree immigration has been securitized at the EU level and when this can be said to have occurred. The literature on this subject will be divided into two sections, dealing with events before and after the 2015 European migrant crisis respectively. Baele and Sterck (2014, pp. 1129–1130) contribute to this debate by quantitatively analysing the intensity of security framing in EU immigration policy, concluding that immigration-related texts published by the EU's institutions feature a "statistically abnormally high presence of security words" relative to the average of the whole corpus of EU legislation. In a book aiming to identify security logics in EU policy discourse, Stępka (2022) analyses EU policy discourse before and after the so-called 'European migrant crisis' of 2015. Before the crisis, he argues that European migration-security discourse relied on the concept of "Fortress Europe". Stępka (2022, pp. 69–71) charts how the formation of the Schengen Area in 1995 effectively securitized human mobility across the EU's external borders, which overtime has transformed into a technologically sophisticated "dense network of surveillance and control", protecting the referent object of European society from the supposed threat posed by the referent subject, economic migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers from outside the European Union. A prevalent security frame identified by Stępka (2022, p. 76) is that of the "bogus asylum seeker", or the supposed threat of economic migrants falsely presenting as asylum seekers in order to gain entry to the European Union. He identifies the 1990 Dublin convention, the 1992 Edinburgh European Council conclusion, the 1992 Maastricht treaty, and the 1997 Amsterdam Treaty as contributing to a system of migration management which casts doubt on the validity of Asylum seekers and puts in place systems which make gaining access to asylum more difficult. Huysmans (2000, p. 760) discusses how a close discursive association was constructed between migration and forms of international crime such as drug trafficking, money laundering, and terrorism during the 1990's. This association was further intensified with the advent of Islamic terror attacks, associating a terrorist threat with migration particularly in the wake of the 2015 refugee crisis.

In the wake of the 2015 migrant crisis, Stępka (2022, p. 131) identified a three-pronged response by the EU consisting of risk management, resilience building, and exceptionalist security measures. According to Stępka (2022, p. 133), risk management-driven policies "usually assume a conventionalised and long-term character, focusing on the future foreseeable events and ways they can be managed and mitigated… [and] are designed to navigate and

govern possible 'risky futures' and achieve an equilibrium between what is considered as satisfactory security and acceptable uncertainty" using technologies of control and surveillance. The EU's "Hotspot" approach falls under this definition, with strategically located centres being established to receive, detain, and process irregular migrants, effectively framing them as posing a risk to the EU. This policy has attracted a wide array of criticism for the poor conditions individuals experience in these hotspots (HRW, 2019). Closely related is the EU-Turkey statement, which seeks to contain prospective migrants in Turkey, the key transit country into the EU during the crisis. This informal agreement essentially frames irregular migrants as posing such a significant threat that they must be processed outside of the EU, regardless of the relatively low capacity of the Turkish government, its authoritarian nature, and its questionable human rights record. Leonard and Kaunert (2021a, pp. 573–574) address the topic of the EU's risk management policies, writing how asylum seekers were indirectly securitized by the EU and its institutions such as FRONTEX who strengthened border controls in response to the increased frequency of terrorist attacks in 2016, creating an enduring association between asylum seekers and terrorist attacks in EU policy and EU public opinion. This association was later reinforced by EU level discourse around the terrorist threat posed by returning foreign fighters, framing migration and border control as key aspects of the EU's counter-terrorism policy and thereby further securitising migration into the EU (Baker-Beall, 2019, pp. 449–450). Stępka (2022, p. 152) summarises the securitising impact of risk-based approaches to migration as normalising the prioritization of control over the EU's external borders over the human security of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. Bello (2022, p. 1335) argues that risk-based approaches which treat migrants as criminals leads to increased popular prejudice against migrants, resulting in a phenomenon where the securitization of migration spirals.

Similarly, the EU's efforts at internal and external resilience building have further securitised migration by prioritising funding for programmes which enhance the border control capabilities of third countries. In the words of a Member of the European Parliament "the EU's understanding of resilience to migration is about building walls outside already existing walls" (Stępka, 2022, p. 167). Anholt and Sinatti (2020, p. 312) use the case of Jordan and Lebanon as an example, arguing that EU humanitarian and development policies attribute an undue level of responsibility to crisis-affected states and frame refugees as an economic opportunity for refugee-hosting states as part of a policy which is above all concerned with preventing migration into the EU through a multi-pronged refugee-containment strategy. Finally,

exceptionalist security measures have been used to directly respond to attempts at irregular migration with European security forces, while alternating between humanitarian and securitizing discourse in relation to said actions (Stępka, 2022, pp. 174–175). The usage of humanitarian discourse in relation to the 2016 EU-Turkey statement will be closely examined during the results section of this dissertation to determine to what extent Presidents of the European Commission it used it to either attempt to de-securitize migration or cynically justify the implementation of securitizing policies.

2.2 Scholarly Debates Concerning The 2016 EU-Turkey Statement

The last section of this literature review will instead be concerned with academic literature which is directly concerned with the EU-Turkey Statement, without necessarily requiring a direct link to securitization theory. This is intended to include as many academic perspectives as possible on the agreement which will then be drawn upon during the results section of the discourse analysis of the speeches of the Presidents of the European Commission.

2.2.1 The Concept of the "Safe Third Country"

A topic which often comes up in academic literature relating to the EU-Turkey Statement is Turkey's status as a safe third country. The concept of a safe third country was established under Article 38 of EU directive 2013/32/EU (Eur-Lex, 2013). To be considered as a safe third country under EU law, the state in question must: not threaten the "life or liberty" of any particular social group, not pose a risk of harming individuals, respect the principle of non-refoulement, prohibit removal in case the individual is under threat of cruel treatment on return, and must provide the right for individuals to apply for refugee status and benefit from the protections associated with being a refugee under the Geneva Convention. Simsek (2017, p. 164) argues that Turkey cannot be considered a safe third country since it does not meet all of the above-mentioned criteria. Indeed, Turkey's treatment of its Kurdish (Turkut & Phillips, 2021, p. 117) minority is enough to call into question its status as a safe third country for refugees and asylum seekers. Simsek (2017, p. 178) goes on to write that, to achieve this status, Turkey should guarantee refugees long term protection and access to services and the labour market. Syrian refugees and asylum seekers in Turkey not only face difficulties accessing the labour market, but also face significant disparities in access to education and healthcare as compared to Turkish citizens (Hadid & Hos, 2021, p. 168). Ovacik (2020, p. 73) takes a different approach, noting that the nature of the migration deals between the EU and Turkey compromises Turkey's position as a safe third country. Following this logic, Ovacik (2020, p. 74) argues that Turkey's controversial status as a safe third country is less problematic than the

externalisation of migration controls performed by member states of the European Commission who are ultimately responsible for the resulting endangerment of refugees. Similarly, Kaya (2020, pp. 49–70) writes how gaps in the 1951 refugee convention have enabled European Union member states to bypass their legal obligation to provide protection for refugees by shifting the burden onto so called safe third countries which are close to conflict zones. This behaviour goes against the fair burden-sharing principles of the international refugee protection regime, and over burdens safe third countries such as Turkey, thereby inevitably worsening the conditions for refugees in said countries.

2.2.2 Human Rights Under the Statement

Concerns relating to Turkey's status as a safe third country are inherently related to discussions relating to the human rights of refugees and asylum seekers. For example, Kaya (2020, p. 49) argues that the safe third country concept inherently increases the danger of migration routes seeking to bypass transit countries which are designated as such. Furthermore, the EU-Turkey statement in particular directly violates the rights of refugees and asylum seekers by permitting their re-admission to Turkey, a country which: applies geographic limitations to the 1951 Refugee Convention, frequently deports re-admitted refugees and asylum seekers without legal review, and lacks the institutional and economic capacity to properly provide for the number of refugees and asylum seekers it holds (Kaya, 2020, pp. 106–107). Alpes et al (2017) argue that human rights violations are baked into the EU-Turkey statement. This is partly due to the agreements focus on effecting returns from Greece to Turkey. The agreement also exerts geographical restrictions on asylum seekers, keeping them in overcrowded hotspots on Greece's islands for the duration of the lengthy asylum application process (HRW, 2019). Alpes et al (2017, pp. 4–5) describe how these overcrowded conditions, alongside a lack of effective security provisions from internal and external threats, result in asylum seekers feeling profoundly unsafe, worsens their existing trauma, and compels them to consider accepting a return to Turkey before their asylum claim has run its course. The core of the argument expressed by Alpes et al (2017, p. 8) is that the human rights violations resulting from the statement are intentionally designed features as opposed to flaws relating to poor implementation and that a sustainable EU solution to managing asylum seekers and refugees would be centred on fair burden sharing across EU member states. Providing further evidence for the poor human rights conditions experienced by Syrian asylum seekers in Greece, Poole et al (2018) found that a vast majority of adults surveyed in a Greek refugee camp experienced some degree of depression. From a sample size of 135 individuals, 44% were determined to

have major depression while a further 36% were diagnosed with mild depression. Focusing instead on the experience of asylum seekers in Turkey under the EU-Turkey statement, Strasser and Tibet (2020, p. 368) depict how the 2016 EU-Turkey statement interfered with the lives of young unaccompanied asylum seekers by preventing their entry into Europe, securitizing their desire to do so, and compounding their vulnerability by placing them in refugee camps controlled by Turkey's authoritarian government. Maritato (2021, p. 90) takes a step back, discussing how the EU enables the Turkish state to claim moral superiority due to the disproportionate number of refugees and asylum seekers it shelters and thereby help the ruling party to build a political consensus for its aggressive foreign policy in Northern Syria. Furthermore, she argues that Turkey's dual-role as a gatekeeper against irregular migration into the European union, and custodian of millions of refugees and asylum seekers, allows the state to employ a form coercive migration diplomacy in negotiations with the European Union, thereby extracting valuable concessions.

2.2.3 Living Under the Statement: The Experience of the Individual

Syrian refugees and asylum seekers affected by the EU-Turkey statement face a wide array of different threats depending on factors such as their age, gender, and health. This section of the literature review deals with the biopolitical aspects of the Statement and how they affect the lives of Syrian refugees depending on characteristics such as age, gender, and class.

Syrian children living under the Statement face several threats. Fehr and Rijken (2022, p. 12) demonstrate how restrictions placed on Syrian refugee populations in Turkey which restrict their access to the formal economy drive many Syrian refugee children into the informal labour market in Turkey, working long hours for low pay. In a wide-ranging overview of the vulnerabilities of Syrian refugee children in Turkey, Sahin et al (2021, pp. 2–6) detailed a range of health issues posed by the difficulty of access to healthcare and discussed various social risks they were more likely to experience than their Turkish peers, including domestic violence, child labour, and child marriage. Refugee women also experience a disproportionate degree of insecurity to other refugees. Canefe (2018, p. 46) writes that, amongst Syrian refugees, women and girls are at a higher risk of being exploited by the sex trade, denied wages for labour in the informal economy, and face gendered discrimination in patriarchal societies such as Turkey. Eleftherakos et al (2018, pp. 1 & 5) point out that Syrian refugees who successfully reach Greece experience institutional abuse which inflicts continuous traumatic stress, with women experiencing a disproportionate degree of insecurity due to a lack of internal security provided in refugee camps. On the point of traumatic stress, Syrian refugees in Turkey also faced

difficulties and discrimination when attempting to access mental health services, making it harder for them to recover from conflict and displacement related trauma (Doğan et al., 2019, p. 678). Parker (2015, p. 2342) identifies the prevalence of sexual violence being deployed a tactic of war in Syria, and that upon fleeing the country women face further risks including sexual exploitation and intimate partner violence which are reported more frequently to human rights groups than police forces. Asaf (2017, pp. 13–14) argues that political negotiations concerning Syrian refugees should move away from solely framing women as victims, which serves to reduce their agency, and should instead involve women in these negotiations and centre the role of gender.

The notion that the discursive framing of refugees as helpless victims serves to reduce their agency has attracted a lot of scholarly attention and is relevant to the 2016 EU-Turkey statement. Aradau (2004, p. 269) provides an early example of how groups categorized as "at risk" by the state and the society can quickly mutate into posing a perceived risk to the state, using the case of trafficked women in Europe to demonstrate the 'at risk – a risk' dichotomy experienced by women who have been trafficked. Similarly, Hansen (2000, p. 305) identifies how women in Pakistan were made insecure by a "proper-improper" dichotomy which stripped their agency and served as an individualising practice to reduce their ability to collectively securitize threats facing them as a group, namely honour killings. Identifying the presence of a similar dichotomy in the 2016 EU-Turkey statement, Casaglia and Pacciardi (2022, p. 3) discuss how refugees and asylum seekers are categorized as deserving or undeserving. They argue that the one for one swap policy has an undeniable biopolitical character, objectifying migrants and identifying refugees worthy of protection and unwanted bodies to be returned to Turkey. This objectification is another experience refugees and asylum seekers must contend with, being depersonalized by the EU's bureaucracies before they even arrive at the border due to border externalisation policies which project control over international human mobility through a Eurocentric vision of mobility (Casas-Cortes & Cobarrubias, 2019, pp. 197–200).

2.2.4 The Discourse Around Human Smugglers

Others have focused on the impact of the statement on human smugglers. While comparatively little has been written about this subject, the fact that both the European Union and the Turkish government outlined their aspiration "to break the business model of smugglers" in the original text of the 2016 EU-Turkey statement (European Council, 2016) and that this discourse features heavily in broader discussions around curbing irregular migration (Alagna, 2021), makes it a topic worth discussing. Yildiz (2021, p. 141) approaches the topic by seeking to

evaluate the impact of the 2016 EU-Turkey statement on the practices of human smugglers in the Aegean. Drawing on conclusions reached through extensive interviews with forty-six migrants, she asserts that human smugglers have rapidly adapted to the EU-Turkey statement and that migrants are more vulnerable and exploited than before. Karacay (2017, p. 98) takes a historical perspective on the adaptive nature of irregular migration routes and the smugglers who work them, describing how new routes into the EU have formed to find the path of least resistance, shifting from the Western Mediterranean, to the central Mediterranean, and then in the case of the EU-Turkey statement, to the Eastern Mediterranean. Karacay (2017, pp. 107–108) suggested that the 2016 EU-Turkey Statement merely encouraged smugglers to undertake longer more treacherous journeys from the Turkish coast to other EU-member States or less defended parts of Greece. While examining the language of the EU-Turkey statement, Casaglia and Paccardi (2022, p. 10) find that the EU utilises discourse relating to the threat posed by human smuggling to constrain the agency of migrants and paint them as victims of coercive criminal networks involved in human smuggling as opposed to rational individuals acting in their own self-interest. This provides the EU with the optics of heroism when cracking down on irregular migration, when in reality its harsh border policies which externalise migration management are in part to blame for creating the conditions which encourage migrants to use the services of human smugglers as their most viable way of entering the EU. When interviewing individuals connected to human smuggling operations in Turkey, Achilli (2019, pp. 206–207) found that a similar form of moralistic discourse pursued in the EU-Turkey statement was widespread amongst both smugglers and their clients, creating a situation where smugglers were viewed as honourable in success, and criminal in failure. Achilli (2019, p. 206) also argued that the EU-Turkey statement increased the pressure on individual smugglers and encouraged the pursuit of more dangerous and expensive routes whose facilitators tend to be more exploitative as a result of the increased severity of legal consequences they are required to tolerate. Using surveys and in-depth interviews, Mandić (2017, pp. 28 & 35) found that refugees believed "most smugglers functioned as guides, informants, and allies", and expressed "considerable satisfaction with their criminal services". He argues that policies should differentiate between smugglers and trafficking groups, as the "smuggling experience overwhelmingly did not include trafficking" (Mandic, 2017, p. 35) for Syrian refugees on the Balkan route. In fact, in line with Yildiz (2021), Karacay (2017), and Achilli's (2019) consensus that cracking down on human smugglers merely increases the danger for refugees, Mandić (2017, p. 36) argues that "anti-smuggler repression drove costs up and trafficking was more common for those traveling after the Balkan Route closure than for those traveling

before". This implies a negative correlation between the repression of human smugglers and the safety of refugees.

2.2.5 The Informalisation of Migration and Asylum Policy

Kassoti and Idriz (2022, pp. 1–4) compiled a book on the subject of the informalisation of the EU's migration and asylum policy, including contributions from a wide range of scholars. They argue that the EU-Turkey statement represents an example of an ongoing informalisation of the EU's migration policy. This refers to the shift towards flexible informal tailor-made partnerships with third countries who are unwilling to conclude formal readmission agreements with the European Union. This in turn, according to Kassoti and Idriz (2022), has had a wide range of implications in regard to the EU's constitutional order, the human rights of individuals targeted by said informal policies, and for the third country partners of the EU. Furthermore, the 2016 EU-Turkey statement's perceived success has encouraged the EU to pursue a plethora of new informal re-admission agreements with third countries such as Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Ethiopia. Carrera et al (2019, p. 156) discuss how the EU-Turkey statements informal non-legally binding nature and its publication by way of a press release threatened the legal safeguards and institutional framework of the EU's border, asylum, and readmission regime. Similarly, Groenendijk (2019, p. 219) stresses the disadvantages informal agreements have in terms of the lack of parliamentary and judicial control over the content and implementation of the agreement. This point will be examined more closely in the final section of this literature review which will be concerned with debates in the literature concerning efforts to evaluate the 2016 EU-Turkey statement. Gatti and Ott (2019, pp. 199–200) warn about the proliferation of legal uncertainties associated with informal international agreements and raises concerns about the prioritisation of a "pragmatic" policy for the EU's management of migration which compromises human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. In a later piece, Ott (2020, pp. 600–601) discusses how informalisation can be understood as "softification" of the EU's bilateral instruments, which provides advantages for EU institutions "at the expense of the rule of law, legal certainty, and legal review". Using similar terminology, Molinari (2021, pp. 286–287) warns that the proliferation of "soft deals" at the EU level provide more opportunities for EU member states to run-afoul of the principal of sincere cooperation by concluding their own bi-lateral deals with third countries which contradict the EU's concerted strategy expressed through soft deals in the field of migration management.

2.2.6 The Externalisation of Migration and Asylum Policy

A topic which is frequently referred to in Kassoti and Idriz's (2022) book as well as in the broader literature is the ongoing externalisation of the migration policy, of which the EU-Turkey agreement is an example. Öztürk (2022) closely examines the effect the EU's externalisation of its migration policy has on Turkey, addressing a gap in the literature identified by Kassoti and Idriz (2022, p. 4) relating to the impact externalisation policies have on third countries. Öztürk (2022, pp. 280–281) argues that the statement represents "a new type of externalisation tool for the EU's migration policy" which sets out to contain refugees and asylum seekers in Turkey without due regard for the capacity of the Turkish state's migration and asylum system. While the statement provides financial assistance aimed at capacity building in Turkey, the lack of responsibility sharing, the flawed resettlement scheme, the rushed formulation and implementation of the statement, the informal nature of the agreement, and the inherent securitization of refugees and asylum seekers associated with the migration deterrence aspects of the statement all have a negative impact on the Turkish states capacity to conduct migration management. All of these factors come to negatively impact on the conditions which refugees and asylum seekers experience. Öztürk's (2022) argument represents an academic basis for many of Erdogan's complaints relating to the EU-Turkey statement. Arriving at a similar conclusion from a perspective grounded in EU law through the Dublin system, Karageorgiou (2019, pp. 357–358) writes that the EU-Turkey statement maintains a status-quo where third countries and EU member states on the EU's border remain overburdened by refugees and asylum seekers, as opposed to creating a system which prioritises responsibility sharing across EU member states and thereby upholds the duty for international cooperation and solidarity outlined in the 1951 refugee convention. Eylemer (2020, pp. 336–337) charts how internal negotiations within the EU have failed to arrive at a unanimous agreement in relation to burden sharing due to the objections of politically anti-migrant member states. Underpinning these objections is the securitised nature of immigration in the EU, which incentivises EU member states to act in their own perceived national security interests for political gain, weakening the ideals of solidarity on which the Union is based. These disagreements have made it politically more realistic for the EU to pursue a harsher, more informal and externalised approach to migration management through agreements with third countries as opposed to a compulsory proportionate burden sharing approach. In an in-depth analysis of the language of border externalisation as represented by the EU-Turkey deal, Casaglia and Pacciardi (2022, pp. 10–11) find a heavy emphasis on discourse which creates a hierarchical system of deserving and undeserving migrants and defines moral and immoral

ways of migrating into the EU. The one-for-one return and resettlement scheme included in the EU-Turkey statement is the prime example used to make this argument, since it prioritizes a legal pathway into Europe for "good" migrants who have not attempted to illegally enter Europe. The relatively small number of resettlements which have occurred through the statement, however, demonstrate the hollow and insufficient nature of the EU's attempt to incentivise regular migration while in practice the EU's policy continues to contain the vast majority of refugees and asylum seekers in third countries such as Turkey. Spijkerboer (2018, p. 216) traces the history of the externalisation of migration policy in the EU back to 1990 with a shift from reactive to proactive migration regulation and a shift in framing the issue of migration from a matter of public administration to a matter of the EU's security. He (Spijkerboer, 2018, pp. 230–231) argues that the EU-Turkey statement has in practice provided the leaders of EU-states and EU institutions with legitimacy by having appeared to have "brought migration under control", and that the externalisation of migration management to Turkey has not only kept refugees and asylum seekers out of European territory but, as enabled by the European Court of Justice, has also prevented them access to the legal rights and protections afforded to a refugee or asylum seekers under EU law. Further examining the relationship between the European Court of Justice and the externalisation of EU immigration and asylum policy, Andrade (2022, p. 110) notes that the court has dealt with relatively few cases on the matter due to the reticence of EU institutions to bring this issue before the court and a general passivity from the court in interfering with the security-oriented approach to migration pursued by the EU and its member states. Andrade (2022, pp. 125–126) asserts that the European Court of Justice must act to counter the trend of informalisation and re-securitization occurring within EU-migration and asylum policy by establishing strong judicial supervision to ensure that the EU's values and principles are appropriately represented in said policy.

2.2.7 Perspectives on the Design of the Statement

Instead of solely criticising the outcomes of the agreement, Tantardini and Tolay (2020) have discussed broader flaws relating to the agreements design. Due to the highly politicised nature of the issue and the complex network of actors pursuing different and potentially mutually exclusive goals, Tantardini and Tolay (2020, p. 142) argue that the reporting and framing of outcomes may matter more than the material impacts of the agreement. In setting out to investigate how performance was measured in the case of the 2016 EU-Turkey statement, Tantardini and Tolay (2020, p. 147) discuss how the institutions responsible for implementing

the agreement were not systematically monitored regarding their performance and that the performance information which was gathered was used instrumentally by various actors to either legitimise or delegitimise the process. This picks up on what Groenendijk (2019, p. 219) sees as a fundamental weakness of informal agreements like the 2016 EU-Turkey Statement, namely the lack of parliamentary or judiciary control over their implementation. Acknowledging this flaw, the evaluation conducted at the behest of the European Commission (Landell Mills, 2021, p. 131) discussed how the EU Facility for Refugees in Turkey implemented a result monitoring framework in its second year of operation which took several years to expand to the point where it monitored all activities conducted by the Facility.

3 Research Design, Theoretical Framework and Methodology

This chapter will set out the research design, methods and the theoretical framework while will inform the discourse analysis used to answer this dissertations research question.

3.1 Research Design

This dissertation will employ discourse analysis as its research method, and will address the following research question through the lens of securitization theory: In what ways has the speech of the President of the European Commission contributed to the securitization of migration resulting from the Syrian civil war? This discourse analysis will be performed on primary source material in the form of transcripts for the President of the European Commission's speeches relating to Syria since the outbreak of the Syrian civil war until the publication of the EU-Turkey Statement in 2016. In order to analyse the speech of the president of the European Commission through the lens of securitization theory, it is important to first conceptualise the role and influence of the President of the European Commission. A theoretical discussion on securitization theory will then be provided, identifying the adopted approach to securitization theory and defining concepts relevant to this projects research question.

3.2 Theorizing the Role of the President of the European Commission

Drawing on leadership theory, Tömmel (2013, p. 790) categorizes Commission Presidents as being either transactional or transforming leaders depending on "the institutional setting, the situational context and the personal qualities of the office holders". Tömmel discusses the interdependent nature of the three categories, with the willingness of member states to pursue further integration providing the necessary situational context to improve the institutional setting, and then in turn permit the President to pursue transformative change if that is in accordance with their personality. This, as will be seen, is compatible with securitization theory

with the importance Balzacq (2010, p. 2) places on the habitus, or personal context, of the securitizing actor. Similarly, Müller (2019, pp. 33–34) emphasises the importance of the leader's behaviour in their "institutional-situational environment" and stresses that the analysis of the leadership of a President of the Commission should depend on three factors similar to those identified by Tömmel (2013, p. 790). The only slight difference here is that Müller identifies the "institutional structure of the office" as opposed to the broader "institutional setting" discussed by Tömmel. Müller (2019, p. 25) moves away from the binary of transformative or transactional leadership, however, instead identifying a "typology of patterns of leadership performance" shown in Figure 3 which classifies leaders as entrepreneurial, reactive, executive, or passive depending on the strength of their political ambitions and the degree to which they successfully exploit their situational context. This typology will be incorporated in the discourse analysis where relevant to provide further insights into potential differences between Barroso and Juncker's approach to migration.

Figure 3. Typology of patterns of leadership performance (Müller, 2019, p. 25).

Olsson and Hammargård (2016, p. 565) examine the use of charismatic rhetoric by Presidents of the Commission, finding that it increased during times when the Commission was actively engaged in managing a crisis. The use of charismatic rhetoric, and as a result the Commissions media visibility and its influence as an institution, were decreased when member states dominated the crisis response. Through this lens, the 2016 EU-Turkey statement can be seen as a way for the EU's institutions to assert more control over crises and thereby increase its influence as a supranational structure. Pansardi and Battegazzorre (2018, pp. 867–668) examined the discursive legitimation strategies of the President, dealing with similar source material as this dissertation. They found that Barroso relied "primarily on rationalization in light of economic goals and on authorization defined in terms of the authority of economic

expertise… By contrast… [Juncker relied] on legitimation through authorization in terms of democratic procedures and popular sovereignty". Interestingly, they argue that Barroso worked to discursively "depoliticize problems of a political nature" by framing them through a functionalist and rationalist lens. This classifies Barroso as a "de-securitizing actor" according to this dissertation's definition of the practice, as discussed in the following section. Whether he acted to de-securitize migration, however, will be examined in the discussion of this projects results.

On the relationship between the European Commission and the accession of Turkey, Aydın-Düzgit (2013, p. 534) highlights how former President of the Commission, Romano Prodi, prudently articulated concerns over the accession of Turkey which were partly related to concerns over migratory pressure amongst Commission officials. While discussing the political dimension of EU migration governance, Geddes (2018, pp. 124–125) discussed how Juncker called for the EU to "move away from crisis mode" in relation to its response to migration, as migration "will remain a challenge for a generation of Europeans". This can be interpreted as a call for the de-securitization of migration, returning it to the realm of normal deliberative politics and away from the need for exceptional policy measures. He proposed the development of "a stable and integrated EU approach to migration and asylum" informed by values of solidarity and responsibility. The adoption of informal externalisation agreements such as the EU-Turkey statement, and the failure to reform the Dublin Regulation and create a common migration and asylum policy, indicates that Juncker failed to sufficiently influence the politics of migration governance in the EU with this statement. During the discussion of the results, an argument will be provided for whether Juncker could be seen as sincere in his apparent desire to de-securitize migration and how his discourse was reflected in the 2016 EU-Turkey statement.

3.3 Securitization Theory

Since the publication of Waever's (1995) chapter *Securitization and Desecuritization* and the book *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Buzan et al., 1997), concepts relating to securitization have become highly influential within the field of security studies. As a result, there are many different strands of securitization theory which define securitization differently and introduce related processes' such as de-securitization and flexicuritization (Georgia, 2022). The field was recently embroiled in controversy relating to the charge by Howell and Richter-Montpetit (2019) that securitization theory is underpinned by racist Eurocentric assumptions. Waever and Buzan's (2020) reply to this accusation, however, outlines several methodological

flaws in Howell and Richter-Montpetit's paper and wholeheartedly rejects the accusations made. It is worth noting, however, that Howell and Richter-Montpetit's paper is merely the most controversial example of scholarship which accuse elements of securitisation theory for being underpinned by problematic assumptions (Bertrand, 2018; Coleman, 2021; Fonseca, 2019; Hobson, 2022). The Copenhagen School of securitization theory, represented by scholars such as Waever (1995), has also attracted serious criticism for its inability to account for gender-based insecurities. Hansen (2000, pp. 304–305) makes the argument that the issue of honour killings in Pakistan represents a case where securitization would be a positive phenomenon, and that authors within the Copenhagen School had been unable to identify the silence of victims as a strategic response to the "political-legal-religious establishment's successful construction of women's security in individual terms". Hansen (2000, p. 306) uses this case to challenge the Copenhagen Schools concept of speech act theory, stating that security "is not only a speech act, but [is] embedded in the production of particular subjectivities which then form the basis for what can be articulated as threat and threatened". Since migration has a very strong gender dimension, with women and girls often facing significantly higher insecurity as refugees and asylum seekers in transit and on arrival, it would not be appropriate to adopt the Copenhagen Schools approach to securitization theory. The following definition of securitization is more compatible with Hansen's conceptualization of security and is therefore better suited for this case.

Balzacq (2010, p. 3) defines securitization as "an articulated assemblage of practices whereby heuristic artefacts (metaphors, policy tools, image repertoires, analogies, stereotypes, emotions, etc) are contextually mobilised by a securitizing actor, who works to prompt an audience to build a coherent network of implications about the critical vulnerability of a referent object, that concurs with the securitizing actors reasons for choices and actions, by investing the referent subject with such an aura of unprecedented threatening complexion that a customized policy must be undertaken immediately to block its development". There are five key variables in this definition which can be adapted for the purposes of this discourse analysis. These are the securitizing actor, the audience, the referent object under threat, the threatening referent subject, and the customized policy designed to address said threat. The proposed securitizing actor is the president of the European Commission whose speech can be argued to contribute to the idea that migrants, the referent subject, pose a threat to the European Union, the referent object. The audience of speeches delivered by the President is multifaceted, with speeches serving to set the political agenda of the commission on the international stage,

conduct institutional mediation, and represent the Commission and the EU to the European public and the world at large (Müller, 2019, p. 183). The customized policy in this case can be understood to be the 2016 EU-Turkey Statement, or informal externalized migration policies more generally. It is important to note that adopting Balzacq's definitions implies that this dissertation will follow a more sociological variant of securitization theory rather than the philosophical approach associated with the Copenhagen School. In practice, this means that securitization is understood as a "strategic process that occurs within, and as part of, a configuration of circumstances, including the context, the psycho-cultural disposition of the audience, and the power that both speaker and listener bring to the interaction" (Balzacq, 2010, p. 1). The last point in relation to the power dynamics between the speaker and listener is particularly important in this case, with the discourse of the President of the European Commission being highly influenced by the structure of the institution and the various political forces acting on it from within and without. As will be explored, the President themselves wields relatively little power as compared to the institutions and the member states, meaning the situational-institutional context is more important in effecting EU migration policy than the habitus of the President. Balzacq (2010, p. 2) describes how the securitizing actor is influenced both by their own personality, their "habitus", and by the context of the time they are acting in. While summarising the differences between his sociological approach to securitization theory and the more philosophical approach adopted by the Copenhagen School, Balzacq (2010, p. 2) writes that securitization "can be discursive and non-discursive; intentional and non-intentional; performative but not an act in itself". Adopting this approach allows for a more nuanced analysis of findings in the source material by incorporating contextual factors which are not present in the discourse itself.

Of equal importance to the concept of securitization is its opposite, de-securitization. Salter (2010, p. 128) defines de-securitization as a process of "re-politicization" where a security issue is brought back into the realm of deliberative politics. As an example, Sjostedt (2010, p. 164) points to Clinton's pursuit of a political agenda concerned with lifting bans on AIDS-infected immigrants and homosexual individuals in the military as potentially constituting de-securitizing acts. Adapting this definition to the case of the securitization of migration into the European Union means that de-securitizing acts can be understood as the use of heuristic artefacts to pursue the removal of existing agreements which securitize migration and replace them with long term formal agreements concluded through the realm of normal deliberative

politics. Chief amongst these is the "permanent relocation mechanism" proposed by Juncker, which will be discussed in detail in the discussion section of this dissertation.

In order to identify heuristic artefacts which contribute to the ongoing securitization migration in the context of speeches by the President of the European Commission, three concepts identified by Casaglia and Pacciardi (2022) in a critical analysis of the language used in the 2016 EU-Turkey statement are particularly useful. This informal agreement represents the policy expression of the ongoing process of securitization of migration in the EU, of which the role of one securitizing actor is analysed by this project. For this reason, the discursive methods used to securitize migration identified by Casaglia and Pacciardi (2022, p. 3) are of great relevance to this projects research design, allowing the employment of these securitizing practices, and their evolution overtime, in the speeches of the Presidents of the European Commission to be identified and analysed.

First is the moralistically hierarchical framing of migrants identified by Casaglia and Pacciardi (2022, p. 3), which differentiates between subjects who deserve entry into the European Union and "unwanted bodies" to be excluded. This falls into discussions around the biopolitics of migration (Casaglia & Pacciardi, 2022, p. 4), where often arbitrarily defined aspects of the individual's identity, such as their country of origin or perceived degree of hardship or insecurity are used to categorize them into simple dichotomies of good or bad, deserving or undeserving. The second concept relates to the EU's discourse surrounding its borders. By classifying countries in terms of their relation to irregular migration flows, being either a source, place of transit, or the desired destination of migrants, the EU asserts a "Eurocentric vision of mobility" which asserts a right to control the movements of people around the world. Today, this is often expressed through visualizations of "migration routes" (Casas-Cortes & Cobarrubias, 2019, pp. 197–200), serving to project a security lens onto the mobility of individuals well beyond the borders of the European union. Third is the utilization of humanitarian discourse to cynically legitimize the securitization of migration. As discussed in the literature review, Aradau (2004, p. 252) discusses how "humanitarian discourse… can be appropriated within a securitising discourse where migrants, boat people, asylum-seekers or trafficked women are integrated in a continuum of danger". In relation to the EU-Turkey statement, this humanitarian lens can be seen in discourse around protecting migrants from human smugglers, thereby justifying and legitimizing more exceptional, urgent, and forceful migration management policies. As explored by Stępka (2022, p. 173), naval search and rescue operations conducted by FRONTEX often had a dual purpose of cracking down on human

smugglers, granting supposedly humanitarian missions with an undeniable "militarised character". Campesi (2014, p. 132) argues that humanitarian rhetoric has been used by FRONTEX to legitimise and obscure its violations of human rights and to de-fang criticism of the EU's border regime from European civil society and human rights organisation. It is therefore necessary to further analyse any such language in the source material to determine whether can be considered as an act of de-securitization or whether it has securitizing implications. Finally, Bigo (2002, pp. 65–66) argues that the securitization of migration "comes also from a range of administrative practices such as population profiling, risk assessment… and what may be termed a specific habitus of the 'security professional' with its ethos of secrecy and concern for the management of fear or unease.", which is important to keep in mind in relation to this dissertations case.

3.4 Operationalization of the Research Design

In order to perform a discourse analysis through the framework of securitization theory, the relationship between the securitizing actor, the speech act, and the audience has to be firmly understood. The presence of security-oriented and humanitarian-oriented heuristic artefacts relating to migration will be identified within the source material, building a case for whether the president of the European Commission has employed discursive practices to securitise or de-securitize the issue of migration relating to the Syrian civil war.

In regard to data collection, the advanced search capabilities of the European Commission's official website can be used to retrieve a vast quantity of data. In this case, the search engine was used to collect primary source material, namely transcripts of all speeches by serving Presidents of the European Commission relating to the Syrian civil war. The following search was performed using the database and repeated for each year from the start of the Syrian civil war up to the signing of the 2016 EU-Turkey statement. First, key words were used to narrow down the search to relevant speeches: 'Syria' and the name of the serving president of the European Commission. These are José Manuel Durão Barroso from the 15th of March 2011, the start of the Syrian Civil war, until the end of his second term on the 31st of October 2014, and Jean-Claude Juncker from the 1st of November 2014 until the implementation of the 2016 EU-Turkey Statement on the 18th of March 2016. The document type is set to only include speeches in order to exclude material outside of the scope of this project. The 'policy area' and 'college member' fields are set to 'Any' so as not to exclude any relevant materials. Figure 4 demonstrates a sample search for 2013.

Figure 4. Advanced Search for EU Commission Presidential Speeches relating to Syria in 2013 (European Commission, 2022a).

The framing of both the conflict, and the refugees and asylum seekers produced by it, will be examined closely for the presence or absence of securitizing or de-securitizing discourse. To demonstrate the development of this discourse over time, and to highlight potential differences between Barroso and Juncker, the results will be presented on an annual basis. Furthermore, the source material will be analysed within the broader context of relevant EU agreements and legislation, namely the various migration externalisation agreements which have been signed since the "closing [of] the door" represented by the introduction of the Schengen Area in 1985 to those seeking entry into Europe from the global south as identified by Goldschmidt (2006, p. 37). Most relevant are the variety of "Mobility Partnerships" signed between the European Commission and transit countries in the EU's neighbourhood, including Morocco, Tunisia, and Jordan (Tittel-Mosser, 2019, p. 239).

4 Results

This section will put the above research design into practice, commenting on relevant quotes from the corpus of speeches and connecting them to concepts discussed in the literature review where appropriate. When reference is made to external legislation or events, context may be provided to provide more evidence for whether something constitutes a securitizing or de-securitizing act.

4.1 President Barroso – March 15th 2011 to the 31st of October 2014

Representing the final three years of José Manuel Durão Barroso's second term in office as President of the European Commission since 2004, the Syrian civil war was only on his agenda for a brief time. He nevertheless referred to the conflict in thirty-three of his speeches during this timeframe, although the vast majority of these speeches only referred to the conflict and the refugees and asylum seekers produced by it in passing. During his tenure, the EU-Turkey re-admission agreement was signed which laid the foundation for the 2015 EU-Turkey Joint Action Plan and its successor, the 2016 EU-Turkey Statement.

2011

The President of the European Commission, José Manuel Durão Barroso, made three references to the Syrian civil war in 2011. While deliver a speech in June, although the issue of migration and conflict in Syria were not directly linked, Barroso (2011a) remarked how the "issue of migration" was "extremely difficult in public opinion of some of our member states", yet he offered no comment on the issue. This demonstrates his "intergovernmentalist" approach to leadership as identified by Müller (2019, p. 74), preferring to avoid interfering with the decisions or stances of member states. This suggests that Barroso was aware of a negative political frame surrounding the issue of migration in certain member states. The fact that he did not offer his own opinion on the matter is not surprising when considering the general "passive" nature of his leadership, characterised by poor public leadership and lack of a concrete agenda (Müller, 2019, pp. 217–219). After expressing his hopes for the completion of the common European Asylum system by 2012, Barroso only vaguely referred to worrying developments in Syria while calling for the collective implementation of the EU's strategy for the Southern Mediterranean. In July, Barroso (2011b) spoke of a more dire situation, expressing "grave concerns for the people of Syria" and pushing "for urgent change" in the country. In November, he (Barroso, 2011c) optimistically referred to "the winds of freedom" blowing from Tunis to Syria in reference to the wave of protests associated with the Arab spring. Nevertheless, he warned that the EU needs "to be prepared collectively to face and manage potential crisis or hotspots", pointing to the "deterioration of the situation in Syria". Barroso's speeches in this year can be summarised as vague and non-comital, with optimistic and compassionate sentiments expressed in favour of policy proposals.

2012

Barroso referred to Syria in twelve speeches throughout 2012, including his first comments on refugees resulting from the conflict and frequent calls for regime change in Syria to move away

from Assad's dictatorship in favour of a representative democracy. In April, Barroso (2012a) called on the Syrian government to implement the six-point plan it negotiated with the UN (2012) which sought to bring an end to violence and stabilize the country, demonstrating a willingness to work with Assad to end the conflict in Syria. This position deteriorated over time, however, declaring in July that "a regime that kills its own people has no place in the community of nations" (Barroso, 2012d) and later stating that "there is no more room for Assad in Syria" (2012f). This is emblematic of his political indecisiveness which was expressed in relation to several issues including his stance on European integration (Müller, 2019, p. 74).

Later in April, Barroso (2012b) praised Jordan's "cooperation in hosting Syrian refugees". Aside from this being his first reference to Syrian refugees, this also marks the first time that Barroso referred to the hosting of refugees as an act of cooperation by a third country with the EU's strategic priorities for Syria, namely the cessation of violence and "full and unhindered access to humanitarian aid". In the same month, Barroso (2012c) similarly thanked Lebanon for being "supportive" to the EU's priorities in Syria by "providing protection and assistance to displaced people fleeing from Syria". These comments project a paternalistic and Eurocentric conceptualization of human mobility onto Syria's neighbouring countries (Casas-Cortes & Cobarrubias, 2019, pp. 197–200), associating their decision to host Syrian refugees as acts of cooperation with the EU's priorities in the region. In September, Barroso (2012e) discussed the "instruments at the disposal of the European Union" to support mass movements for democracy, listing "money, market access and mobility". This shows that Barroso viewed mobility agreements as a potential diplomatic carrot. While he says that they can be used to support mass movements for democracy, the reality is that mobility partnerships were used by his commission to induce states in the EU's neighbourhood to invest more in border control and sign re-admission agreements. As will be discussed later, the offer of potential visa liberalisation for Turkish citizens was used as a means to induce Turkey to agree to a re-admission agreement which it had avoided for years (Léonard & Kaunert, 2021b, pp. 736–737). Later in the same month, he (Barroso, 2012f) expressed his "willingness to initiate a dialogue towards a Mobility Partnership with Egypt". Ultimately, this dialogue did not lead to the formation of a mobility partnership with Egypt in the short term, with Egypt refusing to enter further negotiations several times. This could be due to the perceived imbalance in favour of the EU's interests (Seeberg, 2014, p. 2), facilitating legal brain drain while attempting to further restrict unskilled migration and placing a heightened burden of responsibility on third countries to prevent irregular migration and affect readmissions. Cooperation between the EU

and Egypt continued along the framework established by the Association agreement (European Commission, 2017) signed in 2001 and implemented in 2004 until the formulation of the EU-Egypt Migration Hub in 2022 (Berger, 2022).

2013

Syria was once again referred to in twelve of Barroso's speeches in 2013. A dominant theme in these speeches was the use of moralistic language to condemn Assad's government through the phrase "Syria is a stain on the world's conscience", which was repeated in eight of the twelve speeches after Barroso debuted the phrase in his acceptance speech for the Nobel peace prize award to the European Union (van Rompuy & Barroso, 2012). This was often followed up with calls for increased humanitarian aid and comments about the EU's position as the top donor in these efforts, which served to elevate the importance of the EU's involvement despite their negligible contribution to hosting refugees. In February, Barroso (2013a) expanded on the EU's strategy for its "Southern Neighbourhood", which consisted of an "ambitious trade and mobility agenda and concrete sectoral support". The reference to mobility agenda here is critical, as it refers to a range of informal migration agreements being negotiated between the EU and third countries at the time, serving as predecessors for the EU-Turkey statement. It is important to note here that "the dramatic situation in Syria", and political uncertainty more generally, is presented as a barrier to the EU's agenda, with Barroso stating that "political uncertainty has limited the capacity of our partners to benefit from the full potential of our offer". Barroso's reliance on rationalization through economic discourse (Pansardi & Battegazzorre, 2018, pp. 867–868) is apparent here. While the language used is by no means securitizing, the mobility agenda has been criticised for being more concerned with containing migration than anything else (Reslow, 2015, p. 125). Mobility partnerships always include a give and take, where the EU attempts to use money and legal migration opportunities to incentivise third countries to cooperate on issues such as the return and readmission of illegal migrants (Reslow & Vink, 2015, p. 863). Barroso also associates the mobility agenda with "concrete sectoral support", implying that cooperation with the EU on mobility will be linked with economic development, which has been used in the past to further improve the image of mobility partnerships (Reslow & Vink, 2015, p. 863). Furthermore, the informalisation of the EU's mobility policy represented by these agreements, driven by short term pragmatism, results in the proliferation of legal uncertainties (Gatti & Ott, 2019, pp. 199–200). Barroso's willingness to eagerly support these agreements without articulating a political justification for their deployment demonstrates his passive approach to leadership (Müller, 2019, p. 219).

Later in the year, Barroso's speeches took on a decidedly more securitizing character in relation to migration. In a speech in August titled "European ideas for fair globalisation", Barroso (2013b) presents what he sees as the problems of a globalized world: "Climate change is by its very nature blind to borders; terrorism cuts across national frontiers; migration and technological progress are accelerating but also have their dark sides; underdevelopment is a threat to developed economies too; and internal instability often acts as an incubator of regional problems". This is certainly a negative framing of migration and could be considered to be a securitizing act where migration is associated with the same degree of threat posed by issues such as terrorism and climate change. This can be understood as emblematic of the "problematization of migration", through which the close discursive association of migration with issues such as terrorism was common throughout the 1990's (Huysmans, 2000, pp. 756 & 760). This close association facilitated the development of risk management policies which indirectly securitized refugees and asylum seekers when setting out to tackle the issue of terrorism (Léonard & Kaunert, 2021a, pp. 573–574). This association of migration with issues such as terrorism is in contrast with Barroso's evaluation of global challenges in 2012, which notably did not include migration and instead listed "poverty, organised crime, terrorism, [and] climate change" (van Rompuy & Barroso, 2012). This indicates a shift from the relatively passive and humanitarian approach to discussing migration to a more securitized and problematized framing. In December, Barroso (2013c) referred to Turkey in relation to the EU's strategy in Syria for the first time, discussing the financial assistance provided by the UN to Turkey for its role in hosting refugees from Syria. Days later, Barroso (2013d) makes his first mention of a humanitarian tragedy involving migrants hailing from Syria and elsewhere, stating that 350 people died in European territorial waters off the coast of the Maltese island of Lampedusa. Referring to it as an "urgent and complex situation", he highlights the following three priorities for the EU:

1) Cooperating with third countries to "address the causes of migration and fight against trafficking, smuggling and organised crime".
2) The "need to better manage our sea borders with a reinforced FRONTEX".
3) To "increase our solidarity in terms of resettlement and helping member states under heavy pressure".

Here we see several strong indicators of securitization at play. First, Barroso associates the issue of migration with the "fight" against several illegal activities, which invests the referent subject of migration with an aura of criminality and implies that it must be fought, which serves

to legitimize a forceful security centred response. In particular, the notion of fighting smuggling victimizes refugees, working to reduce their agency in making decisions which are in their best interest (Casaglia & Pacciardi, 2022, p. 10). Barroso here is delegitimizing the only viable path into Europe for the vast majority of displaced Syrians and justifying the use of force to prevent it under the guise of "protecting" exploited refugees. Furthermore, it is unclear how Barroso intends for the EU to "address the causes of migration". Aside from his frequent denunciations of the war and Assad's regime, it is unclear how Barroso intends to address the causes of migration, namely the Syrian conflict. This is yet another example of a lack of clarity in his leadership (Müller, 2019, p. 217). He does mention having "set aside financial support". This could imply that Barroso sees the EU's resilience building programmes, which were gaining in popularity at the time, as part of a solution to address the causes of migration. This would be problematic considering the emphasis such programs place on containing refugees in third countries (Anholt & Sinatti, 2020, p. 312). Secondly, he directly calls for a tailored policy response, namely the reinforcement of FRONTEX, an EU agency which has been labelled as a key securitising actor of migration at the EU level both discursively and in terms of its actions (Stępka, 2022, p. 71). With Barroso having been interpreted by many observers as an opportunistic President (Müller, 2019, p. 74), this action can be seen as the cynical use of a human tragedy to further securitise irregular migration. Beyond speech acts, Barroso did not place much emphasis on involving himself or the commission in crisis response (Tömmel, 2019, p. 1142). The third priority can be seen as a vague statement in support of an equitable burden sharing migration policy for the EU, although Barroso made no special efforts to implement this plan. Barroso's successor, as will be discussed, did make significant efforts to implement such a policy. This third priority could therefore be seen as representing a cynical use of humanitarian language to further frame migration as a threat which places EU member states under "heavy pressure" considering the fact that he did not make any effort to de-securitize the issue.

2014

With Barroso's second term coming to an end on the 31st of October 2014, this year marked his final speeches in the role of President of the European Commission. He made reference to Syria in six of said speeches. In the first of these speeches, he thanks Turkey for signing "the readmission agreement" and states that "in turn, the commission could also start the visa liberalisation dialogue with Turkey" (Barroso, 2014a). Here he is referring to the 'Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Turkey on the readmission of persons

residing without authorisation' signed in December 2013 (Eur-Lex, 2014, p. 1), which sets out to strengthen co-operation "in order to combat illegal immigration more effectively". Here Barroso is celebrating a concession made by the Turkish government, where their opposition to signing a readmission agreement was dropped in order to make progress on visa liberalisation for Turkish citizens hoping to travel to the EU. This agreement has been labelled as being asymmetrically in favour of the EU, as Turkey's access to visa liberalization was dependent on many conditions being achieved (Léonard & Kaunert, 2021b, pp. 736–737). In the same speech, Barroso expresses the Commissions gratitude to Turkey for its "great efforts to host… the refugees" resulting from the "tragedy in slow motion" represented by the Syrian civil war. This speech is notable as it includes no reference to the content of the readmission agreement it celebrates, an agreement which sets out to "tackle irregular migration" through "institution and capacity building to enhance Turkey's capacity to prevent irregular migrants from entering, staying, and exiting its territory, as well as its reception capacity" (Eur-Lex, 2014, p. 24). Here Barroso is celebrating an agreement which effectively securitizes irregular migration coming from and into Turkey, restricting the mobility of Syrian's fleeing the war. Simultaneously, he uses humanitarian discourse to express sympathy for the Syrian people and celebrates the EU's "role as the largest donor in this crisis" while neglecting the fact that much of this funding is concerned with controlling mobility. This instance can certainly be described as a cynical use of humanitarian discourse to distract from the securitization of migration, as described by Casaglia and Pacciardi (2022, p. 5).

In June, Barroso (2014b) references the threat posed by "radicalised European jihadis returning to our streets from Syria", a phenomenon which Baker-Beall (2019, pp. 449–450) argues was used to further securitize migration. Indeed, it is easy to see how this discourse implies a connection between migration from Syria and terrorism. While he does specify that the threat is posed by jihadis of European origin, the implied policy response of heightened border security is one which affects all irregular migrants, imbuing them with a heightened aura of danger and placing a more serious burden of proof on them. He goes on to discuss how the European Union is deeply involved in tacking both the Syrian civil war and with "preventing the massive influx of Syrian refugees from overburdening and destabilizing the neighbouring countries", characterizing migration from Syria with an overwhelming and dangerous character. This statement is characteristic of the EU's policy at the time, with much of the EU's capacity building funding being concerned with keeping displaced Syrians in countries like Lebanon, Jordan, and Turkey (Anholt & Sinatti, 2020, p. 312). The implied logic here is that

Syrian refugees and asylum seekers represent a destabilising threat, and the EU must do what it can to stabilise neighbouring countries so that these people do not go on to threaten the EU. These policies do not account for the capacity of refugee and asylum systems however, as there is only so much that funding can achieve, particularly when it is more directed towards migrant containment and control rather than care (Kaya, 2020, pp. 106–107; Öztürk, 2022, pp. 280–281).

In September, Barroso (2014d) referenced Syria for the last time. First, he claims that "issues like climate change and international migration are affecting all of us". The sincerity of this statement is dubious considering the disparity in refugee populations between the European Union and states neighbouring Syria who hosted 95% of the 3.9 million Syrian refugees in 2014 according to the UNHCR (2014, p. 13). Furthermore, this statement problematizes migration by implying it poses a threat to the global system, adding to the institutional tradition of associating immigration with internal security in the European Union which Huysman's (2000, p. 756) identified as originating with the Schengen agreement of 1985. More specifically, it is compared with climate change, a phenomenon which poses an existential threat to humanity and many other species. This imbues the supposed threat posed by migration with a similar existential quality by association. Discussing the challenges faced by the EU from "the economic crisis and energy security to migration policy or terrorism", he emphasises the role of Turkey "as a strategic partner for the European Union and as part of the solution". The discursive proximity of migration policy and terrorism is notable here, further securitizing migration by association. So too is the legitimization of Turkey as a viable strategic partner of the European Union despite the myriad of human rights concerns associated with the state (Simsek, 2017, p. 164). He goes on to praise Turkey for its role in offering shelter to Syrian refugees, further legitimizing the Turkish government and in turn enabling them to maintain political support for their aggressive and destabilizing foreign policy (Maritato, 2021, p. 90) as well as their treatment of minorities (Turkut & Phillips, 2021, p. 117). This validates arguments that the EU is responsible for the poor standard of human rights afforded to refugees in Turkey (Ovacik, 2020, p. 74), considering that through the speech of Barroso the EU is officially endorsing their role as "part of the solution".

4.2 President Juncker – November 1st 2014 to the 18th of March 2016

While President Jean-Claude Juncker only discussed the Syrian conflict personally on a handful of occasions, his speeches provide ample evidence for the ongoing institutional securitization of migration through the policies pursued by the European Union. His speeches

also often include deep insights into his personal views on how the European Union should respond to the crisis which often contrasts with the former.

2014

Right before the start of his term, Juncker (2014) delivered a speech as President-elect of the European Commission. In reference to Syria and other "unstable" states in the EU's neighbourhood, he stated that "scores of immigrants arriving at Europe's external frontiers in search of a better future remind us of the need to reconcile the quest of solidarity with the demand for safe borders". This quote is interesting as Juncker implies that the arrival of "scores of immigrants" threatens the safety of the EU's borders. He also fails to distinguish between economic migrants and refugees, possibly suggesting the presence of the "bogus asylum seeker" security frame (Stępka, 2022, p. 76). This suggests a degree of continuity with the framing pursued by Barroso at the end of his term. While Juncker did not address the issue again until 2015, he entrusted his Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship to address the challenges of migration in a speech to the European Security Forum. Avramopoulos' (2014) speech provides important insights into the approach to immigration initially endorsed by Juncker, emphasising the threat posed by returning European Jihadists, calling for the empowerment of FRONTEX, developing new policies for regular migration focused on attracting skilled workers, "hunting down" traffickers and smugglers, and preventing "people from embarking the unseaworthy boats with a hope to reach Europe". Avramopoulos plays into several securitizing themes here. Keeping continuity with the securitizing discourse pursued by Barroso, he raises the supposed threat of the returning fighter (Baker-Beall, 2019, pp. 449–450) and the need to reinforce FRONTEX (Stępka, 2022, p. 71). He goes further by employing faux-humanitarian discourse which presents irregular migrants as victims of human smugglers (Casaglia & Pacciardi, 2022, p. 10), stripping them of their agency and justifying harsher border control policies which make the only viable path into Europe for many displaced Syrians, human smuggling services, less accessible due to increased price and danger. His argument about developing new pathways to facilitate the migration of skilled workers not only further develops notions of the deserving and undeserving migrant (Casaglia & Pacciardi, 2022, p. 3), but also frames the EU's response to irregular migration through the lens of economic and market driven considerations (Pianezzi et al., 2022, pp. 152–153). Avramopoulos' framing of the migrant crisis and how the EU should respond is interesting, as it provides insight into the institutional context Juncker was presiding over at

the time of his ascension to the presidency. As will become clear, his personal perspective on migration differs quite significantly from that of his Commissioner for Migration.

2015

In 2015, Juncker did not personally deliver a speech relating to Syria until his state of the union address in September (Juncker, 2015a). Here he discussed the refugee crisis, and how nearly 500, 000 people had made their way to Europe. After delivering a quantitative overview of the situation, Juncker decreed that "now is not the time to take fright. It is time for bold, determined and concerted action by the European Union, by its institutions and by all its Member States", defining the EU's duty to respond to the crisis as "a matter of humanity and of human dignity… and historical fairness". He discussed Europe's long history of forced displacement and called on people to feel pride instead of fear over the fact that "today it is Europe that is sought as a place of refuge and exile". He put into context the proportionally small number of refugees coming to Europe, compared to the disproportionate number sheltered by states such as Lebanon. He reprimanded Member States for failing to adhere to legislation pertaining to the Common European Asylum System. In detailing the EU's response to the crisis, he discussed how "over 122,000 lives have been saved" thanks to an increased presence by FRONTEX in the Mediterranean, how "efforts to tackle smugglers and dismantle human trafficker groups" were successful, and how the EU had already mobilised €4 billion in support of efforts to alleviate the Syrian refugee crisis. This markedly humanitarian framing of the refugee crisis has been highlighted as a rare departure from the EU's "risk-centred managerial" approach to the crisis (Stępka, 2022, p. 96). There is, however, a noticeable disconnect between Juncker's humanitarian discourse and the policy's he lists as being pursued by the EU in response to the crisis. The work of FRONTEX is fundamentally concerned with intercepting and deterring irregular migration, despite Juncker's discursive choice to frame it as an agency concerned with saving lives. Furthermore, the discourse linking human smugglers with human trafficking stigmatizes the only viable path into Europe for displaced Syrians. Indeed, this linkage is not consistent with research findings. Mandić (2017, p. 28) found that migrants perceived smugglers as "guides, informants, and allies". Furthermore, he argues that policies which serve to further criminalize and supress human smugglers actually serves to increase the insecurity of refugees and increase the likelihood of them being exploited by human traffickers Mandic 35. Criminalising the supply of a service which is in high demand does not decrease the demand, it just means that only criminal organisations will remain willing to offer that service. This is in line with Achilli's (2019, p. 5) interviews of low-level smugglers who stopped

providing the service in the wake of the EU-Turkey statement. Juncker's statement wilfully ignores this fact. As discussed in the literature review, most of the funding mentioned by Juncker was directed towards programmes which acted to externalise migration by funding capacity building and border control capabilities in third countries. While his call for the relocation of 160,000 refugees from states on the EU's borders was successful (European Commission, 2015c), his proposal of a "permanent relocation mechanism" (European Parliament, 2022) ultimately failed to achieve support and was withdrawn in 2019. Whether this State of the Union address can be seen as an attempt by Juncker to de-securitize the EU's response to the crisis will be explored in the discussion section.

In the same month, Juncker delivered two more speeches dealing with Syrian refugees. In the first, he again stressed how "[The EU is] ridiculous [given] the magnitude of the problem" (Juncker, 2015b), referring to the significant disparity between the number of refugees being re-settled by the EU compared to the number of refugees being sheltered by small states such as Jordan and Lebanon. In the second, he discussed how €9.2 billion would be distributed to tackle the refugee crisis, including funding for the world food programme, humanitarian aid, EU agencies like FRONTEX, and funds to "stabilise" neighbourhood countries, with €1 billion going to Turkey (Juncker, 2015c). In October, Juncker (2015d) reasserted that "we require a Europe-wide distribution key that does not concentrate refugees in a single focal point, but spreads them across the EU", and made clear that he "did not understand why countries, governments and parties are opposed to" this proposal which "is not something we should find so difficult". To drive home this point, he again used the example of Lebanon who housed a refugee population representing 25% of its population. Interestingly, he also denounced the failure of ministers of the interior to agree to classify Turkey as a safe third country, highlighting how he "knew what is possible in Turkey", possibly alluding to the 2015 EU-Turkey Joint Action plan which would be agreed upon later that same month. This demonstrates that Juncker, despite his humanitarian framing of the refugee crisis, values pragmatic solutions over concerns relating to both Turkey's adherence to the criteria in EU law necessary to be considered a safe third country (Simsek, 2017, p. 164) and its poor treatment of minority populations such as Turkish Kurds (Turkut & Phillips, 2021, p. 117). At the end of this speech, Juncker discussed how the EU was in "demographic decline", and how the EU's share of global GDP was shrinking. While not directly suggesting that the solution to these problems was immigration, it could certainly be argued that this is implied, which could be argued to represent another de-securitizing act on his part. Alternatively, Juncker could be seen

attempting to securitizing the absence of migration by highlighting how "by the end of the century, Europeans will make up only 4 per cent of the world's ten billion people. We will become weaker, not stronger, if we do not understand that now is not the time to retrench behind national borders… that the time has come to strengthen Europe". This follows Goldschmidt's (2006, p. 37) argument that the European Union could stand to benefit from large scale immigration to supplement its ageing population which strains the welfare state.

In his final speech of the year, Juncker (2015e) celebrated the opening of "a new chapter in our relations with Turkey", referring to the EU-Turkey Joint Action Plan (European Commission, 2015b). He also called on member states to do more than "accelerate relocations and returns", highlighting the need for the proposed crisis relocation mechanism and the classification of safe countries of origin to facilitate returns. The latter is interesting, as Juncker justifies it with the argument that it would "increase the efficiency of the asylum system and speed up the return of irregular migrants". This represents a securitized approaches to the crisis through a humanitarian frame, as irregular migrants coming from countries he deems as safe are considered to pose some sort of threat to the EU which necessitates their removal. This could be seen as playing into the security frame of the "bogus asylum seeker" identified by Stępka (2022, p. 76), where refugees and asylum seekers face increased scrutiny and a higher burden of proof to be made "deserving" (Casaglia & Pacciardi, 2022, p. 3) of the EU's protection.

2016

In 2016, Juncker (2016) delivered one speech relating to Syria before the advent of the EU-Turkey Statement. While Juncker complains about the failure to implement a permanent and equitable relocation mechanism, this lecture truly demonstrates the dominance of the security-frame in the European Commission's discourse around migration. Juncker engages in discourse which frame refugees negatively: "What bothers me in particular – and we see it every day – is when refugees in Greece and Italy, especially Greece, simply choose where they want to go themselves". Here the individual refugee is being problematized for having preferences, preferences which may be rooted in linguistic, familial, or economic concerns. He expresses his desire to make it clear to "refugees - above all the genuine ones, not the economic migrants but the genuine asylum seekers who make their way to Europe to escape from war and violence – that it is not up to them to decide where to go". This statement does three things. First, it strips agency from the refugee and securitizes their possible secondary movements upon entering the Union, enforcing strict control and scrutiny over their mobility. Secondly, it highlights an important distinction between refugees and economic migrants. Here Juncker is

playing into the notion that refugees seeking to enter the EU during the migrant crisis ought to face scrutiny for their intentions, legitimizing return policies for those deemed not insecure enough to benefit from the EU's protection. This is a clear example of the security frame identified by Stępka (2022, p. 76) as the "bogus asylum seeker". This discourse propagates the biopolitical dichotomy of the deserving and undeserving migrant identified by Casaglia and Pacciardi (2022, p. 3). Finally, the statement also serves to individualise refugees. Using the case of women in Pakistan, Hansen discussed how individualising practices served to weaken the collective ability of a group to securitize issues facing them. By individualising refugees, Juncker shifted blame away from the systemic flaws of the EU's approach to refugee and asylum governance onto the individual refugee for daring to have a preference for where in Europe they might end up.

Juncker (2016) also legitimizes the concept that the migrant crisis poses a serious threat to the European Union by stating that "we urgently need to strengthen the protection of our external borders". Failing to do so would mean the EU would "never manage to overcome the crisis". To achieve this goal, Juncker argues that "we have to bring the flow of refugees heading from Turkey to Greece, and then onwards to northern Europe under control". After describing the migration crisis in an undeniable security frame which poses a serious threat to the European Union, Juncker introduces the customized policy response meant to address this issue: The Joint Action Plan with Turkey: "With Turkey, we have agreed a Joint Action Plan, at a cost of €3 billion to Europeans". In describing the plan, Juncker details how the money will be spent "to fund projects to help Syrian refugees in Turkey" yet fails to mention how much of the funding is directed towards improving Turkish border control capabilities. This is a clear cynical use of humanitarian discourse, celebrating the 'soft' side of migrant externalisation while neglecting the violence and suffering involved in controlling the mobility of people. Juncker goes on to emphasise that "without Turkey, there is no solution to the crisis". By placing this much importance on Turkey, Juncker is openly signalling that the Turkish government has leverage over the European Union through its ability to exploit the securitization of migration in the EU (Léonard & Kaunert, 2021b, pp. 745–746). Despite the fact that the effectiveness of migration driven coercive diplomacy was firmly established within academia by Greenhill's (2010, p. 2) comprehensive study, Juncker neither mentions this possibility nor attempts to moderate the importance of Turkey. This demonstrates how the securitization of migration can act as a liability for the EU.

Furthermore, despite the fact that he "could talk for hours about human rights, press freedom and similar issues in Turkey", they still represent the EU's most important partner for "stemming the flow of refugees". This statement supports Ovacik's (2020, pp. 73–74) argument that the EU is ultimately responsible for the poor human rights conditions of Syrian refugees in Syria by demonstrating that elite level decision makers in the EU were fully aware of human rights concerns associated with Turkey, yet still saw them as the most important partner for the containment of refugees. Furthermore, despite highlighting that "there are hundreds of thousands of Syrian children currently living in Turkey who are not going to school despite being of school age", Juncker still announces the EU's pursuit of policies which contain refugees in Turkey. This demonstrates an institutional context characterized by a lack of regard for the capacity of the Turkish state's migration and asylum system, which further compounds poor human rights conditions in Turkey (Öztürk, 2022, pp. 280–281).

Juncker goes on to emphasise how this policy goes against his principles, asserting his belief that "we are duty-bound to offer a new home to those fleeing war and violence". With Juncker having made frequent attempts to influence the formation of a de-securitized policy approach to the refugee crisis, it is fair to conclude that he aimed to transform the EU's policy response to the refugee crisis. He failed to effect this transformation, however, as is demonstrated by the formulation of the 2015 EU-Turkey Joint Action Plan and the 2016 EU-Turkey Statement which followed soon after this speech was delivered. Through Tömmel's (2019, p. 790) conceptualization of the position of President of the European Union, Juncker can therefore be argued to be a failed transformative leader in relation to migration. The rest of his speech is dedicated to denouncing what he views as the self-inflicted reputation damage stemming from the EU's policy approach to the refugee crisis, rooted in the argument that "the richest continent in the world" is too mired in its own egoism to come together and "tackle the refugee crisis decently". Interestingly, Juncker states how "in principle I am not in favour of pushing back the flow since it is my view, based on the Christian values adhered to in the European Union, that we are duty-bound to offer a new home to those fleeing war and violence". Karyotis and Patrikios (2010, pp. 52–55) instead depict how religion can be used to securitize migration. This shows how religion can be instrumentalized to either securitize or de-securitize migration depending on the habitus of the individual.

5 Discussion

This section sets out to discuss the results of the discourse analysis by expanding on certain important themes which it identified in the discourse analysis. First, the leadership of both Barroso and Juncker on migration stemming from the will be discussed. The importance of the proposed "Permanent Relocation Mechanism" will be thoroughly explored in relation to its potential to de-securitize the issue of migration in the EU. Finally, the relationship between their discourse and the final text of the 2016 EU-Turkey statement will then be reflected on before reaching a conclusion.

5.1 Theorizing the Leadership of Barroso and Juncker in Migration Policy

From the content of their speeches to the actions of their respective Commissions, Barroso and Juncker clearly approached migration policy differently. This section will summarise each President's actions and how they link into this projects theoretical framework in terms of leadership theory and securitization theory.

5.1.1 President Barroso

For Barroso, there was a clear shift in how he framed Syrian refugees. In one of his first references to Syrian refugees, he thanked Lebanon for "providing protection and assistance to displaced people fleeing Syria" (Barroso, 2012c). This is in contrast with how he discussed the EU's priority of "preventing the massive influx of Syrian refugees from overburdening and destabilising the neighbouring countries" (Barroso, 2014b). This demonstrates how Barroso went from describing victims in need of protection and assistance to the highly securitized from of a threatening mass of refugees who posed a threat to all neighbouring countries. Despite this shift in framing, there is ample reason to believe even his initial humanitarian framing of the situation was cynical and without substance, and that the containment of refugees and asylum seekers was always his preferred policy outcome. This is evidenced by the fact that Barroso (2012f) openly discussed the pursuit of mobility partnerships which offered limited legal migration opportunities in return for third country cooperation on combating irregular migration through re-admission agreements. These agreements were also discussed through a clear neoliberal frame, inevitably creating conflicts between stated humanitarian goals and market driven economic concerns (Pansardi & Battegazzorre, 2018, pp. 867–868). He asserted a Eurocentric and paternalistic view of mobility far beyond the EU's borders, thanking states neighbouring Syria for "cooperating" with the EU by offering shelter to their displaced neighbours. Barroso did not exert any significant effort to implement a burden sharing policy in the EU, and at the end of his term the European Union sheltered less than 5% of the 3.9

million Syrian refugees displaced internationally by the conflict (UNHCR, 2014, p. 13). At the same time, he celebrated the EU's role as the top donor, without discussing how much of this funding was concerned with problematic programs such as resilience building which were concerned with the containment of irregular migration. His passive intergovernmental approach to the role of President of the European Commission resulted in the Commission taking a less active role in crisis management, with Barroso only occasionally acting opportunistically to further securitize migration resulting from the conflict in response to incidents such as the Lampedusa tragedy. He openly discussed supposed threats to the EU, such as that of the returning European Jihadi, which inevitably contributed to the securitization of migration in the EU (Baker-Beall, 2019, pp. 449–445). Barroso (2014c) also celebrated the role of Turkey as "part of the solution" despite the serious human rights concerns associated with its governments practices and the capacity of its refugee and asylum system. Overall, Barroso contributed to the ongoing securitisation of migration through his discourse, the policies he celebrated, and by failing to make any progress towards a de-securitized common European migration and asylum policy. His passive leadership style limited his personal influence over the policies pursued by the EU, which were more of a product of his institutional and situational context than of his personal ambition or habitus. His passivity also meant that the European Commission was not especially involved in responding to crises, and his intergovernmental politics meant that the Commission did not perform its traditional role to the same extent as the primary driver behind further integration.

5.1.2 President Juncker

In the run up to the ascension of Juncker's Commission, he discussed the refugee crisis in a way which seemed to represent the continuity of the securitized framing of migration pursued by Barroso, stating that "scores of immigrants arriving at Europe's external frontiers in search of a better future remind us of the need to reconcile the quest of solidarity with the demand for safe borders" 2014. As discussed in the report, this statement both imbued the migrant with a certain degree of threat and implied a degree of uncertainty in common with the security frame of the "bogus asylum seeker" explored by Stępka (2022, p. 76). Juncker's rhetoric changed dramatically once in office, however, with him describing the EU's duty to respond to the crisis as "a matter of humanity and of human dignity… and historical fairness" (Juncker, 2015a). He openly discussed the massive disparity in the number of refugees offered shelter in Europe compared to the millions being protected in states neighbouring Syria, marking a stark contrast between himself and Barroso (2014d) who has been content to celebrate the EU's efforts as a

donor while claiming that "issues like climate change and international migration are affecting all of us". This shift towards humanitarianism went beyond rhetoric, however, with Juncker successfully pushing for the relocation of 160,000 refugees from border countries such as Greece and Italy. He was only partially successful in his efforts to be a transformational leader in regards to migration policy, however, as his efforts to build support for a "permanent relocation mechanism" ultimately failed. The potential for this policy as a de-securitizing force will be discussed later in this section of the dissertation. Juncker's speeches clearly demonstrated the friction between his habitus and the institutional context which he presided over. He directly said as much in his final speech on the issue before the implementation of the 2016 EU-Turkey statement: "in principle I am not in favour of pushing back the flow [of refugees] since it is my view, based on the Christian values adhered to in the European Union, that we are duty-bound to offer a new home to those fleeing war and violence". Despite holding these views, Juncker's commission oversaw the implementation of the 2015 EU-Turkey Joint Action plan, building on the readmission agreement negotiated by his predecessor. While providing humanitarian support for Syria's in Turkey, the agreement also set out to strengthen the capacity of the Turkish coast guard and increase cooperation to perform joint return operations (European Commission, 2015b). Juncker also frequently made statements which appeared to contradict his principals, including calling for the classification of Turkey as a safe third country (2015d) despite serious human rights concerns (Simsek, 2017, p. 164), and framing interceptions of irregular migration by FRONTEX as purely life-saving (Juncker, 2015a) when the agency was actually conducting the work of pushing back the flow of refugees which he openly opposed. Juncker (2015a) also expressed that "we need to strengthen Frontex significantly and develop it into a fully operational European border and coast guard system", which led to it transforming and gaining more powers in 2016. These moves can be interpreted as Juncker performing the work required of him by his institutional context. In 2016, Juncker seemed to capitulate even more to institutional and situational pressure to pursue a security frame of the refugee crisis. He engaged in individualising practices, problematized the secondary mobility of refugees, imbuing them with a certain degree of threat, and engaged with the security frame of the "bogus asylum seeker" (Juncker, 2016). These rhetorical concessions possibly represent his deference to his institutional context, and also the early stages of his "strategic reorientation" which Tömmel (2019, p. 1151) identified. This reorientation was characterised by Juncker abandoning the boldness of his initial agenda-setting leadership, as inspired by his self-perceived political mandate afforded to him by his election through the ground-breaking Spitzenkandidaten system (Tömmel, 2019, p. 1142), in favour of a less

confrontational and more mediative-institutional approach to leadership (Tömmel, 2019, p. 1151). Juncker ensured that the Commission took a larger role in the tackling the crises of his Presidency, in stark contrast to Barroso's presidency which saw the European Council and the governments of powerful member states steer the EU's response to the multitude of crises which occurred during his term (Tömmel, 2019, p. 1142). As President, Juncker boldly and frequently attempted to de-securitize migration through a range of discursive, political, and legislative practices. The institutional context of the European Union, and the political context of its member states, however, ultimately prevented him from passing permanent EU level policies which acted to de-securitize and re-politicise migration, the most important of which was the "Permanent relocation mechanism".

5.2 The Permanent Relocation Mechanism

The Permanent Relocation Mechanism put forward by Juncker (2015a) in his 2015 State of the Union address would have enforced the "fair sharing of Member States' responsibilities" when it comes to resettling migrants, determining the number of relocations to each country depending on key variables such as population, GDP, unemployment rates, and the number of existing asylum applications (European Parliament, 2022). This would have served as a massive step towards removing the urgency associated with relocating migrants accumulated in states such as Greece and Italy. Having an automatic burden sharing mechanism in any capacity would also have made it easier for the EU to absorb more refugees and asylum seekers, reducing the EU's reliance on border externalisation policies. This sort of policy was first introduced in the early 1990's in response to the migrant crisis in the Balkans (Voynikov, 2019, p. 20). Such policies have always been imagined as countering the effects of the Dublin system, which places the burden of processing asylum applications on the first country of entry Juncker sou 2015. This naturally creates an unequal burden for Member States which exist along the European Union's external border. Karageorgiou and Noll (2022b, p. 134) write how early debates around the creation of an asylum burden-sharing system were rooted in an understanding that irregular movements from outside the EU threatened the populations of Member States' since internal borders had been abolished. The asylum policies of Member States where therefore mostly concerned with containing refugees flows in third countries, similar to the EU's response to the Syrian refugee crisis. The existing securitized framing of external migration associated with the Schengen agreement of 1985 therefore prevented the formation of a common European Asylum system. Karageorgiou and Noll (2022b, pp. 147–148) describe how resistance from the Visegrad group, consisting of Slovakia, Hungary,

Czechia and Poland, has prevented the EU from adopting a unified asylum policy on more than a short-term emergency basis. They conclude that, in relation to a common asylum policy, "solidarity is forever postponed to the future" and that "EU asylum solidarity is seeking to immobilize migrants" (Karageorgiou & Noll, 2022b, p. 153). While attempting to offer a solution to this deadlock, McEwen (2017, p. 28) 28 argued in favour of a system of "tradeable refugee quotas", where states who do not wish to host refugees and asylum seekers must finance Member States who are willing to resettle them. It is unclear that the Visegrad group will agree to any policies which would increase the number of refugees and asylum seekers from outside of Europe entering the EU, however, with McEwen (2017, p. 28) 28 acknowledging that the public hostility towards migrants must first be surmounted in order to create a political environment in the EU more in favour of a reformed burden sharing system. In this sense, Juncker's discursive efforts can be seen as genuine attempts to build towards the de-securitization of migration in the European Union. The "Permanent relocation mechanism" represents a policy which had the potential to significantly de-securitize migration in the EU by providing a political solution, decreasing the necessity for urgent and exceptional policies. Juncker's efforts to persuade his audience, including the European public and Members of the European Parliament, can be interpreted as a genuine effort, informed by his habitus, to de-securitize migration. His failure, and his stated support for policies which effectively treat migration as a security issue, can be understood as representative of his institutional context where the securitization of migration was normalised. It remains to be seen whether contemporary crises' such as the Russian Invasion of Ukraine, will lead to meaningful reform of the Dublin system and implement a compulsory burden sharing system for refugees in the European Union.

5.3 The Content of the Discourse of Barroso and Jucker and the 2016 EU-Turkey Statement

This dissertation's research question has primarily been concerned with examining the securitizing and de-securitizing practices pursued by Presidents of the European Commission from the start of the Syrian civil war up to the signing of the 2016 EU-Turkey Statement. While there are works dedicated to analysing the language of the EU-Turkey statement (Casaglia & Pacciardi, 2022), applying the results of this discourse analysis to the text of the Statement (European Council, 2016) yields valuable results by approaching the topic from a different angle.

The first interesting quote is found in the preamble, with the European Council expressing their "condolences to the people of Turkey following the bomb attack in Ankara on Sunday" and "their continued support to fight terrorism in all its forms". Taken out of context, this can be interpreted as an innocuous expression of sympathy and solidarity. Its inclusion in the relatively short preamble to the Statement, however, could imply an association between the content of the statement and the fight against terrorism. Indeed, both Barroso and Juncker frequently associated the threat of terrorism with irregular immigration by drawing an equivalence between the threat posed by the two phenomena, and through the use of security frames such as that of the "returning foreign fighter" (Baker-Beall, 2019, pp. 449–450). Also of interest is the celebration of "Turkey's opening of its labour market to Syrians under temporary protection". Juncker (2015a) expressed his support for such measures in his 2015 State of the Union where he called for "allowing asylum seekers to work and earn their own money". This can be interpreted in two ways. On the one hand, it works to lessen the degree of economic exploitation suffered by Syrian refugees being absorbed into the informal Turkish economy by expanding their opportunities in formal markets where they can theoretically benefit from better protections (Fehr & Rijken, 2022, p. 12). That being said, it also imposes a neoliberal and economic frame on Syrian refugees, potentially determining their worth in economic terms which creates a conflict with humanitarian goals as argued by Pianezzi et al (2022, pp. 152–153) in relation to the case of Italy. The Statement also mentions how "Turkey and the EU also agreed to continue stepping up measures against migrant smugglers and welcomed the establishment of the NATO activity on the Aegean Sea". This builds on the discourse around smugglers used by both Barroso and Juncker to strip agency from refugees by depicting them as helpless victims of criminal human smugglers. This justifies the use of exceptionalist security measures as defined by Stępka (2022, pp. 174–175), particularly with the endorsement of NATO involvement, and distracts from the fact that refugees voluntarily engage with smugglers in order to reach the EU. The EU adopting a Eurocentric (Casas-Cortes & Cobarrubias, 2019, pp. 197–200) and paternalistic approach to human mobility is made clear by the following quote: "in order to break the business model of the smugglers and to offer migrants an alternative to putting their lives at risk, the EU and Turkey today decided to end the irregular migration from Turkey to the EU". Here the EU is depicting itself as a moralistic actor when it is forcefully containing refugees and asylum seekers against their wishes. This type of discourse was also propagated by Juncker (2015a).

The main action points of the Statement also included relevant quotes. The dichotomy of the behaved and un-behaved migrant identified by Casaglia and Pacciardi (2022, p. 3) makes an appearance, as "priority will be given to migrants who have not previously entered or tried to enter the EU irregularly". This strategy was employed by Juncker (2016) in his pursuit of classifying more safe countries of origin to pre-emptively make it harder for individuals from these countries to gain access to asylum and the doubt he expressed about the nature of individual refugees' plights through the use of the "bogus asylum seeker" framing identified by Stępka (2022, p. 76). Juncker's failure to negotiate compulsory refugee resettlement quotas is demonstrated by the fact that "any further need for resettlement will be carried out through a similar voluntary arrangement". Furthermore, his failure to de-securitize the European Union's refugee and asylum policy is evidenced by the very existence of the Statement, an informal agreement which violates his personal principles objecting to returns of refugees (Juncker, 2016). Seemingly acknowledging the fact that migration routes will reform to bypass restrictions in line with Karacay's (2017, p. 98) argument, it is written that "Turkey will take any necessary measures to prevent new sea or land routes for illegal migration opening from Turkey to the EU". Aside from the sinister and forceful implications of "any necessary measures", this represents the EU attempting to ensure that Turkey maintains a proactive approach to containing outflows of irregular migration from its borders. This is similar to the contents of mobility partnerships pursued by Barroso (2012f), such as that of the Mobility Partnership with Egypt. Finally, the 2016 EU-Turkey statement includes a provision to improve the humanitarian conditions in "certain areas near the Turkish border which would allow for the local population and refugees to live in areas which will be more safe". This seems to represent the EU's, at the very least, tacit support for Turkey's foreign policy in Northern Syria which has been described as an attempt at demographic engineering against Kurdish people, possibly even ethnic cleansing (Chulov & Shaheen, 2018; Hall, 2019; van Wilgenburg & Holmes, 2019). Turkey has, however, expressed frustration over the lack of concrete support for this plan from the EU (Ihlamur-Öner, 2022, p. 307). This further demonstrates the degree to which the EU is willing to compromise its normative commitment to human rights in the name of externalising migration. Both Barroso and Juncker demonstrated their support for Turkey, with Barroso (2014c) referring to the state as "part of the solution" and Juncker (2016) saying "without Turkey, there is no solution to the crisis".

6 Conclusion

Through a rigorous discourse analysis of the speeches of Presidents of the European Commission in relation to the Syrian civil war and the refugees and asylums seekers produced by it, this dissertation has addressed the following research question: In what ways has the speech of the President of the European Commission contributed to the securitization of migration resulting from the Syrian civil war? The results of the discourse analysis showed differing approaches to both the role of President and the issue of irregular immigration by Barroso and Juncker. Barroso's approach to leadership can be characterised as passive and intergovernmental, reducing the European Commission's involvement in the crises which occurred during his ten years in office. He also acted opportunistically to securitize refugees and asylum seekers, and actively pushed for the continued expansion of an EU mobility agenda characterized by refugee containment through mobility partnerships and readmission agreements with third countries. Despite initially employing more humanitarian discourse towards Syrians affected by the war, he went on to problematize migration, justify the use of exceptional and forceful measures to counter it, and stood by as policies and agreements further securitized irregular migration. Juncker, on the other hand, openly stated his disagreements with the EU's direction of travel on migration and asylum policy. He successfully campaigned for the resettlement of 160,000 refugees from Member States on the EU's external border, but failed to sufficiently de-securitize the issue of irregular migration sufficiently to prevent the passage of further policies which externalized migration controls and sought to contain refugees and asylum seekers in third countries by all means possible. Juncker's partial success as a transformative leader in the EU's migration and asylum seeker policy shows that the habitus, or personality, of the President of the European Commission matters in relation to EU refugee and asylum policy. The situational-institutional context, however, is ultimately more influential in determining the behaviour of the European Commission than the personal goals of the President as demonstrated by Juncker's failure to reform the Dublin system. These conclusions combine to address a significant gap in the literature when it comes to studying the relationship between the President of the European Commission and the securitization of refugees and asylum seekers.

How Juncker reacted to the 2016 EU-Turkey statement and its results would be interesting to examine in more detail, particularly considering the fact that Juncker's approach to leadership was said to become more moderate over the years as he lost the initial confidence given to him by his election through the Spitzenkandidaten procedure. Furthermore, as more speeches

become available, it would be interesting to observe differences between Juncker and Von Der Leyen's discourse on migration, including how Von Der Leyen responded to efforts by Turkey to violate the 2016 EU-Turkey statement resulting in the Greek Border Crisis of 2020. Over time, it will also become possible to compare European discourse relating to Ukrainian refugees and that relating to refugees from the global south. The UN Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism commented on reports of racist and xenophobic treatment against non-white refugees fleeing the conflict (OHCHR, 2022b). The chair of the African Union (2022) also condemned these reports of discrimination. Talking to Syrian refugees, Sharma (2022) shares the pained feelings of Syrian refugees in relation to the harsher and more criminalized framing they experienced at the hands of the government and media than their Ukrainian peers who "suffer from exactly the same thing" in terms of forced displacement and the destruction of their homes. It also remains to be seen whether the Russian invasion of Ukraine will lead to the reform of the Dublin system towards a common European refugee and asylum system with compulsory burden sharing. Karageorgiou and Noll (2022a) have already commented on this, labelling the EU's welcoming approach to Ukrainian refugees as a form of "unequal solidarity" informed by alliance logic as a way of projecting power against Russia's aggression. The EU, according to van Selm (2022), has "no alternative" but to support displaced Ukrainians due to the existential threat Russian aggression poses to the status-quo in the EU.

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