

JAGIELLONIAN UNIVERSITY IN KRAKOW
CENTRE FOR EUROPEAN STUDIES



**Identifying Securitising Dynamics in Discourse
and Practice:**

The Handling of Asylum applications in the Context of
the 2015 “Refugee Crisis”

Patxi Abarzuza Garciandia

118016

Master’s thesis written under the supervision of

Dr. Karolina Czerska-Shaw

September 2022

Krakow, Poland

PLVS RATIO  QVAM VIS

Table of contents

Abstract	3
Introduction	4
Literature Review	7
Securitisation Theory and The Copenhagen School.....	7
Moving beyond the Speech act and the Logic of exception	11
Migration and Asylum in a logic of securitisation	14
Methodology	19
Operationalisation.....	19
Data selection	23
Analysis	25
I. The handling of asylum and refugee applications in the EU before the 2015 “refugee crisis”	
1.1. Schengen Agreement: the starting point.....	25
1.2. Building on the Schengen Agreement: The Dublin Convention	27
1.3. Changing approaches to migration in the European strategic and policy framework prior to 2015	30
II. EU handling of refugee and asylum applications amidst the 2015 “refugee crisis”	
1.1. Setting the context: The “refugee crisis” in the wake of the Arab spring.....	34
1.2. The EU’s framework for immigration and asylum policy. Towards a securitising tendency?	36
1.3. Shifting views on migration and asylum policy: EU securitising responses to the migration crisis in the aftermath of the 2015 “refugee crisis”?	41
III. Identifying securitising discourses in the handling of asylum and refugee applications in the EU in the aftermath of the 2015 “refugee crisis”	
1.1. An analysis of the conditions enabling the emergence of the securitisation discourse.....	48
1.2. Analysing the actors engaged in the securitisation process in the handling of asylum and refugee applications in the EU	53
1.3. Analysing the public’s acceptance of the securitisation process	55
Conclusion(s)	59
Annex	62
References	64

Abstract

This thesis aims to investigate the potential securitisation dynamics in the managing of asylum applications in the context of the 2015 European “refugee crisis” carried out at the EU level. It argues that the approach taken by the European Union since 2015 has strengthened the securitising tendency mechanisms for EU Asylum and Migration Policy. Building on a revised version of the Copenhagen school’s theory of securitisation, this thesis departs slightly from the original conception by adding to the analysis the identification of securitisation practices rather than simply examining the speech act. In sum, the findings indicate that in responding to migratory pressures arising from the 2015 “refugee crisis”, the EU adopted an approach that emphasised a strategy and policy practice based on reactionary emergency measures related to defence, external action and security. The contribution of this thesis is twofold. First, it adds to the understanding of the securitisation of asylum seekers and refugees in the EU and the potential role of the EU institutions in this process. Second, it contributes to securitisation theory by applying a modified framework, combining discursive and non-discursive securitisation practices in the analysis.

Key words: Securitisation – “Refugee crisis” – European Union – Refugees and Asylum-seekers

Introduction

Over the last decade, increased cross-border migration flows and heightened media attention and coverage have awakened the old ghosts of extreme nationalism and xenophobia that have haunted Europe. Against this background, the already convoluted link between migration and security became even more entrenched at the centre of the political debates, especially in the aftermath of 9/11 (Lazaridis and Wadia, 2015). As political and economic destabilisation in the European Union's neighbouring countries deepens and prolonged conflicts in Africa, South Asia, and the Middle East escalate, civilian populations seeking refuge from war and poverty have consistently risen over the last few years, reaching an estimated 79 million as of the end of 2019 (UNHCR, 2020).

In 2015, a turning point in the European migration situation occurred when unprecedented asylum applications across member states were recorded. Most asylum seekers and refugees in the 2015 "refugee crisis"¹ came from conflict-ridden and war-torn countries in the MENA region. The unstable and fragile situation in many countries in the Middle East and North Africa was exacerbated by the Arab Spring in 2011, leading to increased instability and forced displacement. Although most forced migrants have moved internally or remained in the vicinity of their country of origin, asylum seekers attempting to seek refuge in Europe have certainly increased in number since 2015, sparking what has often been depicted as unmanageable mass migration into EU borders (Lucassen, 2017). According to Frontex, in 2015, the number of irregular border crossings into the EU increased fourfold compared to previous years, amounting to over 1.8 million (Frontex, 2015). By the same token, in 2015 and 2016, EU Member States recorded an all-time increase in asylum applications, with a total of 1.2 million applications made (Eurostat, 2017). Consequently, the EU has rapidly become a trigger for the so-called "refugee crisis", becoming one of the most challenging security and migration "problems" Europe has faced since the end of the Second World War (Stępką, 2022).

Following the anxiety triggered by the "shock" of the "refugee crisis" in 2015, states have adopted a wide range of legislative measures (such as visa policies and carrier sanctions, among others) to reduce the access of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers alike, to their territory. Governments have also sought to curtail the rights of migrants and

¹ Throughout this thesis, the concept of "the refugee crisis" will be used in inverted commas to emphasise the socially constructed nature of said crisis.

asylum seekers within their territories. Moreover, these legislative changes have co-occurred as the budgets dedicated to migration controls have been increased in several member states. As such, a tendency can be observed in most member states to invest large amounts of money in sophisticated technologies aimed at increasing migration control and monitoring (Lehtonen and Aalto, 2017).

This situation of unparalleled migration flows provided fertile ground for the proliferation of securitisation dynamics of migration and asylum in Europe. As the EU intensified narratives and policy actions that have pushed migration and asylum into security discourses and practices, the response to the refugee crisis found itself with more stringent measures (most of them adopted unilaterally by member states) and less coordination. In this light, the instruments for coordination between the Member States in dealing with asylum and refugee applications seem to fall short of meeting the increase in asylum and refugee claims. To respond to this exceptional migratory situation, the European institutions adopted a strategy defined in the European Agenda on Migration, which marked the beginning of a new stage in European immigration policy, especially in measures related to asylum.

The hypothesis underlying this research is that the European Union's reaction to the growing migratory pressure experienced since the "refugee crisis" of 2015 has not resulted in greater integration in the field of migration – especially in the area of asylum – but has instead strengthened the existing coordination instruments of an intergovernmental system that fails to effectively manage exceptional migratory flows. As a result, both the EU's internal coherence and external legitimacy have been eroded. Moreover, this thesis argues that the approach adopted by European institutions since the "refugee crisis" has intensified the securitising tendency of European migration policy, especially asylum-related mechanisms. In doing so, it has favoured the application of reactionary defence- and security-related measures.

Accordingly, three questions are posed to determine the veracity of the hypothesis, which will serve to organise the content of each analytical chapter of this research.

- *How prepared was the EU in terms of migration governance to manage the migratory stress at its external borders before 2015?*

- *Which policy instruments explain the securitising trend adopted by the European Union in the managing of asylum and refugee applications following the 2015 “refugee crisis”?*
- *To what extent has the handling of asylum and refugee applications in the EU been securitised through discourses in the aftermath of the 2015 “refugee crisis”?*

This research thesis ultimately has two objectives. The first is to improve understanding of the securitisation of asylum seekers and refugees in the EU and the potential role of the EU in this process, especially in the aftermath of the 2015 “refugee crisis”. The second objective is to contribute to the securitisation theory by applying a modified securitisation framework, bringing together discursive and non-discursive securitising practices to the analysis. Much previous research has analysed, for example, the European or member states’ response to the “refugee crisis” or the EU’s externalisation strategy of migration control or international protection instruments, and so on. However, little research focuses on the trend towards securitisation of European migration policy, especially in handling asylum and refugee applications, and even less research that applies a revised version of the Copenhagen School’s securitisation theory.

To this end, this thesis will be structured as follows: first, a review of the existing literature will be undertaken to identify the debates and gaps in the literature that underpin this research and to present the theoretical framework on which the subsequent empirical analysis will be based. Next, the chosen methodology for this thesis will be presented, detailing the selected methods and the operationalisation of the securitisation theory to answer the research questions. The results of the analysis will then be presented in three parts. The first chapter will provide the necessary context of migration and asylum policies in the EU for the subsequent empirical research. The second chapter will analyse the changing perspective on asylum and refugee issues in the aftermath of the “refugee crisis” and outline the securitisation practices that the EU has adopted through its policies. The third and final chapter will apply the theory of securitisation to the EU discourse to assess the process of securitisation of the EU’s handling of asylum and refugee applications in the aftermath of the 2015 “refugee crisis”. It will conclude with the overall conclusions of the thesis.

Literature Review

Securitisation Theory and The Copenhagen School

Among the most notable contributors to securitisation theory is the Copenhagen School corpus of literature. Building on a series of articles published in the mid to late 1990s by scholars Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver², the securitisation theory was advanced in a landmark publication entitled *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Buzan et al., 1998). Not surprisingly, since then, a large and growing body of literature has investigated securitisation. Indeed, the securitisation framework offers an appealing framework for challenging the notion of the materialist ontology of security and, simultaneously, revealing underlying dynamics behind the political and decision-making processes that drive matters or actors into the security domain (Bourbeau, 2015; Lazaridis, 2011).

Following the linguistic turn in International Relations theory and security studies, the securitisation framework introduced by the Copenhagen School understands that “language is not only about what is – out there – but is also a constituent part of the social reality it describes” (Balzacq, 2010; Stepka, 2022). In this sense, the Copenhagen School departs from the realists’ and neorealists’ understanding of discourse and language and its role in security studies. Instead, the Copenhagen school argues that security is not an objective fact but is, rather, constructed through intersubjective social and discursive interaction between powerful actors who propound definitions of what constitutes a threat and the corresponding audiences, who endorse or reject these definitions (Buzan et al., 1998; Buzan & Wæver, 1997).

Here, in line with the constructivist nature of the securitisation framework and drawing on elements of the speech act theory developed by John L. Austin (1975) and Schmitt’s notion of the “state of exception”, the central tenet of the concept of securitisation emerges; there are no security issues per se, but only issues that certain

² Although other scholars have occasionally been involved in the Copenhagen School’s work (such as Jap de Wilde), Buzan and Wæver are the two most influential scholars in developing the securitisation framework within the Copenhagen school of thought. For this reason, this thesis will speak interchangeably of “the Copenhagen School” or “Buzan & Wæver”, though the latter would be a somewhat simplistic account of all the contributions made to securitisation theory by Copenhagen School scholars.

actors construct – “securitising actors” – through the use of speech acts (Buzan et al., 1998; Wæver, 1995; Williams, 2003).

To use Wæver’s own words:

In this usage, security is of no interest as a sign that refers to something more real; the utterance itself is the act. In saying it, something is done (as in betting, in giving a promise, in naming a ship). By pronouncing the word “security”, a state representative transfers a specific development to a specific area and thus claims a special right to use whatever means are necessary to block it.

(Wæver, 1995: 55)

In this conceptualisation of security, Buzan and Wæver understand security in its more traditional sense as something consubstantial to survival. Along these lines, Buzan and Wæver stress the importance of the rhetorical structure of speech acts and, in particular, the necessity of raising the securitised issue above the realm of “normal politics” (Buzan and Wæver, 1997). In this context, powerful social actors produce discourses of security that frame a problem as an existential threat (migration, terrorism, environmentalism) to a specific referent object (a given policy, population or issue) in dire need of immediate protection (Stepka, 2022). Therefore, securitisation could be defined as:

The staging of existential issues in politics to lift them above politics. In security discourse, an issue is dramatised and presented as an issue of supreme priority; thus, by labeling it as security, an agent claims a need for and a right to treat it by extraordinary means.

(Buzan et al., 1998: 26)

In other words, securitisation represents an extreme act of politicisation of an issue. It ceases to be dealt with by the normal instruments of public policy, which are replaced by the urgent devices of the security and defence policy of the actor in question (Buzan et al., 1998). Nevertheless, according to the Copenhagen school, we should not confuse the politicisation of an issue with securitisation. In order to better understand the concept of securitisation, they make an effort to differentiate it from the concept of politicisation:

“Security” is the move that takes politics beyond the established rules of the game and frames the issue as a special kind of politics or above politics. Securitisation can thus be seen as a more extreme version of politicisation. In theory, any public issue can be located on the spectrum ranging from nonpoliticised (meaning the state does not deal with it and it is not in any other way made an issue of public debate and decision) through politicised (meaning the issue is part of public policy, requiring government decision and resource allocations or, more rarely, some other form of communal governance) to securitised (meaning the issue is presented as an existential threat, requiring emergency measures and justifying actions outside the normal bounds of political procedure).

(Buzan et al., 1998)

But then who can (or cannot) talk about security? According to Buzan & Wæver (1998), no fixed set of criteria establishes who are the only actors with the power to speak about security and securitise. Nonetheless, it could be argued that certain actors have an inherent legitimacy or are more likely to be accepted as the voices of security because of their position of power. Among these actors well placed to be heard when talking about security could be governments, pressure groups, political leaders, bureaucrats or other security forces, to name a few (Buzan et al., 1998). However, it is essential to note that not all securitisation speech acts used by powerful social actors are constitutive and security-producing. Hence, it should be pointed out that speech acts merely represent what are called “securitisation moves” or, in other words, attempts to securitise a dynamic, an issue or an actor that will only be successfully securitised if they gain political and social momentum and, above all if the relevant audience accepts such a speech act (Buzan et al., 1998).

And indeed, it is this acknowledgement and acceptance by the audience that endows the securitisation movement with the intersubjective character that is integral to threat as a social construct (Buzan et al., 1998; Côté, 2016). Securitisation rhetorically actualises anxiety and uncertainty concerning a security issue (Buzan et al., 1998). This is the art of securitising, guaranteeing, and securing, i.e., mobilising a set of financial and human means for the security of an actor (Demurtas, 2019). According to Buzan and Wæver, for the speech act to be more successful and likely to be accepted, it must meet certain requirements. On the one hand, the speech act must comply with the security

grammar. In this spirit, it must include a plot with an existential threat, an imminent danger, a non– return point, and so on. On the other, external conditions, which are contextual and social, must also be fulfilled. To begin with, the securitising actor must have social capital (in the most “Bourdieuian” sense) and, therefore, be in a position of authority.

Secondly, let us suppose that the utterer wants to increase his persuasive power. In that case, he or she must refer to those “objects” generally perceived as threatening, i.e., polluted waters, to substantially impact the relevant audience (Léonard and Kaunert, 2019). Thus, in studying security, the Copenhagen School does not seek to identify and assess the existence of objective threats but to explore the processes by which a given “problem” is socially constructed and how it subsequently gains recognition as a security threat (Léonard and Kaunert, 2019). Moreover, it is important to stress that, from the outset, the Copenhagen School’s work on securitisation had an important normative aspect (Floyd, 2011).

All in all, this seminal work by the Copenhagen school represents a valuable tool for deepening the definition of security, framed in the theoretical debates of the post–Cold War period. The new framework advanced by Buzan and Wæver involved broadening the scope of the study of security and not reducing it exclusively to political and military issues, which almost monopolised research during the Cold War. Deepening the definition of security implies assuming that the state – while maintaining its essential importance – is no longer the only subject of reference (Demurtas, 2019). Given the multiple changes taking place in the post–Cold War international system at the geopolitical, territorial, technological, environmental and identity levels, it is necessary to combine the state analysis with other levels. Thus, the authors claimed the need to approach security from a multidimensional perspective, focusing on traditional political and military issues and those related to the economic, environmental and social security sectors. The individual, regional and global perspectives may even become the most important for analysing some security sectors.

Over time, the Copenhagen school’s conceptualisation of securitisation gained universal recognition, but at the same time, it also became the subject of criticism and reconceptualisation. In the next section of this chapter, the shortcomings of securitisation as presented by the Copenhagen school will be pointed out, and further developments of the concept of securitisation beyond the three essential components underlying

securitisation (the speech act, the logic of the exception and the actor– public interaction) will be discussed with a focus on the Post– Copenhagen contributions. This discussion will serve as a reference point for elaborating the framework of securitisation that will be applied in this thesis.

Moving beyond the Speech act and the Logic of exception

In contrast to the broadly linguistic conception of securitisation put forward by the Copenhagen School, almost at the same time a whole school of thought emerged, the Paris school. Influenced by the ideas of Michel Foucault (1994, 2007) and Pierre Bourdieu (1990, 1991), the emerging academic current defined the securitisation process from a more sociological standpoint. In this spirit, these authors highlight the central role of governmentality and bureaucratic practices in establishing and inscribing meanings in the construction of security (Balzacq et al., 2016). According to Balzacq (2005), the first problem posed by the theory of securitisation as propounded by the Copenhagen Schools is its excessive degree of formalism: the structure of the securitising process, centred on the speech act, seems to be based on a code of permanent and immutable practices, which risks turning security into a “conventional procedure”.

Conversely, Balzacq argues that securitisation is, rather, “a strategic (pragmatic) practice that happens within – and as part of – a set of circumstances”. These include the context, the psychological-cultural predisposition of public opinion, and the power that the speaking agent and the listening agent reproduce in the interaction (Balzacq, 2005). Thus, according to Balzacq, securitisation should not be treated as a speech act but rather as a “pragmatic act”. In this case, discourse is not self-referential, but is combined with the study of factors such as the social context, the agents involved in the process and the relative positions of power they occupy (Balzacq, 2005; Vuori 2011).

Hence, security dynamics function under the threshold of exceptional situations, as they are part of standardised and everyday security practices (Bigo, 2002). Following this securitising logic, the Paris school and subsequent scholars focuses on non-discursive processes. That is, all those cases in which a given threat has become a recurrent element that looms over a given society and has lost its exceptional character (e.g., irregular migration flows) and therefore performative discourses are no longer necessary to establish securitisation. Instead, the securitisation process occurs predominantly and inconspicuously through administrative practices, public policies or procedural

implementation, eventually becoming entrenched and institutionalised (Bigo, 2002; Léonard and Kaunert, 2019).

As Didier Bigo's aptly observed:

“It is possible to securitise certain problems without speech or discourse and the military and the police have known that for a long time. The practical work, discipline and expertise are as important as all forms of discourse”.

(Bigo, 2000)

Under this approach of securitisation through practice, police and military forces, border guards and humanitarian workers, amongst other security professionals, constitute the central actors of securitisation (Bigo, 2002). The methodology employed also changes. For instance, Bigo proposes shifting the focus from the macro-level context, with political discourses as the main focus of study, to a new micro-level approach that looks at the everyday practices of actors in the security field to identify the routines underlying the processes of securitisation (Bigo, 2000; Bigo 2008; Bigo and Tsoukala 2008). In this vein, other academics, such as Huysmans (2004; 2006), stress the importance of securitising practices. Huysmans, who draws on Foucauldian inspirations in his concept of governmentality, stresses the central and increasingly pronounced role of technologies as securitising tools. In this light, Huysmans argues that the use of technology goes beyond its role as a simple instrument (a means to an end) to implement given policies but also plays a significant role in presenting the existing choices to decision-makers (Huysmans, 2006).

This can be seen most clearly in the case of migration and its increasing securitisation in the last decade. In recent years, member states have invested vast amounts in developing and implementing technological devices to strengthen and increase border surveillance and migration control (Bellanova and Duez, 2016). These monitoring technologies have led to the conceptualisation and implementation of biometric and smart border technologies, as well as a comprehensive interoperable IT system with large databases that have been set up in the EU to collect information about migrants and asylum seekers (such as VIS, SIS and EURODAC) for the purpose of controlling mobility within and across European borders (Jeandesboz, 2017). Several scholars have argued that this knowledge-based framework acts as a “preventive securitisation of migrants”, whereby each mobile individual is framed as a potential

security threat or risk (Stępką, 2022; Jeandesboz, 2017; Rijpma and Vermeulen, 2015). Thus, these more technological securitisation dynamics, along with technocratic security practices, are not based on the strict identification and definition of existing threats but on the triage of potentially dangerous migrants and their neutralisation if they are perceived as a risk to the object of reference (Ragazzi, 2016; Maguire, 2015). Although these technological tools had typically been developed for different ends, like counter-terrorism operations, their existence and readiness in the security industry have resulted, in many cases, in their adoption and implementation for border control purposes (Leonard & Kaunert, 2019; Rijpma & Vermeulen, 2015).

Faced with globalised (in)security, transnational networks of security professionals are booming with globalised (in) security, such as Europol or FRONTEX (Delkáder,2020). On the one hand, Europol is the EU institution responsible since 1994 for coordinating the police forces of the EU Member States in the fight against crime, organised crime, and terrorism. It is the primary mechanism for police cooperation in the EU. On the other hand, as we will see in the analysis chapter of this research, FRONTEX is the European Union agency created in 2004 with the mission of managing and controlling the external borders of the Schengen area. It is linked to the Schengen Agreement, in force since 1995, establishing an area of free movement in Europe. The social practices that occur in (in)security constitute processes of (in)securitisation and result from competition between different security agencies for authority to define threats (Delkáder,2020).

These practices are oriented towards control and surveillance and routinely use technological tools for risk profiling in a context where any behaviour is potentially dangerous. Coercion is complemented or replaced by information control through data collection and processing systems. Total traceability and surveillance – the dream of many security professionals – highlight the tense relationship between security and freedom. However, there is currently an evolution from solid surveillance or panopticon, a term coined by the philosopher and father of utilitarianism Jeremy Bentham and later developed and popularised by Foucault in his work *Watch and Punish* (1994), where he theorises the surveillance society, to liquid surveillance, focused on risk profiles. This technique of government is defined as the governmentality of the professionals of uncertainty or fear (Bigo, 2002). It is about establishing what or who constitutes a threat and should be monitored.

Central to the production of security in the context of the surveillance society and through the technocratic practice of the governmentality of fear is what Foucault calls dispositifs: “A completely heterogeneous set consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions, both the said and the unsaid. In short, the dispositif is the system of relations that can be established between these elements” (Foucault, 1980).

In Balzacq et al. (2010), two types of tools used by the dispositif are differentiated. On the one hand, regulatory tools aim to standardise the behaviour of individuals, prohibiting some actions and promoting others. On the other hand, capacity tools are usually related to Foucault's idea of discipline, the most common being technological tools. Here it is important to note that devices have a mutually constitutive relationship with fields through the operation of norms and technologies. Devices are not mere technical tools; they are endowed with political and symbolic content. Thus, to the extent that they are employed as tools of (in)securitisation, devices shape social relations and public action and embody images of threat, i.e., they are producers of security (Balzacq et al., 2010).

In short, the Paris School's approach proposes the need to analyse disputes over the definition of security to understand better the social and power relations involved in the production of (in)security. Paris School's sociological proposal to reflexively study the processes of social and intersubjective construction of (in)security, i.e., processes of (in)securitisation, is a valuable contribution to the sub-discipline. Especially because of its emphasis on so-called non-discursive practices. To conclude, this section has presented a portrait of securitisation theory from the Copenhagen school to the contributions of the Paris school and later post-Copenhagen contributions.

Migration and Asylum in a logic of securitisation

In recent decades, a large and growing body of literature has investigated the migration-security nexus (Bourbeau, 2017; Faist, 2004; Miller, 2001; Tirman, 2004). In doing so, scholars have primarily turned to the theory of securitisation developed by the Copenhagen School to explore this link between security and migration (Chebel d'Appollonia, 2015; Huysmans, 2006; Lazaridis, 2011; Leonard & Kaunert, 2019; van

Munster, 2009).³ Against this background, the bulk of the literature seems to argue that asylum and migration have been successfully securitised in Europe (Leonard & Kaunert, 2019).⁴

After thoroughly analysing the literature, two lines of research on the link between migration and security can be discerned. The first one concerns all those scholars who have examined the actors and processes through which asylum and migration have been constructed as threats in Europe. In this line, scholars have analysed the various reasons why asylum and migration have been securitised in European countries by focusing on the modalities of securitisation. For instance, according to Huysmans (2000), migration has been constructively framed as a socio-economic, cultural, and threat to internal security. For their part, Ceyhan and Tsoukala (2002) have pointed out the many similarities between the discourses that securitise migration, regardless of whether they are delivered by security actors, political elites or the media. These discourses, in their opinion, are typically organised along four axes: “socioeconomic, securitarian, identitarian, and political” (Ceyhan and Tsoukala, 2002).

In the opinion of d’Appollonia (2012), migrants are seen as a security threat due to “a historical, social and political construction” based on particular prejudices and discourses associated with the figure of the migrant. It should be noted here that d’Appollonia (2012) disagrees⁵ with the widely held view that the 9/11 terrorist attacks constituted a drastic change from the previous European position on the immigration-terrorism nexus and that the event was not a “turning point” for the EU’s development of asylum and migration policy (Colman, 2006; Guild, 2004; Nicholson, 2006).

Bello (2017) also examines the role of prejudice in the securitisation of refugees and asylum seekers. Through an analysis of security practices and routines, she argues that certain security practices, such as the return of asylum seekers who have not been granted refugee status to their country of origin, play a role in the emergence of prejudices against asylum seekers and thus in their social construction as security threats. Finally,

³ Despite the existence of other approaches that have also significantly added to the study of the relationship between migration and security (see for example Bourbeau, Handbook on Migration and Security, 2017).

⁴ However, it should be noted that the extent of such securitisation and other indicators, such as public acceptance of the securitising discourse, are less conclusive in the debate on the securitisation of migration and asylum.

⁵ Indeed, other scholar such as Boswell also contends that the terrorist attacks had a relatively minor impact on the securitisation of migration in the EU (see Boswell, 2007).

Balzacq (2008) examines the instruments of data exchange in the context of such securitisation practices in the EU. In the same vein, Léonard investigates the activities of FRONTEX in its control of European borders and how it has contributed to the increasing securitisation of migration and asylum at the European level (Léonard, 2010).

According to van Munster (2009), a pattern of securitisation in migration can be observed since the signing of the Schengen agreement in 1985. In this regard, van Munster argues that the Schengen treaty had a noticeable impact on the EU's approach towards migrants, asylum seekers and refugees. Van Munster attributes this change to the gradual transfer of migration to the technocratic realm and the fact that human mobility became increasingly seen as a security issue due to the absence of internal borders (van Munster, 2009). Other factors, such as transnational migration – especially in the form of irregular migratory flows – that were increasingly linked to issues such as transnational crime, transnational terrorism or border control contributed to further securitising dynamics. These precedents paved the way for considering migration and asylum as one of the key areas of EU internal security policy, and thus socially constructing migration as a threat (Bali, 2008).

Regarding the securitisation of asylum at the European level, since 2015 politicians from different member states have made speeches linking asylum seekers or refugees to an increase in insecurity in their countries. Beck (2017) collects some of the most relevant speeches, grouping them under the following lines of argument: the connection between migration and terrorism (the migration-terrorism nexus), the idea that immigrants reduce national resources, and the difficulty of integrating immigrants. Many of the statements analysed by Beck were made after terrorist attacks on European cities or in response to the German chancellor's open borders policy (*Wir schaffen das*) implemented as of 4 September 2015. It should be noted, however, that the vast majority of individuals involved in terrorist attacks in Europe in the last decade are European citizens, many of whom have been foreign fighters and were already known to European law enforcement authorities. Between June 2016 and April 2017, four asylum seekers, three of whom had been refused asylum and two of whom had arrived before the 2015 migration crisis, were involved in four terrorist attacks in European cities. None of them had refugee status (Danish Institute for International Studies, 2017).

Another important line of research in the literature on the securitisation of migration has been developed by scholars critically examining the consequences of the

increasing securitisation of migration and asylum at the European level. Huysmans was an early researcher exploring the possible consequences of the securitisation of migration. He warns that one of the adverse effects of socially constructing migrants as a threat is that it fuels an increased tendency towards violence between the indigenous population and migrants (Huysmans, 1995). Huysmans also proposes some de-securitisation⁶ strategies that will help to defuse an issue and return it to “normality” in the public sphere (Huysmans, 1995; Hansen, 2012). Both Squire (2015) and Van Munster (2009) caution that treating migration management as a constant threat leads to the “abjection” of migrants in the European Union. That is, it strips them of their status as political subjects and thus of their agency. In this sense, both agree on the need for a more inclusive approach to asylum in the EU.

Aradau (2008) examines how “security categories” applied to anti-trafficking policies can result in migrants being labelled from dangerous criminals to vulnerable individuals entitled to international protection. This is often highly subjective and, therefore, to a larger extent, unclear categorisation determines the situation of migrants and their future on a somewhat arbitrary basis. Indeed, the line between irregular migrants and vulnerable migrants and/or refugees is blurred in cases such as human trafficking, potentially leading to the securitisation and victimisation of groups of people who should not, in principle, be the target of security (Aradau, 2008).

Finally, Bello (2017, 2022) has also made noteworthy contributions to the relationship between prejudice and the securitisation of migration in the context of the European Union. Bello argues that the social construction of asylum and migration as security issues plays a significant role in developing xenophobic attitudes and the proliferation of prejudice. She also offers novel findings on the audience’s role (a concept lacking theoretical conceptualisation in securitisation theory) not by focusing on speech acts, but on the cognitions and narratives of non-state actors in the management of reception centres. Bello explains that, unlike speech acts, narratives “do not need to be

⁶ De-securitisation is understood as the opposite of securitisation, i.e., the transfer of an issue from the security and defence sphere to the ordinary logic of public policy. No longer representing an existential threat to the actor, this issue no longer needs to be addressed with emergency measures because – according to the perception of the authorities and public opinion – it can be solved with the normal instruments of public policy implementation.

accepted by the public to exert their effects. Rather, the public is impressed by the narratives, which, in a performative act, make them feel and perceive what the narrative stages” (Bello, 2022).

By and large, the burgeoning literature on the securitisation of migration presents a rather fragmented and complex landscape, not allowing this process to be encapsulated in a single mould (Stepka, 2022). Admittedly, many indications have been found throughout the literature that indicates that the construction of security is entangled in a variety of logic, as well as in the discourses and practices shaped by them (Balzacq, 2015; Bourbeau, 2015; Leonard and Kaunert, 2019; Salter et al., 2019; Stepka, 2022). Thus, to understand the complex picture of securitisation in the field of asylum and migration, this thesis will take into account the speech act and securitisation through practices, including the role of policies and technologies in the development of these practices.

Methodology

Once the securitisation framework as developed by the Copenhagen School and subsequent academic currents has been presented, the question of its empirical application is now ripe for consideration. Is Buzan and Waever's securitisation framework appropriate for analysing real-world cases of securitisation, such as the securitisation of asylum handling in the aftermath of the "refugee crisis" of 2015? A look at the large and growing amount of literature on the empirical application of the securitisation theory of migration and asylum bears this question out (Bigo, 2002; Bigo, 2014; Bourbeau, 2011; Leonard, 2010; Leonard & Kaunert, 2019; Neal, 2009; Sperling & Webber, 2019; Stokes-Dupass, 2017; van Munster, 2009). In this spirit, this thesis departs slightly from the original conception of securitisation theory by adding to the analysis the identification of securitisation practices rather than simply looking at the speech act.

Thus, this thesis, consistent with other research (Leonard and Kaunert, 2019; Bourbeau, 2014), believes that any analysis of securitisation would gain from considering both securitisation discourses and securitisation practices. These two approaches can be reconciled, as their differences should not be exaggerated (Bourbeau, 2014). Moreover, analysing the securitisation of migration and asylum through the two lenses (discursive and non-discursive securitisation practices) could provide a more holistic and accurate depiction of these processes (Bourbeau, 2014). To this end, the methodology used in this study is based on an extensive qualitative document analysis.

Operationalisation

Securitisation through (policy) practices

As this thesis aims to analyse the securitisation practices in handling asylum applications potentially made by the EU, official documents issued by the European institutions constitute a central part of the study. This comprises documents of the European Commission and other institutions, to a lesser extent, such as the European Council or the European Parliament. These documents are essential for assessing how the EU has been framing asylum seekers and refugees during the study's time frame (2011-2018), as well as what policies have been pursued in response to the increased migratory pressure following the 2015 "refugee crisis".

In analysing the documents, they will be contrasted with the model constructed to operationalise the EU's securitisation practices (shown on the following page). Accordingly, as far as securitisation practices at the policy and instrument level are concerned, the developed model is based on the contributions to securitisation by authors such as (Bigo, 2002; Huysmans, 2006; Balzacq, 2010; Léonard, 2010). Here, applied to the question of the securitisation of asylum management, this approach requires including in the analysis the non-discursive practices of actors dealing with migration rather than focusing exclusively on their discourse on migration.

Hence, the first strand of analysis will focus on studying the practical implementation of the shift in perspective through emergency mechanisms activated by the EU to deal with the “refugee crisis”, as well as programmes aimed at meeting the needs of asylum seekers. It will also look at external policy instruments, especially the 2011 Global Approach to Migration and Mobility, as a starting point for formalising the link between migration, security and cooperation with third countries. In this regard, rather than security, an analysis of the securitisation of the management of asylum applications in the wake of the EU's 2015 “refugee crisis” will be undertaken. The underlying theoretical framework as already presented in the literature review is constructivism, more specifically, the theory of securitisation developed by the Copenhagen school and its subsequent strands.

Developed model 1. Overview of the fulfilment of the conditions for the existence of securitising practices

Conditions	Identified condition	Level of compliance
1. Existence of a securitisation agent		
2. Existence of a securitised agent		
3. An identifiable threat/ referent object		
4. Existence of securitization Instruments		
4.1. Increase Technological devices in border control		
4.2. Increased controls at external land and maritime borders by military and/or armed security agents		
4.3. Outsourcing practices		
4.4. Use of large databases to control and monitor human mobility		

Source: own elaboration based on securitising practices identified in (Bigo, 2002; Huysmans, 2006; Balzacq, 2010; Léonard, 2010)

Securitisation through discourse

Secondly, this thesis will examine the discourse of some European immigration and asylum policy documents and the discourses of political elites in EU institutions. According to Waever (1995), discourses shape our perception of reality. In this sense, discourses make sense of social and political realities so that individuals, states, and regional bodies can make sense of themselves, each other and the world they inhabit. A discourse is a “cohesive set of ideas, concepts and categorisations about a specific object” that frames that object in a particular way, thus determining the “possibilities for action about it” (Epstein 2008; cited in Abdulhamid 2018). Foucault (1981) situated power within the discourse and, in this sense, how EU institutions have articulated discourses on security, migration and asylum to frame their international position and create knowledge through discourse could represent an instrumental exercise of power.

Discursive analysis has played a predominant role in the literature on securitisation due to the centrality of the speech act for the Copenhagen school (Balzacq, 2011). This type of analysis aims to examine the influence of discourses in shaping different collective worldviews and address the existing power relations that characterise them to try to (de)construct them. Thus, just as threats are socially constructed for securitisation theorists, this methodology considers that the perception of reality is shaped by different discourses, as these are conveyors of meaning. Furthermore, this methodology discards the use of quantitative methods as it is found to be ineffective for analysing common discursive threads and representations of migration across the different texts selected for the study.

The discourse securitisation practices analysed in this thesis (the former President of the Commission and the former EU Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship (Jean-Claude Juncker and Dimitris Avramopoulos, respectively) will therefore be tested against the model constructed from the conditions of discourse securitisation according to Buzan, Waever and De Wilde, 1998. Concerning the content of the analysis, the security arguments presented in each document will be examined and linked to its context, the respective object of reference, connection with the contributions of the actors involved in the securitisation of asylum management and, finally, the functional actors.

Developed model 2. Overview of the fulfilment of the conditions for the appearance of the securitisation discourse

Conditions	Level of compliance
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="315 400 1308 480">1. The construction of an existential threat to be responded to with emergency measures<li data-bbox="315 560 1308 799">2. Contextual factors facilitating the emergence of the securitisation discourse<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="421 612 696 639">2.1. Security dilemmas<li data-bbox="421 663 763 691">2.2. Geographical proximity<li data-bbox="421 715 674 742">2.3. Past experiences<li data-bbox="421 766 954 793">2.4. Non-coincidence of political ideologies<li data-bbox="315 874 1308 1118">3. Internal factors that facilitate the emergence of the securitisation discourse<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="421 927 1137 954">3.1. Security Structure and grammar used in the speech act<li data-bbox="421 978 1240 1058">3.2. Strategy that identifies existential threat, point of no return and possible solution<li data-bbox="421 1082 965 1109">3.3. Well-structured and coherent speech act<li data-bbox="315 1193 1308 1342">4. External factors facilitating the emergence of the securitisation discourse<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="421 1246 1010 1273">4.1. The social capital of the enunciating subject<li data-bbox="421 1297 730 1324">4.2. The concept of threat	Totally compliant / Partially compliant / Non-compliant

Source: Own elaboration based on (Buzan et al., 1998)

Data selection

Data selection is based on a deductive research strategy, elaborated by Popper (2002). This strategy promotes a structured approach to data collection and analysis. Given the limited word count of this thesis, the most relevant documents to the object of study have been selected from references in the academic literature and the monitoring of the most pertinent developments in EU security and migration and asylum policies within the researched time frame (2011-2018).

As this thesis is concerned with the analysis of possible securitisation practices at the discursive and non-discursive level in the EU, the empirical evidence is drawn from official European Commission reports, communications and press release analysis ($N=9$), as well as European Council conclusions ($N=4$). Another category of documents, albeit to a lesser extent, are those coming from the various NGOs active in the field of asylum and migration and lobbying the EU on these issues. These are press releases, reports and newsletters from Amnesty International, ECRE, Forum Réfugiés-Cosi and other intergovernmental organisations such as UNHCR-NGOs that are active in the field of asylum and migration and lobby the EU on these issues. However, the documents of the various NGOs and supranational organizations (UNCHR) and the Council conclusions (prior to 2011) have contextualised and provided information on the existing legal mechanisms for migration policy but have not been analysed and analysed codified according to the models developed based on the securitisation theory.

Nevertheless, the selected sample of official European Commission and European Council documents ($N=13$ in total) is representative and characteristic of the European level's prevailing discourse and policy practices. It allows us to understand the discursive link between security, migration and the management of asylum applications). In this regard, the selected documents relate to general debates on migration flows at the European level, which is why the textual production of the two EU institutions with the greatest competence in the field of migration and asylum has been examined: the European Commission (reports, communications and press releases) and the Council (conclusions). In any case, to achieve the work's objectives and based on the theoretical recommendations, the analysis of speeches by the former President of the Commission and the former EU Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship (Jean-

Claude Juncker and Dimitris Avramopoulos, respectively) will be the focus of the study when analysis the discursive securitising practices at the EU level.

It should be noted, however, that due to the generalist nature of these documents, it may be challenging to analyse complete securitising movements. That is, to find both the argumentation of the existence of an existential threat and the presentation of extraordinary measures to try to meet it. On the other hand, the selected texts correspond to a period of (7) years because the purpose of the data collection is to maximise objectivity in the analysis of discursive threads and, in turn, to reduce the inevitable arbitrariness in the selection of texts that could lead to confirmation bias (for more details on the empirical material gathered, see the “Appendix” section).

As described earlier in this thesis, securitisation theory states that for a successful securitisation process to be established, the acceptance of the authority’s discourse by public opinion must be accepted. If approved, European public opinion should be concerned about the growing migratory pressure and would accept the securitisation instruments activated to deal with the threat. In this light, for measuring public acceptance of the securitisation process, the public’s (in this case, EU Member States’ nationals) perception of migration as a perceived challenge will be analysed. The Eurobarometer survey dataset used in this thesis will cover the period from spring 2014 to the latest available data from 2017. Through the Eurobarometer data, it is possible to know in detail what are the priorities for action of the EU institutions, considering the data provided by the representative citizens consulted in the survey and to check whether the securitising discourse carried out at the European Union level has been taken into account.

Analysis

I. The handling of asylum and refugee applications in the EU before the 2015 “refugee crisis”

This section aims to present the evolution of European immigration policy – with particular attention to asylum mechanisms in place before 2015 – for subsequent empirical analysis of the possible securitisation processes resulting from the “refugee crisis”. To this end, this chapter presents the context of the institutional, normative, and doctrinal framework by examining its main characteristics and the most important instruments.

1.1. Schengen Agreement: the starting point

For the present study question, the obligatory starting point is the Schengen Agreement⁷, which abolished internal border controls in the participating EU Member States, requiring a common, or at least harmonised, management of Europe’s external borders. The content of Schengen and its secondary legislation has thus become an integral part of the EU treaties. For its part, the Maastricht Treaty⁸ included the so-called third pillar of cooperation in justice and home affairs, which introduced intergovernmental procedures and defined the concept of citizenship of the Union. In 1995, a system was created for implementing external controls and regulating access to the Schengen area. It became part of the EU legal order in 1997 and has evolved in the context of the Schengen Borders Code⁹, which integrates European rules on border management. With the Treaty of Amsterdam¹⁰, the EU gained the first competence in the area of borders, immigration and asylum. This treaty also integrated Schengen and visa policy, including non-refoulement, became a community competence and led to the list of countries whose citizens are

⁷ The Schengen Agreement between Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands, was adopted at Schengen on 14 June 1985 and entered into force in 1995.

⁸ See Maastricht Treaty, adopted in Maastricht on 7 February 1992 and entered into force on 1 November 1993

⁹ European Parliament and Council Regulation (EU) No 2016/399 of 9 March 2016 establishing a Union Code on the rules governing the movement of persons across borders.

¹⁰ See Treaty of Amsterdam, adopted in Amsterdam on 2 October 1997 and entered into force on 1 May 1999

required to have a visa to enter the Schengen area being drawn up for the first time in 2015.¹¹

This process culminated in the Lisbon Treaty¹², which abolished the Maastricht pillar structure and brought about important changes such as the establishment of the ordinary legislative procedure for all migration and asylum issues and, since 2014, the application of the jurisdiction of the Court of Justice of the EU. Title V of the Lisbon Treaty, entitled Area of Freedom, Security and Justice, establishes the legal basis for the current immigration policy, allows the European institutions to legislate on the long-term visa regime for migrants and their families, and provides measures to facilitate their integration (Thielemann & Armstrong, 2013). Article 62 of Chapter 2 of this treaty focuses on border control, asylum and immigration policies, and among the tasks, it indicates that the EU “ensures the control of persons and effective surveillance when crossing European borders” and undertakes to “progressively establish an integrated management system for external borders” and provides for the Parliament and the Council to adopt measures relating to the creation of a Common European Asylum System.

Following the Tampere (European Council, 1999), The Hague (European Commission, 2005) and Stockholm (European Commission, 2010) work programmes, mechanisms were envisaged to harmonise rules on, for instance, border controls, the regulation of migratory flows, the development of a common asylum system or a common immigration policy, as well as to further strengthen the links of the Schengen area. Concurrently, instruments such as Frontex in 2004; the EASO in 2010 to contribute to the implementation of the Common European Asylum System and strengthen cooperation between Member States; the Eurodac Regulation allowing for the fingerprinting of asylum seekers and refugees in the EU; and the Dublin Regulation, launched in 2003 and revised in 2013, which establishes the Member State responsible for the examination and processing of asylum applications were implemented (Thielemann & Armstrong, 2013).

¹¹ Regulation (EC) No 539/2001 of 15 March 2001 listing the third countries whose nationals must be in possession of visas when crossing the external borders and those whose nationals are exempt from that requirement

¹² See Treaty of Lisbon, adopted in Lisbon on 13 December 2007 and entered into force on 1 December 2009.

Although attempts to build a common European policy have been attempted since 1985, following the Schengen Agreement, responses to migration and asylum are still based on an approach of shared competences, in which the most relevant decisions continue to be taken at the national level, which prevents a coordinated response beyond the harmonization instruments that have been built up over the years.

Moreover, such a governance framework of shared competences, neither entirely national nor entirely European, generates asymmetries between Member States, leading to an unequal distribution of the costs of migration management (Sanahuja, 2014). As a result, this situation violates the principle of solidarity and fair sharing of responsibilities between Member States, that should underlie the asylum, immigration and external border control policy, according to Articles 67.2 and 80 of Title V of the TFEU¹².

1.2. Building on the Schengen Agreement: The Dublin Convention

Following the implementation of the Schengen Agreement and the consequent abolition of the internal borders of the signatory Member States, the mobility of asylum seekers within the various countries of the area of free movement was facilitated. These developments, coupled with the need to respond to the refugee crisis of the 1990s after the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia, spurred the debate on the responsibility for examining asylum applications among Schengen member states. At the same time, it also triggered the discussion on the need to activate a procedure for harmonization of the different asylum regimes, which took the form of the Dublin Convention and later evolved into the Dublin II and Dublin III Regulations (Thielemann & Armstrong, 2013). The Dublin system was not set up to equitably distribute responsibility for refugees among the different Member States, but rather to determine the State responsible for examining each application on the basis of shared criteria.

A key rationale was to anticipate the phenomenon of asylum shopping (Fratzke, 2015). That is, firstly, asylum seekers who apply in member states where they believe they are more likely to be accepted or to be offered more significant benefits, and secondly, “orbiting asylum seekers”, who “although they do not return directly to a country where they may be persecuted”. Secondly, “orbiting asylum seekers”, who, “although they do not return directly to a country where they may be persecuted, are refused asylum or cannot find a state willing to consider their application and go from

one country to another in a constant search for asylum” (European Commission website, 2022).

The current Dublin system is built on three main pillars: First, asylum seekers have only one opportunity to apply for asylum in the EU and, in case of a negative response, it applies to all Member States. Second, the distribution criteria established by the Dublin system, and not the preference of applicants, determine the Member State responsible for examining an application. Third, asylum seekers can be transferred to the Member States to which they have been assigned. The criteria for determining the Member State responsible for examining an asylum application lodged in one of the Schengen participating countries are set out in the Dublin III Regulation (Thielemann & Armstrong, 2013). Asylum seekers who have family members with refugee status or asylum seekers are first assigned to the State where their family is located (Articles 8 to 11). In the case where the applicant has no family, the first responsible State is the one from which the applicant has a residence permit or visa (Articles 12 to 14) and, secondly, the one through which he or she entered the EU (Article 13). If neither of these criteria applies, the State in which the asylum seeker is responsible (Article 2).

Since 2003, the year when the Eurodac database was activated, to which all states applying the Dublin Regulation have access and which stores the fingerprints of asylum seekers and persons apprehended when crossing Europe's external borders. In this way, authorities can check whether they have to process an asylum application or refer it to another state because the person has previously applied for asylum in that country or entered the EU through its borders. Before 2015, and therefore the migration crisis on which this thesis focuses, the Dublin system already showed limitations in terms of fairness, efficiency and respect for the human rights of refugees (Garcés-Mascareñas, 2015). Given that the most commonly used criterion is that of the first country of arrival, the responsibility falls unequally on the States with external borders of the EU. Thus, these countries are under double pressure from other Member States and European institutions to maintain adequate controls and prevent irregular arrivals, as well as to take care to respect human rights, especially the right to asylum, so as not to damage the reputation and self-perception of the EU to its ethical and normative values (Sanahuja, 2014). As such, registration in the first country of arrival implies not being able to apply for asylum in another Member State or, if the person does so, he or she runs the risk of being transferred back.

Five Member States processed 69 per cent of all asylum applications in the EU in 2014: Germany, Sweden, Italy, France and Hungary, ranked by the number of applications received (Eurostat, 2018a). The Dublin system, however, primarily utilises the transfer of responsibilities from northern states to those close to the EU's borders (Fratzke 2015). Furthermore, in 2014, more than 63 per cent of the transfer requests were issued by three states.

Table 1.

Requests for transfers of persons under the Dublin procedure issued in 2014 (%)

Requesting country	Number of transfer requests	Percentage share of total requests in the EU
Germany	35.058	38.15
Sweden	14.900	16.21
Switzerland	8.272	9.00
Total transfer requests made by all Schengen all Schengen countries in 2014	91.898	63.36

Source: Own elaboration based on EUROSTAT data (EUROSTAT, 2017)

The principal receiving country of relocated applicants in 2014 was Italy, with 22,754 out of a total of 77,980, followed at a considerable distance by Hungary, with 7,930 (Eurostat, 2017b). In this regard, requests for relocation between the Member States are ineffective due to enforcement difficulties such as those imposed, for example, by applicants who do not cooperate in their return to other European countries or receiving states that do not accept or do not respond to the request. A further limitation is that the Dublin system does not consider the capacity of states to deal with additional asylum applications. For instance, Bulgaria received approximately 7,000 new applications in 2013, putting a strain on its already weak asylum system. Faced with this situation, in early 2014, UNHCR temporarily suspended Dublin procedure transfers to Bulgaria because of the difficulty of guaranteeing applicants' rights (UNHCR, 2014).

In addition, inefficiency is another criticism of the Dublin system. Most applicants apply for asylum in a country other than where they initially arrived, and their application is not processed by the country where they have applied for asylum. Of the 170,000 people who arrived irregularly in Italy in 2014, only 64,625 applied for asylum in Italy. The EU is also inefficient in its aim to prevent multiple applications. Thus, in 2013, more than a third of asylum applications were made by people who had already applied for asylum in other EU countries. Eleven per cent of those who made more than one application initially did so in Italy, the country of arrival, but reapplied in other countries such as Germany, Sweden or Switzerland (Garcés-Mascareñas, 2015).

To conclude, the Dublin system comes under criticism for the difficulty of ensuring a fair and efficient examination of asylum applications in the Member States, as well as for the lack of coordination in the application of responsibility allocation criteria and, for example, for not taking into account the presence of family members or for being too restrictive with the humanitarian clause and applying the first country of arrival as the primary criterion (Forum Réfugiés-Cosi, European Council on Refugees and Exile, Hungarian Helsinki Committee, 2013). Although the Dublin system was created out of the need to further harmonise European immigration policy following the implementation of the Schengen Agreement, its inefficiencies, especially in periods of high migratory pressure, have shown it to be an insufficient instrument for the coordinated management of asylum applications. The EU has been progressively processing and approving the asylum reform package known as Dublin IV since 2017 (European Parliament, 2018). This reform proposal, based on continuity, includes the transformation of the EASO into an Agency, the reformulation of some criteria for determining the State responsible for asylum, some changes to reception procedures and conditions, and the modification of the Eurodac system.

1.3. Changing approaches to migration in the European strategic and policy framework prior to 2015

This section analyses the evolution of the handling of migration in the European strategic and political framework over the first decade of the 21st century. The aim is to provide a background to European institutions in this field to contextualise the response to the “refugee crisis”.

A Secure Europe in a Better World (European Council, 2003) was published with the goal of preventing a number of emerging issues in an increasingly interconnected world. Terrorism, essentially of Islamist origin, was affecting the global system, with the attack of 9/11 in New York as a turning point in the collective Western imagination. This ESS presented the EU as a space free of conflict, a pole of attraction and a bastion of stability. The latter expression was retained in the 2008 ESS report (European Council 2008a). Refugees and asylum seekers were not mentioned in 2003, showing that refugees and asylum seekers were not directly linked to European security strategies at that time, although the EU had already experienced precedents of exceptional displacement due to the conflicts that followed the dissolution of Yugoslavia from 1990 onwards, and especially afterwards when the Kosovo conflict reached its peak in the first half of 1999. However, it was overlooked that since 2001 irregular arrivals to the EU have increased annually.

Nor did it consider the precarious situation of many migrants, arriving as a result of forced displacement, who were living in the Schengen area without identification, most of them because they had lost it, were hiding it or had it stolen by criminal organisations controlling migration flows (Ospina, 2017). However, there are precedents for the migration crisis to which the EU has responded. Among the most notable was the crisis that emerged with the first assaults on the Melilla border fences in 2005 and the so-called “cayuco crisis” of 2006 when 31,000 people arrived in the Canary Islands, forcing the EU to become involved in its management as it became clear that the southern border had become a point of articulation for migratory movements between Africa and Europe. This crisis dramatically illustrated that Europe’s external borders were under increasing migratory pressure that needed to be addressed. At the same time, development aid to African countries of departure and transit was made conditional on signing readmission agreements for deportees (Sanahuja, 2014). Consequently, in 2005 the European Council adopted the Global Approach to Migration in Africa and the Mediterranean region (European Council, 2005), which later became the GAMM (European Commission, 2011a). This strategy represented the EU’s overarching framework for political dialogue and cooperation on external migration policy.

Initially, it managed to set out a broad approach to act on the root causes of migration, but eventually, security-related actions became more relevant: conditions of entry, measures to address irregular arrivals and readmission agreements with third

countries (Aragall, 2016). Such a strategic approach is related to the ENP (European Commission, 2003), which frames external action with the EU's neighbourhood partners by foreseeing aspects that, beyond political association and economic integration, encompass cooperation on border management, migration and counterterrorism. In a report on the evaluation of spending up to 2014 on European migration policy in the Eastern Neighbourhood and Southern Mediterranean countries, challenges at the level of design and implementation of these policies were highlighted, noting that migration would be better addressed by involving the countries of origin and transit of migration flows in the debate (European Court of Auditors, 2016). Moreover, this assessment prompted a new approach to the ENP influenced by the exceptional migratory situation, which has changed the priorities of the migration agenda, as will be shown in the second analytical chapter.

The 2008 ESS report again linked migration to irregular arrivals, terrorism, and organised crime, as well as to the lack of development in migrants' countries of origin. Under the French EU presidency, six months before the publication of this report, the importance of designing a European migration policy was re-emphasised. Thereafter, the European Council suggested the adoption of a European Pact on Immigration and Asylum (European Council, 2008b) to lay the foundations for a strengthened common policy in a spirit of responsibility and solidarity. Some advances were made, such as the adoption of the CEAS¹³ which establishes rules to ensure common procedures for processing asylum applications, the creation of a European border surveillance system (Eurosur)¹⁴ to prevent cross-border crime, new tasks for Frontex¹⁵, the increase of bilateral agreements with southern Mediterranean countries and the Eastern Partnership, or the adoption of the Return Directive¹⁶ which promotes the voluntary return of irregularly arriving migrants from non-EU countries. Although the Lisbon Treaty pledged to create a Common European Asylum System, this issue was not at the top of the European agenda until 2015,

¹³ Green Paper of 6 June 2007 on the future Common European Asylum System, COM (2007).

¹⁴ European Parliament and Council Regulation (EU) No 1052/2013 of 22 October 2013 establishing a European Border Surveillance System.

¹⁵ European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders (Council Regulation (EC) No 2007/2004).

¹⁶ European Parliament and Council Directive 2008/115/EC of 16 December 2008 on common standards and procedures in Member States for returning illegally staying third-country nationals.

when the need to respond to exceptional migratory pressure arose (Byrne & Vedsted-Hansen, 2020).

An overview of the construction of the European regulatory and policy framework on migration before 2015 shows that integration in this area has been slow and complex, as it is a sensitive area linked to the sovereignty of states. Moreover, for geographical reasons, each country perceives migratory pressure differently. The reluctance to “Europeanise” this issue contrasts, for example, with the positive reception of the benefits of the Schengen Agreement. However, the implementation of the Schengen area should have been equipped, from the outset, with instruments allowing for the common management of Europe’s external borders, which would have made it possible to respond more effectively to migratory situations such as the one experienced since 2015.

II. EU handling of refugee and asylum applications amidst the 2015 “refugee crisis”

This second analytical chapter will examine the evolving perspective on asylum and refugee issues in the aftermath of the “refugee crisis” and outline the securitisation practices that the EU has adopted through its policies.

1.1. Setting the context: The “refugee crisis” in the wake of the Arab spring

The so-called “refugee crisis” arose from the growing instability and uncertainty in some Middle Eastern countries, exacerbated by the start of the Arab Spring in 2010. On 17 December, following the immolation of the young Tunisian Bouazizi in protest against the increasing weariness of Arab populations with their authoritarian leaders (especially corruption and the lack of political and civil liberties), widespread popular protests erupted across the Middle East (Honwana, 2018). proved to be the catalyst for the chain reaction in all the Maghreb countries. The socio-political climate was framed in a context of rising unemployment, the emergence of media outlets with the capacity to convene and coordinate (in a clandestine manner) against authoritarian regimes that had been in place since the very beginnings of the independence movements (Sánchez de Rojas Díaz, 2013).

Protests were met with different political and military responses in each case. In Morocco and Algeria, they were put down with repression and concessions. In Tunisia and Egypt, they turned into regime-changing revolutions, while in Libya and Syria, internationalised civil wars ensued. Though the aspirations demanded by Arab protesters were akin to European values, the EU was initially frozen by the situation but later responded with proposals to strengthen mechanisms to create mobility based on legality (European Commission 2011b). Nevertheless, the EU institution underestimated the extent of these protests in migratory terms. The mass flight of these populations towards European shores led to an unprecedented increase in arrivals, with an all-time high in 2015 (UNHCR, 2018). Likewise, countries affected by the Arab Spring, such as Tunisia and Libya, ended the controls they exercised over the outflow of migrants from their territories to Italy and Malta. Moreover, the intensification of the civil war in Syria generated more than five and a half million refugees by 2017 (UNHCR, 2018). According to the most recent data (UNHCR, 2022), Syrian refugees live primarily in neighbouring countries, with Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan currently hosting more than 80 per cent of those exiled by the Syrian war.

Turkey remains the country with the most refugees in the world, 3.6 million of them from Syria. Lebanon is the country with the highest number of asylum seekers out of its population, one in six, followed by Jordan, where one tenth of its inhabitants are under UN protection (UNHCR, 2022). In terms of the world’s refugee population originating from other Middle Eastern countries, the nearly two and a half million Afghans stand out. Pakistanis have more than 1.3 million refugees in different countries. In the case of Iraq, this figure exceeds 250,000 people, although the volume of IDPs stands out, at more than three and a half million (UNHCR, 2017). Between 1994 and 2002, following the crisis of the communist system in Eastern Europe and the USSR, the EU received an average of 300,000 asylum seekers per year (González Enríquez, 2015). In recent years, this figure has broken historical records.

After the dissolution of the USSR and its ensuing crisis in Eastern Europe, the EU received an average of 300,000 asylum seekers per year (González Enríquez, 2015). However, this figure has become anecdotal compared to recent figures of asylum and refugee applications which have broken all historical records.

Table 2.

Asylum applications in EU countries before and after the 2015 “refugee crisis”

Year	Number of asylum applications
2014	626.960
2015	1.322.825
2016	1.260.910
2017	705.705

Source: own elaboration based on EUROSTAT data (EUROSTAT, 2018).

In 2017, most asylum seekers in the EU came from Syria. This figure has been repeated since 2013, but although it fell to 102,000 in 2017, this is a significant decrease given the 335,000 applications from Syrians recorded in 2016, while Nigerians and Pakistanis accounted for 6% and 5% of applications, respectively. Compared to 2016, people from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq and Iran recorded the most significant decreases in the number of applications considering the country of origin (Eurostat, 2018b). The data presented helps contextualise the Mediterranean region’s complex migration situation since 2015. And in particular, it helps to compare migration pressures in the countries of

the EU southern neighbourhood whose social, economic and political situation is distant from that of the member states.

1.2. The EU's framework for immigration and asylum policy. Towards a securitising tendency?

In response to the “refugee crisis”, the EU reacted with reactive measures based on a European migration and asylum framework constructed by the need to cope with the massive influx of migrants. This section analyses how the EU approached migration-related issues in its policy and strategy documents between 2015 and 2017. The construction of this general European policy framework has served to justify the progressive evolution towards the securitisation of immigration policy, including asylum and refugee measures. The starting point is the Schengen Agreement, which changed the perception of migration from being linked solely to state sovereignty to being a matter for the European community. The GAMM, created in 2005, formed the basis of European migration policy. In the wake of the Arab Spring uprisings and the increase in irregular arrivals at European borders, migration was put at the centre of the political agenda, leading to security-driven initiatives that were formalised in the 2011 GAMM and the European Agenda on Migration (European Commission, 2015a).

1.2.1. The basis for European migration policy: The 2011 Global Approach to Migration and Mobility and the 2015 European Agenda on Migration.

In 2011, the GAMM included the inclusion of protection and the external dimension of asylum as two of its main focal points (European Commission, 2011a, 6). This approach linked cooperation on internal migration policy, with countries of origin and transit, alongside policy, economic, development and human rights issues, which resulted in a renewed comprehensive approach to human mobility. This thesis argues that this approach has manifested itself, for the most part, in policies of a restrictive and border control nature, as the primary purpose is to seek to reduce the causes for which people decide to flee their countries (Zapata-Barrero, 2013).

While the GAMM was formulated as an immediate response to the migration processes triggered by the turmoil caused following the Arab Spring, the European Agenda on Migration was drafted to redefine internal and external migration policies and rectify the tragedies experienced in the Mediterranean. The European Agenda on Migration's approach clarifies the securitisation discourse that the EU has led in the face

of increased migrant arrivals. Both documents emphasise the strategic importance of controlling Europe's external borders to ensure territorial security. The European agenda on migration emphasises the need to create "strong and coherent external borders" (European Commission, 2015a, 13) that maintain European stability and identity and enhance the EU's image as a strong global actor. In the same document, the EU positions itself as a major international donor for refugees (European Commission, 2015a, 10) but recognises its inability to cope effectively with the arrival of large numbers of refugees from countries in conflict (European Commission, 2015a).

Both the European Agenda on Migration and the GAMM state the need to reduce "irregular migration flows" to promote migration in a controlled manner and without excesses (European Commission, 2015a).¹⁷ One of the measures to reach this goal is an increase in militarisation and reinforced border controls. As discussed earlier in this paper, increased border control for security reasons is a process of securitisation of migration through practices that frame migration and human mobility as a potential threat on the assumption that the entry of migrants can be a threat if it is not controlled (Huysmans, 2000).

An analysis of the content shows that the immediate measures envisaged in the European Agenda on Migration are primarily associated with external action, defence and security. Thus, migratory flows and the unprecedented pressure since 2015 justify establishing actions to reinforce agencies such as Frontex or other control and monitoring operations to preserve stability at external and maritime borders (European Commission, 2015a). On the other hand, the EU's motivation for offering international protection to any persecuted individual (for the reasons specified in the 1951 Geneva Convention and its subsequent 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees) is explained by the preservation of "the values of which Europeans should be proud" (European Commission, 2015a) and to project to its partners the EU's characteristic image of respect for human rights. Concerning the EU's specific approach to Syrian refugees, the European Agenda on Migration mentions assistance to countries such as Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey and Iraq and highlights as a "good example" cooperation with Turkey to "address the pressure on its refugee management system and help prevent dangerous crossings in the Eastern Mediterranean" (European Commission, 2015a, 9). Indeed, the launch of the European

¹⁷ "Irregular migration" is used up to ten times in the European Agenda on Migration, while "legal migration" is mentioned as many as nine times.

Agenda on Migration highlighted the difficulties in striking a balance between the image that the EU has historically projected globally and the actions of member states with varying sensitivities on migration.

1.2.2. An overview of the 2015 European Neighbourhood Policy.

The long-term solutions outlined in the European Agenda on Migration prioritise greater cooperation to address so-called “illegal migration” or the causes of crises that lead to an influx of people from countries in conflict. The documents introduced do not elaborate on this issue but refer to the ENP, the policy framework governing the EU’s diplomatic activity with third countries, which was created in 2003 to create a “ring of friends” (Prodi 2002) with eastern and southern neighbours. This term would be replaced in 2015 by a “ring of fire” (The Economist, 2014, 20 September), giving it a more risk-centred connotation and highlighting the instability that the EU perceived with fear in countries in its southern neighbourhood, such as Libya, Syria and Egypt.

The ENP was first revised in 2011 (European Commission 2011c) to achieve long-term sustainable relations with the neighbourhood in the wake of the Arab uprisings. However, in 2015 the focus was on the migration crisis, and security took on a prominent role. The Former High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini, stated that the review aimed to “address numerous challenges within and beyond our borders” (Mogherini 2015), alluding to the terrorist attacks in Paris and those in Lebanon, Egypt, Turkey and Iraq. Under the reformed ENP of 2015, irregular migratory flows were seen as a cause of the destabilisation of European territory. Moreover, development is linked to migration, assuming that poverty, corruption and poor governance are sources of insecurity that affect the EU with conflicts, terrorism or radicalisation occurring in neighbouring countries or member states (European Commission, 2015b, 4).

In this spirit, the measures adopted do not differ from those of the European Agenda on Migration. Indeed, they aimed to ensure the protection of people in need, tackle irregular arrivals and strengthen cooperation in border management between agencies such as Europol and Frontex, practices that several academics have already warned as leading to a securitising process of migration and asylum (Balzacq, 2011; Bigo, 2002; Bourbeau, 2011; Leonard, 2010a; Leonard & Kaunert, 2019; Sperling & Webber, 2019).

All in all, the 2015 European Neighbourhood Policy was intended to address European cooperation in setting up protection and asylum systems in partner countries such as Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq (European Commission 2015b, 18-19). With this amendment, the EU would not increase its involvement in dispute settlement by facilitating the arrival of migrants on European territory. In this context, the ENP's historical discourse of spreading democracy in the neighbourhood was called into question when the EU entered into pacts with regimes that sought to consolidate their autocratic position after the Arab spring. In light of the perceived crisis in the EU during 2014-2015, member states put their national interests first when participating in the ENP review process. As a result, European ambitions to promote democracy diminished in favour of seeking stability and cooperation on terrorism and migration (Schumacher 2016).

1.2.3. An ever more connected, contested, and complex world? the 2016 EU Global Strategy

The EUGS is a strategic document that deals with European security and defines the strategy that shapes the EU's role in the world. The EU's position is made clear, admitting from the outset that Europe is experiencing an "existential crisis" within and beyond the EU's borders, that the EU is "under threat", and that European projects are being "challenged" (EU, 2016, 5). The EU needed to strengthen to address new challenges and threats, especially jihadist terrorism, which became one of the most feared challenges for European leaders. In the face of new challenges and threats, notably that of Jihadi terrorism, which became one of the most worrying concerns for European leaders, strengthening the EU was the answer. The most effective tool proposed to achieve this goal was diplomacy and the unfettered cooperation of all those who shared the European project. The idea of fortifying the EU is repeated on multiple occasions in this document, with the need for a "strong" EU being mentioned up to 17 times.

In this sense, the necessity to establish greater collaboration and rethink the functioning of the Union is mentioned (EU, 2016, 2), an important consideration given the evident disunity between member states in matters such as migration and asylum. This phenomenon plays a central role in the EUGS, with the term "migration" being mentioned twenty times (EU, 2016). Here, migration is presented in a similar way to the 2011 GAMM and the 2015 European Agenda on Migration as both a challenge and an opportunity, highlighting its central role in security. This document's multiplicity of

approaches to immigration illustrates the EU's dilemma in coping with extraordinary and unprecedented migratory pressures (Ceccorulli and Lucarelli, 2017).

An analysis of the EUGS identifies a security narrative that is expressed by appealing to the interconnectedness of internal and external dynamics, i.e., what happens outside the EU's borders has direct consequences on European territory. Moreover, in the case of migration, the emphasis is placed on the supposed relationship of this phenomenon with other security threats such as smuggling or terrorism. This narrative assumes that the target of security is the community living within European borders. As with the European Agenda on Migration, it also identifies migrants as victims of potential threats outside the EU that need to be protected. Among the instruments envisaged, the actions and tasks of the CSDP with the reinforcement of border control stand out (EU, 2016, 15). Another discourse used by the EUGS to refer to the external dimension of migration is that of resilience, which also appears in ENP24. This approach has become increasingly important as more migrants arrive, in the belief that they should stay close to their homes and avoid perilous journeys.

To this end, it aims to ensure that countries of origin and transit prevent the root causes of displacement and improve asylum capacities (EU, 2016, 21-22). Within the selective narrative, the EUGS advocates for the "safe, regular and legal" (EU, 2016, 22) arrival of refugees and, by appealing to this logic, justifies the rejection of uncontrolled migrant arrivals. It foresees the creation of relocation, resettlement or return programmes in order to make regular, safer channels of human mobility effective. Finally, the EUGS also refers to migration by stressing the need to defend European values to guarantee the project's internal coherence¹⁸ and external credibility¹⁹. The various discourses used to refer to migration in the EUGS underline the importance that this phenomenon has acquired in European foreign and security policy since 2015. An analysis of the theoretical framework of European migration policy shows that the initially ambitious and idealistic objectives have mainly evolved into a "realistic" and pragmatic approach that prioritises security and defence-related activities.

¹⁸ The term is mentioned 17 times in the EUGS.

¹⁹ The term is mentioned 7 times in the EUGS.

1.3. Shifting views on migration and asylum policy: EU securitising responses to the migration crisis in the aftermath of the 2015 “refugee crisis”?

This section examines the securitising practices and dynamics that occurred through the emergency mechanisms activated by the EU to deal with the migration crisis and the programmes designed to meet the needs of asylum seekers.

1.3.1. The EU-Turkey deal

On 18 March 2016, the EU signed an agreement with Turkey (European Council, 2016) to reduce the number of asylum applications. In this agreement, Erdogan’s government pledged to readmit any person arriving irregularly on Greek shores and strengthen its fight against criminal migrant smuggling networks. In return, member states agreed to resettle one Syrian national for every Syrian returned to Turkey, accelerate negotiations on Turkey’s EU accession, liberalise visas for Turkish citizens, and offer €3 billion (plus an extra €3 billion) in aid to Turkey. The deal also envisaged that when irregular arrivals decreased, a voluntary humanitarian programme would be triggered to transfer Syrians from Turkey to other European countries.

In February 2017, the court stated that it had no authority to assess the deal, defining it as an informal agreement between Turkey and the member states, not with the European Council. The European Commission’s assessment two years after the entry into force of the agreement found that the number of illegal arrivals to the Greek islands decreased by 97% compared to the period before the conclusion of the agreement: in October 2015, there was an average of 6,360 arrivals per day to 21 March 2016 with an average of 80 arrivals per day (European Commission, 2018a). Death tolls in the Aegean Sea fell from 1,175 in the twenty months before the pact to 130 since its activation (European Commission, 2018a). Over 12,476 Syrian refugees have already been resettled from Turkey to member states (European Commission 2018a). Changes within European borders can also explain the decrease in the number of arrivals. Just months before the agreement with Turkey, leaders of countries such as Slovenia, Macedonia, Serbia and Croatia restricted entry to Syrian, Iraqi and Afghan nationals. Thus, Greece, hitherto a transit country, became the final destination for migrants, as those arriving after the Turkish deal were held in refugee camps and had no alternative but to apply for asylum in Greece through a slow and uncertain process in which they did not know whether they would be recognised as refugees.

The outsourcing of international protection to Turkey is controversial, and the designation of a “safe third country” has been questioned. In the months following the agreement’s entry into force, Greek asylum appeals committees ruled that Turkey was not providing direct protection to refugees in many cases. However, the European Commission continues to defend it as a “safe third country” and that this concept, as defined in the Asylum Procedures Directive²⁰, refers to the possibility of obtaining protection under the Refugee Regulation²¹, irrespective of whether or not it approves of it (European Commission, 2016, 19). The EU-Turkey Statement introduces accelerated border procedures for processing asylum applications, which are applied according to the applicant’s nationality. Initially, priority was given to the registration and processing of Syrians. Since 2016, applicants from countries considered less recognised, such as Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Pakistan or Bangladesh, started to undergo a performance assessment through EASO interviews.

Prima facie, this mechanism appears to be a positive measure, but it excludes people from other nationalities and countries, similar to the situation in Syria, making it discriminatory (Borja Gonzalo 2017). From the outset, the EU-Turkey deal was highly controversial. The EU and its member states defended it because it has successfully reduced the number of people illegally entering Europe. However, this is not the final solution to the problem, as it simply shifts the problem to Turkey, making Turkey the guardian of Europe’s borders.

1.3.2. Managing borders

“During the course of the “refugee crisis”, borders have been a central element to protect due to the “massive influx of refugees and asylum seekers into the EU” (European Commission, 2015a, 5). Indeed, EU border management has demonstrated a lack of coordination among member states, and the prioritisation of security over solidarity and responsibility hinders an effective and coherent response. As mentioned in the previous section, free movement within the Schengen area remained restricted. Between 2015 and 2016, the leaders of the main EU entry routes proposed to reintroduce controls at their

²⁰ European Parliament and Council Directive 2013/32/EU of 26 June 2013 on common procedures for granting and withdrawing international protection.

²¹ Convention relating to the Status of Refugees adopted at Geneva on 28 July 1951 and entered into force on 22 April 1954.

internal borders unless a law using “special circumstances” created “a serious threat to public policy or internal security” (Article 22). Member states agreed in September 2017 to maintain controls for two years if the threat continued, although the EU stressed that closures would have to be due to terrorist threats (Article 25) and not because of irregular movements of people (Article 26) (European Commission, 2017a).

Since 2015, countries along the “Balkan route” have built fences²², mobilised their armed forces and logistically equipped the borders to establish greater control on the entry routes. In this context, FRONTEX contributed to reinforcing the presence of border guards in countries along this route to ensure the entry only of those in need of international protection. These measures have led to the proliferation of dozens of reception and transit centres along the Balkan borders (Sánchez-Montijano and Zaragoza-Cristiani, 2017). Several voices have already identified and empirically substantiated that the increasingly pervasive role of agencies such as FRONTEX in EU border control paves the way for securitisation through practices (Campesi, 2014; Léonard, 2010; Léonard and Kaunert, 2022; Skleparis, 2016).

In 2015, the European Commission stressed that “the Schengen area without internal borders is only sustainable if the external borders are effectively safeguarded and protected” (European Commission, 2015c, 1). Faced with the need to deal with irregular arrivals, the difficulty of coping with migratory pressure in countries such as Greece and Italy, and the limitations of Frontex, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency²³ was set up in October 2016. This led to a twofold strengthening of EU border controls: internally in an unexpected and uncoordinated manner, and externally with the creation of an Agency that is here to stay. Indeed, the “refugee crisis” has served as a justification for the EU to intensify security and defence integration. Nevertheless, Frontex’s highly contentious activities and the unilateral decisions of some member states have

²² Bulgaria started building a border fence with Turkey in 2013 and completed it in 2015. Hungary started building its border fence with Serbia and Croatia in June 2015. Similarly, Macedonia built a fence on its border with Greece in November 2015. At the end of 2015, Austria built a fence on its border with Slovenia, the first border fence within the Schengen area. Later in 2015, Slovenia started building fences in several areas along the border with Croatia. In June 2016, Croatia built a fence at its border crossing with Serbia on the Danube.

²³ European Parliament and Council Regulation (EU) 2016/1624 of 14 September 2016 on the European Border and Coast Guard.

demonstrated the difficulty of maintaining security while preserving the rights of people seeking international protection.

1.3.3. Resettlement, relocation, and humanitarian admission programmes

The implementation and results of the European resettlement and relocation programme at the end of 2017 reinforced the point made in the previous section: a lack of political will among some Member States' leaders to address the "refugee crisis" in a coordinated manner that goes beyond the efforts of EU institutions. According to Article 78(3) TFEU, the relocation programmes of the European Agenda on Migration include the relocation of persons in need of international protection from one country to another EU country if "one or more countries are faced with an emergency situation caused by a sudden inflow of third-country nationals".

This involved an intra-Community process whereby the Member States agreed to take over the management of certain asylum procedures initiated in Greece or Italy. However, this decision was a temporary derogation from the Dublin Regulation regarding the state responsible for examining the asylum application and the stages of the procedure. Of the 160,000 refugees that the Member States agreed to relocate over two years from September 2015, 31,503, just over 19 per cent, had been processed as of 14 November 2017 (European Commission, 2017c). The European Commission justified these low figures as having fewer eligible persons (European Commission, 2017d). Only those asylum seekers with the possibility of receiving international protection, i.e., those from countries with an asylum acceptance rate above 75 per cent, are eligible for relocation. By October 2017, the only countries that met this rate were Eritrea, Bahamas, Maldives, Syria, Yemen, and Papua New Guinea (Eurostat, 2017c), leaving aside countries such as Iraq or Afghanistan with large numbers of asylum seekers. At the same time, the EU-Turkey deal excluded asylum seekers from Greece who arrived after the Pact from the relocation programme, leaving out more than 11,000 Syrians.

Most member states have also failed to cooperate in ensuring that the relocation programme functioned as pledged, often citing a lack of reception places and imposing increased security controls in the wake of the terrorist attacks. In this vein, the Greek authorities denounced the selective policy of member states that opt to relocate those they deem easiest to integrate into their societies. Ultimately, many refugees evade registration not to find themselves detained in uncertain centres, islands, or countries or to be sent to

the first country of arrival under the Dublin system (Garcés-Mascareñas, 2017). Given the slow pace of the process, some decide to leave on their own or disappear if they are relocated in a country they do not want, leading to an increase in secondary movements (Garcés-Mascareñas, 2017).

The relocation scheme implemented using the so-called hotspot method seeks to facilitate the coordination of the four European institutions: EASO, Frontex, Europol and Eurojust. The purpose of the cooperation involves helping to process asylum applications as fast as possible, coordinating the repatriation of so-called illegal immigrants and, together with national resources, eliminating human trafficking and smuggling networks in Italy and Greece. On paper, this may be a sensible measure, but the number of arrivals has overwhelmed existing resources. Against this background, many arrivals did not pass through the hotspots, were not registered and were not subjected to security checks (Prieto, 2016). The chaotic situation in Greece and Italy and the difficulty of ensuring the rights of people in need of international protection in these scenarios is a case in point. The solidarity of member states should have been made visible at this moment. All in all, the relocation programme would have been an opportunity to demonstrate with facts the discourse of European principles and values.

A further durable solution for refugee populations is resettlement. It consists of transferring an individual or family already recognised as a refugee from an initial country of settlement to a different country that better response to their protection needs. Under the European resettlement programme, also described in the European Agenda on Migration, Member States committed to resettling a total of 22,504 persons in the period from 2015 to 2017 (European Council, 2015). By December 2017, 23,925 persons had been resettled in 22 states (Eurostat, 2018c), a higher figure than committed because it included those resettled under the EU-Turkey Statement. The European Commission threatened sanctions against countries that failed to engage with the resettlement programme, another sign of the weakness of European institutions in the face of member states refusing to act in a coordinated manner.²⁴ The EU Commission proposed in November 2017 to resettle an additional 50,000 refugees over two years. Furthermore,

²⁴ Although seven Member States (Estonia, Finland, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom) fulfilled their commitments, nine Member States (Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia) failed to resettle any persons as of September 2017.

the European institutions allocated €500 million to assist member states participating in this initiative, in addition to offering €10,000 for each resettled refugee (European Commission, 2017e).

While the outcomes of this programme could be more positive given the volume of refugees globally, many European countries had not been involved in resettlement prior to the “Refugee crisis”, and their participation should therefore be regarded as a step forward. In this light, the European Agenda on Migration was developed in a reactive manner in an emergency context, and the planned resettlement measures would need to be reformulated with a comprehensive and holistic approach. Nonetheless, the crisis experienced in the EU due to the unprecedented migratory influx has made it possible to create instruments that had not been considered before, such as distribution mechanisms, harmonisation tools or measures to deal with secondary movements. Such an opportunity could be used, for example, to introduce a common European resettlement framework. However, Member States’ delay in fulfilling their obligations demonstrates the difficulty of implementing such initiatives (Hatton, 2017).

The uneven effects of the “refugee crisis” on member states diminish incentives for cooperation in migration management. The crisis has affected only a few European nations, each with unique interests depending on its country of origin, transit or final destination. Even to date, integration in immigration, freedom of movement and asylum is insufficient. Despite the European institutions’ efforts, the Member States’ leaders addressed this situation from a primarily national standpoint.

In short, this section has identified some securitisation instruments in the EU asylum, refugee, and migration fields. Among these are Eurodac, the increased controls at external land and maritime borders carried out by the Border and Coast Guard, the EU-Turkey Statement, and the list of safe third countries. The securitisation instruments transform the issue under analysis into a threat. In this case, the exchange of information between national governments, intelligence services and European institutions. The “hotspot” approach has increased coordination between European agencies and is another securitisation instrument focusing on migratory threats.

Table 3. *Developed model 1. Overview of the fulfilment of the conditions for the existence of securitising practices*

Conditions	Identified condition	Level of compliance
5. Existence of a securitisation agent	Strategic institutions European agencies	Totally compliant
6. Existence of a securitised agent	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Partially compliant
7. An identifiable threat/ referent object	EU migration governance/ EU borders	Totally compliant
8. Existence of securitization Instruments		
8.1. Increase Technological devices in border control	FRONTEX « smart borders » and surveillance technology	Totally compliant
8.2. Increased controls at external land and maritime borders by military and/or armed security agents	FRONTEX / national boarder and coast guard	Partially compliant
8.3. Outsourcing practices	EU-Turkey statement	Totally compliant
8.4. Use of large databases to control and monitor human mobility	Eurodac	Totally compliant

III. Identifying securitising discourses in the handling of asylum and refugee applications in the EU in the aftermath of the 2015 “refugee crisis”

With the aim of assessing the process of securitisation of the EU’s handling of asylum and refugee applications in the light of the “refugee crisis” since 2015, this chapter applies the theory of securitisation as advanced by Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver.

1.1. An analysis of the conditions enabling the emergence of the securitisation discourse

European institutions became involved in the situation in the Mediterranean from 2015 onwards due to increasing migratory pressure from countries with an external EU border and unilateral decisions taken by leaders of some Member States that violated the Dublin Regulation and the Schengen Agreement. Exceptionality was manifested in the discourse adopted in the European Agenda on Migration. In this document, “emergency measures were justified because Europe’s collective policy has failed to live up” to the “immediate imperative” of protecting people in dire need (European Commission, 2015a, 2). The European Commission activated urgent foreign, security and defence policy instruments. The same rhetoric on insecurity was embodied in the EUGS, published in June 2016, after the attacks in Paris and Brussels: “We live in a time of existential crisis, inside and outside the EU. Our Union is under threat. Our European project, which brought unprecedented democracy, prosperity and peace, is under threat” (EU, 2016, 5).

In contrast to some politicians in member states, the public discourses of the EU institutions’ officials do not present asylum seekers or refugees as a threat but rather emphasise the need to respond to the crisis in a coordinated manner. It follows from such discourses that one of the EU’s existential threats comes precisely from member states and their inability to provide a typical response to asylum and refugee issues. This need to strengthen the Union and correct disunity is expressed in the EUGS (EU, 2016, 2). A significant constraint is that European institutions do not have sufficient instruments to force member states to comply with the commitments adopted at the European level. Leaders of EU institutions have repeatedly warned about the lack of commitment of some partners.

“It is now up to the Member States to fulfil their commitments in this area and to intensify their efforts. They have a political, moral and legal obligation to do so.

I call on those countries that have not yet contributed to this joint effort to do their part.”

(Avramopoulos, 2017)

Compliance with the commitments provided for in European programmes such as relocation or resettlement is a decision that falls to the leaders of the member states. The voluntary nature of involvement in managing the migration crisis undermines the efforts made by the European institutions. This situation weakens the internal coherence and external credibility of the European project.

“Pushing boats off the docks, setting fire to refugee camps or ignoring the existence of poor and destitute people – that is not Europe. Europe is the baker in Cos who gives his bread to exhausted and hungry people. Europe is the students at the train stations in Munich and Passau who give clothes to the new arrivals. Europe is the police in Austria who welcome exhausted refugees crossing the border”.

(Juncker, 2015)

European leaders’ need to publicly affirm the values and principles that characterise the EU highlights the weakness of the European identity. Migration is associated in the discourse of most European leaders with “challenges and risks” that need to be prevented in order to “establish safe and legal channels for those who deserve protection and return those who have no right to stay” (Timmermans, 2017). Indeed, it is the increase in migratory pressure, especially the lack of control of irregular arrivals, that activates European leaders’ discourses of securitisation.

“As a result of continued migratory pressure, the situation is still precarious, as witnessed by the recent increase in the number of arrivals along the Western and Eastern Mediterranean routes [...]The EU must be vigilant and prepared to respond to possible seasonal peaks”.

(European Commission, 2018c)

Such speeches perpetuate uncertainty about the security of the EU’s external borders and justify the use of urgent instruments. An idea that is confirmed by the speech of the European Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship, Dimitris Avramopoulos.

“We call on Member States to send border guards and equipment for European Border and Coast Guard operations as a matter of urgency, but also to honour their commitment to reach an agreement on the reform of the asylum system by June”.

(European Commission, 2018c).

Notwithstanding the intrinsic character of the threat, i.e., whether it is objective or constructed by the authorities, the EU’s securitisation process for handling asylum and refugee applications is based on the construction of uncontrolled migratory pressure as an existential threat. As discussed in the previous chapters of this thesis, according to securitisation theory, the emergence of a securitising discourse can be facilitated by contextual factors. In this case, the security dilemma is not a determining factor due to the power asymmetry between European institutions and immigrants. As such, the increased military capabilities of EU institutions do not generate a securitising discourse of refugees or asylum seekers (although there may be non-discursive securitising dynamics embedded in the logic of routine as we will see below/which will not be analysed in this thesis). Geographical proximity, however, could be considered a key factor in the emergence of this discourse. Therefore, if this proximity to the countries of origin of asylum seekers and refugees is added to the impossibility of fully controlling the constant migratory flows at the southern and external borders of the European Union, the perception of the threat increases considerably. This, in turn, motivates the securitising discourse that goes hand in hand with reactive and exceptional measures.

Until 2015, the EU had not been faced with the challenge of managing such a volume of asylum applications. However, an overview of EU discourses reveals, as Stepka puts it, “the variety of interpretations of security that coexist, struggle and/or intertwine in the processes of securitisation in the EU” (Stepka, 2022). For instance, in a speech, Juncker, moving away from the securitising and risk-focused logic of migration and adopting a visibly more humanitarian discourse, reminded member states that shared history is characterised by “the exodus of millions of Europeans fleeing religious or political persecution, war, dictatorship or oppression” (Juncker, 2017). According to the president of the European Commission, the same experiences of the past should motivate a joint response. Finally, the fourth and last contextual factor considered by the Copenhagen School, is the non-coincidence of political ideologies. The different priorities of the EU’s constituent units have given rise to uncoordinated responses,

especially at the onset of the crisis, which have been challenged by the leaders of the European institutions who continue to call for more unity to reduce the existential threat to the European project.

Besides the factors relating to the context in which to situate securitisation, the Copenhagen school and subsequent scholarship contemplate some elements that facilitate the success of the process. This thesis has previously mentioned the need for the internal conditions of the “speech act”, the structure and grammar of security used, along with the construction of a strategy that includes an existential threat, a point of no return and a possible solution to the problem. In the case studied, the leaders of the European institutions formulate a coherent discourse stressing the need to respond to the growing migratory pressure posed as a threat to the EU’s status quo, especially to its founding values and principles such as freedom, democracy and respect for human rights.

The strategy formulated is set out in the 2015 European Agenda on Migration, which structures the responses offered by the European institutions and the commitments of the Member States in terms of resettlement and relocation. On the other hand, according to this theory, there are two external factors that condition the success of the “speech act”. The first is the social capital of the enunciating subject, who must occupy a position of authority perceived as legitimate by public opinion. This is a complex point to analyse, as there is no Eurobarometer indicator that directly shows the degree of knowledge or legitimacy of European leaders among citizens. Some data show a tendency towards a certain disaffection of citizens towards the EU. The turnout in the last European elections in 2014 was 42.61 per cent (European Commission, 2014). According to the November 2017 Eurobarometer, 40.76 per cent of the population trust the EU, 48.21 per cent do not trust the institution and 11.03 per cent do not know (European Commission, 2017).

However, European leaders generally address the securitising discourse to member state leaders, who have the decision-making power to manage the migration crisis. Thus, although European leaders may occupy a position of formal authority in the institutions, the member states’ leaders are the citizens’ main political referents. The second external factor that conditions the success of the “speech act” is the concept of threat. In this case, the feeling of hostility constructed around a group of people who arrive irregularly at Europe’s external borders implies an intrinsic danger to public opinion, as will be shown in the third section of this chapter (Buzan et al. 1998).

Table 4. *Overview of the fulfilment of the conditions for the appearance of the securitisation discourse*

Conditions	Level of compliance
1. The construction of an existential threat to be responded to with emergency measures	Totally compliant
2. Contextual factors facilitating the emergence of the securitisation discourse	
2.1. Security dilemmas	Not compliant
2.2. Geographical proximity	Totally compliant
2.3. Past experiences	Totally compliant
2.4. Non-coincidence of political ideologies	Totally compliant
3. Internal factors that facilitate the emergence of the securitisation discourse	
3.1. Security Structure and grammar used in the speech act	Totally compliant
3.2. Strategy that identifies existential threat, point of no return and possible solution	Totally compliant
3.3. Well-structured and coherent speech act	Totally compliant
4. External factors facilitating the emergence of the securitisation discourse	
4.1. The social capital of the enunciating subject	Partially compliant
4.2. The concept of threat	Totally compliant

1.2. Analysing the actors engaged in the securitisation process in the handling of asylum and refugee applications in the EU

In line with the securitisation theory, three units of analysis (securitising actor, referent object and functional actors) are essential for a securitisation process to take place. This section will present the actors involved in the securitisation process of the handling of asylum and refugee applications by the EU in the aftermath of the 2015 “refugee crisis”.

To begin with, it is worth recalling that the referent object, according to securitisation theory, is that subject or object whose survival is under real or perceived threat. Thus, as demonstrated in the previous section, certain circles of the European political elite argue in their securitising discourse that it is “the European project” (EU, 2016, 5) that is at risk, thereby rendering it the referent object to be protected. The growing migratory pressure represents one of the reasons for the existential threat perceived by European leaders. However, as stated in the EUGS, several other risks occur within and beyond European borders that generate equal or greater instability in European territory.²⁵ The migration crisis experienced since 2015 has highlighted the lack of unity among member states. It has shown that the very units that comprise the international organisation, via unilateral and uncoordinated actions, can call into question the internal coherence and external credibility of the EU, achieved over the years with the creation of normative frameworks of reference and the dissemination of shared norms, values and meanings.

The second element to be analysed is the “securitising actor”, i.e., the one who formulates the security discourse, usually the political elite, the bureaucracy, the government, lobbies, and other interest groups. In this case, it is the European political elite, with the European Commission playing a prominent role. Indeed, since 2015, the EC has published multiple communications recommending actions to address the growing migratory pressure experienced in the EU’s external border countries and appealing to the responsibility and solidarity of member states. The theory of securitisation fails to mention an important securitising actor, the media, which plays a key role in the politicisation of the threat, that is, in the phase of its construction and

²⁵ According to the EUGS, terrorism, hybrid threats, economic volatility, climate change and energy insecurity are phenomena that endanger both the European population and the European territory (EU, 2016, 14).

consolidation as an actual or potential danger to the European project (Williams, 2003). Media have been particularly relevant in conditioning public opinion and, through the publication of images of the tragedies on European shores, have forced European institutions and many member states to become involved in the crisis. Future research could analyse the role of the media in the emergence of the discourse of securitisation of the management of asylum and refugee applications, specifically to find out whether the discourse they have formulated has been coherent with that of the European political elite or whether, on the contrary, they have adopted a perspective that rejects the politicisation of the threat.

Lastly, the third necessary unit for the analysis of the securitisation process is the “functional actor”, who is able to influence the dynamics and decision-making process of a security sector. In this analysis, the political leaders of each member state play the role of a functional actor as they seek to contribute to and influence the EU’s securitising discourse for their political gains and interests – which are determined by their national threat perceptions. The following are examples of some securitising discourse by certain member states. On the one hand, humanitarian discourses advocating solidarity and burden-sharing could be highlighted. In October 2016, the Greek immigration minister criticised Eastern European countries and Austria for objecting to the principle of relocation, recalling that solidarity in the EU is a legal concept (Galarraga, 2016, 25 October). In the same vein, in June 2017, the Italian prime minister called for help from Europe to take in refugees (Planas, 2017, 29 June).

On the other hand, the securitising discourses of some member states that perceived refugees and asylum seekers as a danger and a burden to their national security. In March 2016, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban criticised the EU for denying that refugees were a “threat” (El Mundo, 2016, 15 March). In January 2018, Orban justified his refusal to take in asylum seekers on the grounds that his government considers them “invaders” and not “refugees” (Eldiario.es, 2018, 8 January). In June 2015, former French president Nicolas Sarkozy ridiculed the European Commission’s proposal to distribute asylum seekers, comparing the situation to a domestic water leak (Eldiario.es, 2015a, 19 June). In July 2015, Spanish Interior Minister Jorge Fernández Díaz used the same metaphor as the former French prime minister to explain the distribution of asylum seekers from Italy and Greece: “instead of plugging these leaks, what we are doing is distributing the water that falls into different rooms”.

UNHCR is another functional actor with the ability to exert influence on the securitisation process. Aiming to ensure compliance with the 1951 Refugee Convention, it has positioned itself during the crisis on securitisation instruments such as the EU-Turkey agreement. It warned, for example, that “reception conditions in Greece and its systems for considering asylum applications” should be strengthened expeditiously and that “returnees to Turkey in need of international protection should have access to a fair and adequate procedure” (UNHCR, 2016). Some associations have also interfered in the securitisation process by denouncing the funding of measures that increase border and asylum control (Segura, 2016), or by warning about the weakening of EU human rights and accountability caused by an unclear division of competences of the new European Border and Coast Guard Agency (International Commission of Jurists, ECRE and Amnesty International, 2016).

1.3. Analysing the public’s acceptance of the securitisation process

According to securitisation theory, a final essential requirement confirming the success of the securitisation process is the public’s acceptance of the discourse. If adopted, the European public should be concerned about the growing migratory pressure and would accept the securitisation instruments activated to face a threat. In order to test the public’s acceptance of the securitisation discourse, the following Eurobarometer indicators were analysed from spring 2014 to the latest available data from autumn 2017:

- 1 What are the two most important challenges facing your country today?
- 2 What are the two most important challenges facing the EU today?

In the autumn of 2015, European citizens expressed growing concern about immigration, reaching a turning point. That same year, the European Union recorded unprecedented asylum and refugee applications, hitting an all-time high of 1,322,825 requests (Eurostat, 2018b). In this light, the securitising discourse formulated by the European institutions’ authorities and the member states’ leaders coincided with increased public concern about immigration. Differences with the results prior to November 2015 are relevant in both questions: concern about immigration at the national level rose from 22.88 per cent in May 2015 to 35.75 per cent in November 2015; at the European level, it rose from 37.62 per cent in May 2015 to 58 per cent in November 2015. Two years later, immigration remained the EU’s most important challenge, according to the November 2017 Eurobarometer results. At the national level, immigration ranked

second among citizens' concerns, while countries perceived unemployment as the top challenge.

Table 5. Changes in the three items considered as the most critical challenges facing countries (average of member states' results in %).

Date	Migration issues	Terrorism and security issues	Unemployment
Nov-17	22.03	15.84	24.86
May-17	22.14	18.87	29.37
Nov-16	25.73	14.06	31.28
May-16	28.2	16.3	33.07
Nov-15	35.75	10.55	35.65
May-15	22.88	7.23	41.68
Feb-15	18.32	11.33	42.24
Nov-14	17.91	5.87	44.65
May-14	15	2	48

Source: own elaboration based on the 2018 Eurobarometer survey (European Commission, 2018d).

Table 6. Changes in the three items perceived as the most challenging for the EU (average of Member States' results in %).

Date	Migration issues	Terrorism and security issues	Unemployment
Nov-17	39.42	37.95	12.91
May-17	38.02	43.74	14.54
Nov-16	44.99	31.7	16.18
May-16	47.64	39.33	15.01
Nov-15	58	24.9	17.27
May-15	37.42	17.48	23.95
Feb-15	24.03	10.8	28.7
Nov-14	21	6	34
May-14	-	-	-

Source: own elaboration based on the 2018 Eurobarometer survey (European Commission, 2018e).

Support for a European migration policy remains high, although it has declined somewhat since November 2015, following the presentation of the European Agenda on Migration and the formalisation of relocation and resettlement commitments by Member States.

Table 7.

Changes in European citizens' support for a European immigration policy (results expressed in %)

Date	In Favour	Against	Do not know
Nov-17	68.81	24.82	6.36
May-17	68.04	24.84	7.11
Nov-16	69.28	24.45	6.27
May-16	66.5	26.17	7.33
Nov-15	67.7	24.29	8
May-15	72.8	19.75	7.45
Nov-14	71.06	19.78	9.16

Source: Own elaboration based on the 2018 Eurobarometer survey (European Commission, 2018f).

Finally, the last indicator chosen indicates that immigration, although perceived as a significant challenge according to citizens, is not perceived very positively by society. Nonetheless, the percentages have not varied much with the migration crisis of 2015, which indicates that these are not very fluctuating sentiments and that the securitising discourse has had a low impact in this area.

Table 8.

Changes in European citizens' perception of immigration from non-EU countries (results expressed in %)

Date	Very positive	Fairly positive	Very negative	Fairly negative	Do not know
Nov-17	6.89	31.1	35.01	19.31	6.69
May-17	6.96	31.46	34.23	19.72	7.63
Nov-16	7.13	29.72	35.67	20.54	6.95
May-16	6.17	28.14	35.45	22.67	7.57
Nov-15	6.23	27.58	35.15	24.02	7.02
May-15	6.47	27.81	37.45	18.67	9.6
Nov-14	6.81	28.08	35.9	20.78	8.43

Source: Own elaboration based on the 2018 Eurobarometer survey (European Commission, 2018g).

Evidence from the Eurobarometer indicates a notable positive correlation between the securitisation process of the EU's handling of asylum and refugee applications in the aftermath of the 2015 "refugee crisis" and public concern about immigration. Consequently, according to the criteria and conditions laid forward by securitisation theory, the securitisation of this issue can be said to have been successful. While Eurobarometer data reflect public concern about immigration, it is complex to determine whether the audience has actually been persuaded by the securitising discourse of particular securitising actors (Stritzel, 2007). Moreover, although this thesis has observed that public concern increased in November 2015, months after the adoption of the securitisation discourse by the European political elite, the increase could also be explained by the influence of the media. Similarly, the media might have motivated the securitisation discourse of European leaders.

As academics have pointed out, it is surely the sum of the influence of all these actors that ends up triggering the securitising discourse and public concern reflected in the Eurobarometer (Balzacq, 2005; Stritzel, 2007; McDonald, 2008). The exclusion of representations that do not come from institutional figures is another of the limitations detected when analysing the actors involved in the securitisation process (McDonald, 2008). Despite these limitations, securitisation theory is an important and innovative contribution to security studies and has been considered the most appropriate theoretical framework to answer the research question(s).

This chapter concludes that, in line with the securitisation theory, there was a process of securitisation of European immigration policy in the aftermath of the 2015 "refugee crisis", especially of measures to handle the numerous asylum applications. Through this theoretical framework, it has been shown that the European political elite has played a decisive role in the emergence of the securitising discourse on migratory pressure.

Conclusion(s)

2015 marked a turning point in EU migration and asylum policy, as countries with external European borders recorded unprecedented asylum applications. This thesis has hypothesised that following the “refugee crisis of 2015”, the handling of asylum and refugee applications has undergone a process of securitisation by European institutions. In this spirit, this thesis has corroborated the existence of such processes by drawing on the securitisation theory. On the one hand, this securitisation process stemmed from the emergence of a securitising discourse by the leaders of the European institutions with the greater agency in migration governance, which has impacted the concerns of European citizens who, since 2015, have increasingly seen immigration as the main challenge facing the EU. On the other, to respond to the migratory pressures arising from the “refugee crisis”, the EU embraced a guideline that gave priority to a strategy and policy practice that focused on reactionary external action, defence, and security-related policies.

Regarding securitising discursive practices, it is worth noting that EU institution officials have not pointed to asylum seekers and refugees as responsible for increased insecurity on European territory. However, they have pointed to growing migratory pressure as one of the EU’s significant threats. For its part, the EU argues that the lack of control generated by irregular arrivals at Europe’s external borders hampers proper migration management. This uncontrolled situation hampers the registration of people arriving on European territory, collapses Member States’ coordination instruments to offer international protection to those who need it, and increases the risks associated with criminal organisations. According to the EU, all these factors weaken Member States’ asylum and refugee systems and ultimately violate the rights of asylum seekers and refugees under the Refugee Convention.

In order to test the working hypothesis regarding the potential securitisation of the EU’s handling of asylum applications in the aftermath of the “refugee crisis”, a first question was posed: *How prepared was the EU in terms of migration governance to manage the migratory stress at its external borders before 2015?* The “refugee crisis” has exposed a critical limitation in the EU that invites member states to reflect on their role in European institutions. Even though the EU, following the Schengen Agreement, has been striving to create a common European policy, many relevant migration-related decisions continue to be taken at the national level, regardless of the harmonisation instruments put in place

since 1985. The absence of common structures to manage migration, which should have been designed in periods without high migratory pressure, has prevented a coordinated and effective response to the “refugee crisis”.

Moreover, weak political will among some member states’ leaders, varying threat perceptions depending on the geographical location of each country, non-compliance with the principle of solidarity and equal sharing of responsibilities among member states, and, ultimately, the national approach to the “crisis”, have demonstrated the inability of leaders to comply with Europe’s founding values and principles, undermining the EU’s internal coherence and external legitimacy. These limitations, together with the failure to foresee the scope and results of the Arab spring from 2011 onwards, demonstrate that European institutions did not have the necessary mechanisms to deal with exceptional migratory pressure before 2015.

The second analytical chapter addresses the question: *Which policy instruments explain the securitising trend adopted by the European Union in the managing of asylum and refugee applications following the 2015 “refugee crisis”?* Faced with the deadlock caused by the “crisis” and the lack of unity among member states, the leaders of European institutions pointed to the lack of political will among some leaders as the main threat to the European Union. Instead, the EU responded by activating emergency policy instruments that, under the European Agenda on Migration, do not seek to achieve greater integration on migration issues or prioritise the rights of asylum seekers or refugees, but rather to reduce migratory pressure at Europe’s external borders for the sake of greater stability and to restore the status quo, allowing security practices to burgeon even further.

In this way, migratory control instruments that had already been used prior to 2015, such as “outsourcing” practices or financial support to the southern European neighbourhood to strengthen their asylum and refugee systems and reduce the arrival of migrants to European borders, have recently become more visible as a result of the “refugee crisis”. Indeed, the Formalisation of agreements, like the one between the EU and Turkey, represents the difficulty of finding a balance between rhetoric and action in exceptional situations. Furthermore, the “refugee crisis” has also been used to strengthen security practices, for example, the role of FRONTEX in external border controls. Beyond the measures provided for in the European Agenda on Migration, the EU recognised in 2016 that the European Union was being challenged by events like migratory flows, increasingly perceived as a danger to Europe’s population. This threat perception was

publicly manifested in the EUGS, a strategic framework that helps explain the EU's securitising trend.

Finally, the third and last analytical chapter raises the following question: *To what extent has the handling of asylum and refugee applications in the EU been securitised through discourses in the aftermath of the 2015 "refugee crisis"?* The discursive act adopted by the European political elite fulfils eight of the ten conditions for the emergence of a securitising discourse under the model developed based on the Copenhagen School thought. In addition, the three levels of actors necessary for such a process to take place are identified. Moreover, the securitising process has influenced European citizenship, which since 2015 has considered immigration to be the EU's main challenge. It can be affirmed that, in this case, the requirements foreseen by Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver for a securitisation process to take place are met. Although the response to the "refugee crisis" has highlighted the limitations of the EU and its members, it has also opened a new horizon in terms of migration, especially asylum and refuge, an issue that has been at the top of the European political agenda since 2015 and which has demonstrated the need for greater integration if the EU is genuinely committed to a stronger Union.

Indeed, the "refugee crisis" proved that if the path of strengthening the Union is chosen, the positive and negative consequences of greater integration, including the sharing of the costs of migration management, should not be ignored. It is essential to have a European immigration policy to continue upholding the same founding values and principles. Evidence of this has been provided by the "refugee crisis", in particular, the difficulty of responding to the extraordinary migratory pressure at the external borders without the necessary instruments and having to resort to reactive emergency measures that have led the European Union to discursive and non-discursive securitising practices in the handling of asylum and refugee applications.

Annex

Documents analysed (coded against the developed models)

Actor	Type of document	Document title	Length (pages)	Year
<i>European Commission</i>	Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions	The Global Approach to Migration and Mobility	25	2011
<i>European commission</i>	Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions.	A European Agenda on Migration	22	2015
<i>European commission</i>	Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions	Review of the European Neighbourhood Policy	27	2015
<i>European Commission. Jean-Claude Juncker</i>	Speech	State of the Union 2015: Time for Honesty, Unity, and Solidarity	15	2015
<i>European Commission</i>	Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council	On the state of implementation of priority actions under the European Agenda on Migration	26	2016

<i>European Commission</i>	Commission report	Progress Report on the European Agenda on Migration: relocation	22	2017
<i>European Commission. Dimitris Avramopoulos</i>	Press release	Relocation and Resettlement: Steady progress made but more efforts needed to meet targets	3	2017
<i>European Commission. Jean-Claude Juncker</i>	Press release	Future-proof migration management: European Commission sets out way	3	2017
<i>European Commission</i>	Commission report	EU-Turkey statement. Two years on	17	2018
<i>European Commission</i>	Commission report	Progress Report on European Agenda on Migration	15	2018
<i>European Council</i>	Council conclusions	EUCO 25/26	9	2015
<i>European Council</i>	Council conclusions	EUCO 26/15	7	2015
<i>European Council</i>	Council conclusions	EUCO 34/16	12	2016
<i>European Council</i>	Council conclusions	EUCO 14/17	11	2017

References

- Amnesty International (2016, 4 April). Joint briefing on the European Border and Coast Guard Regulation, ECRE, https://www.ecre.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/ECREAmnesty-ICJ-Joint-Briefing-on-the-European-Border-and-Coast-Guard-Regulation_April-2016.pdf
- Aradau, C. (2008). Rethinking trafficking in women: Politics out of security. Springer.
- Aragall, X. (2016, 4 July). The EU's migration policy in the Mediterranean, *El Periódico*, <http://agendapublica.elperiodico.com/la-politica-de-la-ue-en-materia-de-migraciones-en-el-mediterraneo/>
- Austin, J. L. (1975). How to do things with words, ed. JO Urmson and Marina Sbisá. *Cambridge: Harvard University Press*, 120, 125.
- Avramopoulos, D. (2017, 12 April). Relocation and resettlement: while progress is steady, further efforts are needed to achieve the objectives, European Commission, http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-908_en.htm.
- Bali, S. (2008). Population movements. In P. D. Williams (Ed.), *Security studies: An introduction* (pp. 468–480). Routledge.
- Balzacq, T. (2005). The three faces of securitisation: Political agency, audience, and context. *European journal of international relations*, 11(2), 171-201.
- Balzacq, T. (2008). The policy tools of securitisation: Information exchange, EU foreign and interior policies. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, 46(1), 75-100.
- Balzacq, T. (2010). A theory of securitisation: origins, core assumptions, and variants. In *Securitisation Theory* (pp. 15-44). Routledge.
- Balzacq, T. (2011). Securitisation theory. How security problems emerge and dissolve.

- Balzacq, T. (2015). The ‘Essence’ of securitisation: Theory, ideal type, and a sociological science of security. *International Relations*, 29(1), 103-113.
- Balzacq, T., Léonard, S., & Ruzicka, J. (2016). ‘Securitisation’ revisited: Theory and cases. *International relations*, 30(4), 494-531.
- Balzacq, T., Léonard, S., & Ruzicka, J. (2016). ‘Securitisation’ revisited: theory and cases. *International Relations*, 30(4), 494–531.
- Beck, M. (2017). Securitisation of the Recent Influx of Refugees from the Middle East to Europe. *Center for MellemØststudier*.
- Bellanova, R., & Duez, D. (2016). The making (sense) of EUROSUR: How to control the sea borders? In *EU borders and shifting internal security* (pp. 23-44). Springer, Cham.
- Bello, V. (2017). *International migration and international security: why prejudice is a global security threat*. Routledge.
- Bello, V. (2022). The role of non-state actors’ cognitions in the spiralling of the securitisation of migration: prejudice, narratives, and Italian CAS reception centres. *Journal of ethnic and migration studies*, 48(6), 1462-1478.
- Bigo, D. (2000). Border regimes and security in an enlarged European Community police co-operation with CEECs: between trust and obligation.
- Bigo, D. (2002). Security and immigration: Toward a critique of the governmentality of unease. *Alternatives*, 27(1_suppl), 63-92.
- Bigo, D. (2008). Globalized (in) security: the field and the ban-opticon. In *Terror, insecurity and liberty* (pp. 20-58). Routledge.
- Bigo, D. (2014). The (in) securitisation practices of the three universes of EU border control: Military/Navy–border guards/police–database analysts. *Security dialogue*, 45(3), 209-225.

- Bigo, D., & Tsoukala, A. (2008). Understanding (in) security. In *Terror, insecurity and liberty* (pp. 11-19). Routledge.
- Boswell, C. (2007). Migration control in Europe after 9/11: Explaining the absence of securitisation. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, 45(3), 589-610.
- Bourbeau, P. (2011). The securitisation of migration: A study of movement and order. Taylor & Francis.
- Bourbeau, P. (2015). Securitisation. In *International Encyclopedia of Social & Behavioral Science, 2nd edition*, Elsevier.
- Bourbeau, P. (Ed.). (2017). Handbook on migration and security. Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Bourdieu, P. (1990). The logic of practice. Stanford university press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1991). Language and symbolic power. Harvard University Press.
- Buzan, B., & Wæver, O. (1997). Slippery? contradictory? sociologically untenable? The Copenhagen school replies. *Review of international studies*, 23(2), 241-250.
- Buzan, B., Wæver, O., Wæver, O., & De Wilde, J. (1998). *Security: A new framework for analysis*. Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Byrne, R., Noll, G., & Vedsted-Hansen, J. (2020). Understanding the crisis of refugee law: Legal scholarship and the EU asylum system. *Leiden Journal of International Law*, 33(4), 871-892.
- Campesi, G. (2014). Frontex, the Euro-Mediterranean border and the paradoxes of humanitarian rhetoric. *Southeast European Journal of Political Science*, II, 3(2014), 126-134.
- Ceccorulli, M., & Lucarelli, S. (2017). Migration and the EU Global Strategy: narratives and dilemmas. *The International Spectator*, 52(3), 83-102.
- Ceyhan, A., & Tsoukala, A. (2002). The securitisation of migration in western societies: Ambivalent discourses and policies. *Alternatives*, 27(1_suppl), 21-39.

- Colman, N. (2006). *From Gulf War to Gulf War: Years of security concern in immigration and asylum policies at EU level. Terrorism and the foreigner: A decade of tension around the rule of law in Europe*. Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff.
- Côté, A. (2016). Agents without agency: Assessing the role of the audience in securitisation theory. *Security Dialogue*, 47(6), 541-558.
- d'Appollonia, A. C. (2015). The securitisation of immigration and integration governance. In *Migrant Mobilization and Securitisation in the US and Europe* (pp. 15-35). Palgrave Macmillan, New York.
- d'Appollonia, A. C. (2017). Xenophobia, racism and the securitisation of immigration. In *Handbook on Migration and Security* (pp. 252-272). Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Delkáder Palacios, A. (2020). Critical Security Studies and the School of Paris: a study on Frontex and the securitisation of migration in the EU.
- Demurtas, A. (2019). Veinte años de la teoría de la securitización: puntos fuertes y débiles de su operacionalización. *Análisis Jurídico-Político*, 1(1), 167-187.
- Dimitris Skleparis (2016) (In) securitisation and illiberal practices on the fringe of the EU, *European Security*, 25:1, 92-111, DOI: [10.1080/09662839.2015.1080160](https://doi.org/10.1080/09662839.2015.1080160)
- Eldiario.es (2015b, 20 July). Fernández Díaz compares refugee distribution to a “leaky” leak in a house, https://www.eldiario.es/desalambre/Fernandez-Diaz-reparto-refugiadosgoteras_0_411209324.html
- Eldiario.es (2018, 8 January). Viktor Orban, on those fleeing to the EU: “We don’t consider them refugees but Muslim invaders”, https://www.eldiario.es/desalambre/Orban-Europaconsideramos-refugiados-musulmanes_0_727227470.html
- El Mundo (2016, 15 March). Hungary criticises EU for denying that refugees are a “threat”, <http://www.elmundo.es/internacional/2016/03/15/56e84f1122601dca448b463b.html>.

Enriquez, C. G. (2015). The refugee crisis and the European response. *Análisis del Real Instituto Elcano* (ARI), (67).

European Commission (2003, 11 March). Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament. Wider Europe. Wider Europe – Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours, COM (2003) 0104 final, EUR-Lex, <http://eurlex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2003:0104:FIN:EN:PDF>

European Commission (2005, 10 May). Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament. The Hague Programme: Ten priorities for the next five years. A Partnership for European renewal in the field of Freedom, Security and Justice, COM (2005) 184 final, EUR-Lex, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/procedure/EN/192847>

European Commission (2010, 20 April). Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. Ensuring an area of freedom, security and justice for European citizens. Action Plan implementing the Stockholm Programme, COM (2010) 171 final, EUR-Lex, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0171:FIN:en:PDF>

European Commission (2011a, 18 November). Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. Global Approach to Migration and Mobility, COM(2011) 743 final, EUR-Lex, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52011DC0743&from=EN>

European Commission (2011b, 8 March). Joint Communication to the European Council, the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity with the

Southern Mediterranean countries, COM (2011) 200 final, EUR-Lex, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/procedure/EN/200219>

European Commission (2011c, 25 May). Joint communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. A new response to a changing Neighbourhood, COM (2011) 303 final, European Commission, https://ec.europa.eu/research/iscp/pdf/policy/com_2011_303.pdf

European Commission (2015a, 13 May). Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. A European Agenda on Migration, COM (2015) 240 final, EUR-Lex, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52015DC0240&from=EN>

European Commission (2015b, 18 November). Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. Review of the European Neighbourhood Policy, JOIN (2015) 50 final, EUR-Lex, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legalcontent/ES/ALL/?uri=CELEX:52015JC0050>

European Commission (2015c). The European Border and Coast Guard, European Commission, https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/securing-eu-borders/fact-sheets/docs/a_european_border_and_coast_guard_en.pdf.

European Commission (2016, 10 February). Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the state of implementation of priority actions under the European Agenda on Migration, COM (2016) 85 final, European Commission, <https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/rep/1/2016/EN/1-2016-85-EN-F1-1.PDF>.

European Commission (2017a). The updated Schengen Rules, European Commission, https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agendamigration/20170927_factsheet_updated_schengen_rules_en.pdf.

European Commission (2017b). A European Border and Coast Guard Agency, European Commission, https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agendamigration/20171114_ebcg_en.pdf

European Commission (2017c, 15 November). Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council and the Council. Progress Report on the European Agenda on Migration: relocation (Annex 6), COM(2017) 669 final, European Commission, <http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/rep/1/2017/EN/COM-2017-669-F1-EN-ANNEX-6-PART-1.PDF>.

European Commission (2017d). Relocation: EU solidarity between member states, European Commission, https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agendamigration/20171114_relocation_eu_solidarity_between_member_states_en.pdf

European Commission (2017e). Resettlement: ensuring safe and legal access to protection for refugees, European Commission, https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/whatwe-do/policies/european-agendamigration/20171114_resettlement_ensuring_safe_and_legal_access_to_protection_for_refugees_en.pdf

European Commission (2017f). Interactive Eurobarometer: I would like to ask you about the trust you have in certain media and institutions. For each of the media and institutions, please tell me whether you tend to trust or not: the European Union, European Commission, <http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Chart/getChart/chartType/gridChart/themeKy/18/groupKy/97/savFile/867>

European Commission (2018a, April). EU-Turkey statement. Two years on, European Commission, https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agendamigration/20180314_eu-turkey-two-years-on_en.pdf

European Commission (2018b). Temporary Reintroduction of Border Control. Migration and Home Affairs, European Commission, https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/borders-andvisas/schengen/reintroduction-border-control_en

European Commission (2018c, 16 May), European Agenda on Migration: the situation remains precarious, so there is no room for complacency, European Union, http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-18-3743_en.htm.

European Commission (2018d). Interactive Eurobarometer: what are the two most important challenges facing your country today, European Commission, <http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Chart/getChart/chartType/gridChart//themeKy/42/groupKy/208/countries/IT/periodStart/052005/periodEnd/112017>.

European Commission (2018e). Interactive Eurobarometer: what are the two most important challenges facing the EU today, European Commission, <http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Chart/getChart/chartType/gridChart//themeKy/31/groupKy/188/countries/GR/periodStart/112010/periodEnd/112017>.

European Commission (2018f). Interactive Eurobarometer: what is your opinion on each of the following statements? Tell me if you are for or against each statement: Common European Migration Policy, European Commission, <http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Chart/getChart/chartType/gridChart//themeKy/29/groupKy/180/savFile/646>

European Commission (2018g). Interactive Eurobarometer: please tell me which of the following statements makes you feel positively or negatively? Immigration of people from outside the EU, European Commission, <http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Chart/getChart/chartType/gridChart///themeKy/59/groupKy/279/savFile/867>

European commission website (2022). Migration and home affairs. Glossary and definitions. Refugee in orbit. https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/pages/glossary/refugee-orbit_en

European Commission, http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-02-619_en.htm Segura, n. (2016, 26 October). Frontex's new mandate, a controversial EU approach to the refugee crisis, European Public Affairs.eu, <http://www.europeanpublicaffairs.eu/frontexs-newmandate-a-controversial-eu-approach-to-the-refugee-crisis/>

European Council (1999, 15-16 October). Tampere European Council, Presidency Conclusions, European Parliament, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/summits/tam_es.htm

European Council (2003, 12-13 December). European Security Strategy: A Secure Europe in a Better World, European Union, <https://europa.eu/globalstrategy/en/european-security-strategy-secure-europe-better-world>

European Council (2005, 15-16 December). Presidency Conclusions, European Union, http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_DOC-05-4_es.htm

European Council (2008a). Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy, Providing Security in a Changing World, European Council, http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/reports/104637.pdf

European Council (2008b, 24 November). European Pact on Immigration and Asylum, EUR-Lex, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/ES/TXT/?uri=LEGISSUM%3Ajl0038>

European Council (2015, 20 June). Outcome of the Council Meeting. 3405th Council meeting. Justice and Home Affairs, European Council, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/22985/st11097en15.pdf>

European Council (2016, 18 March). EU-Turkey statement, European Council, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/03/18/eu-turkey-statement/> EFE (2015, 30 July). Cameron says he will protect UK from migrant inplague', <https://www.efe.com/efe/espana/mundo/cameron-dice-que-protegera-al-reinounido-de-la-plaga-inmigrantes/10001-2677213> Eldiario.es (2015a, 19 June). Sarkozy mocks refugee distribution: "It's like the plumber who spreads a water leak at home", https://www.eldiario.es/desalambre/Sarkozyridiculiza-propuesta-reparto-refugiados_0_400360075.html.

European Court of Auditors (2016). Expenditure on the EU external migration policy in the Eastern Neighbourhood and Southern Mediterranean countries up to 2014, European Court of Auditors, https://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/SR16_09/SR_MIGRATION_ES.pdf

European Parliament (2018). Legislative train Schedule. Towards a new policy on migration. Revision of the Dublin Regulation, European Parliament, <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/legislative-train/theme-towards-a-new-policy-on-migration/file-revision-of-the-dublin-regulation>.

European Union (2016). A Common Vision, Acting Together: A Stronger Europe. Comprehensive strategy for the foreign and security policy of the European Union, European Union, https://europa.eu/globalstrategy/sites/globalstrategy/files/eugs_es_version.pdf

Eurostat (2017a, 19 October). Outgoing 'Dublin' requests by receiving country (PARTNER), type of request and legal provision, European Commission,

http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/en/web/products-datasets/-/MIGR_DUBRO Eurostat (2017b, 6 December). Incoming ‘Dublin’ requests by submitting country (PARTNER), type of request and legal provision, European Commission, http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/en/web/products-datasets/-/MIGR_DUBRI.

Eurostat (2017c). Recognition rates and first instance decisions by outcome in the EU-28, 4th quarter 2017, European Commission, <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/6049358/7005580/International+Protection+Rates+of+Recognition+in+the+EU-28+-+Q4+2017.pdf/28691ffd-8cfe-4a8f-a1e4-290b6f4e2be9>

Eurostat (2018a, 30 March). Asylum and first-time asylum applicants by citizenship, age and sex annual aggregated data, European Commission, http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/en/web/productsdatasets/-/MIGR_ASYAPPCTZA

Eurostat (2018b, 16 March). Asylum statistics, European Commission, http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Asylum_statistics

Eurostat (2018c). Resettled persons – annual data, European Commission, <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&pcode=tps00195&plugin=1>

Faist, T. (2006). The migration-security nexus: International migration and security before and after 9/11. In *Migration, citizenship, ethnos* (pp. 103-119). Palgrave Macmillan, New York.

Floyd, R. (2011). Can securitisation theory be used in normative analysis? Towards a just securitisation theory. *Security Dialogue*, 42(4/5), 427–439. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26301799>

- Forum Réfugiés-Cosi; ECRE; Hungarian Helsinki Committee (2013). Dublin in regulation. Lives on hold. European comparative report, Refworld (UNHCR), <http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/513ef9632.pdf>
- Foucault, M. (1980). Power/knowledge, brighton. *Harvester Press*, 206, 381-93.
- Foucault, M. (1994). Michel Foucault (Vol. 2). Taylor & Francis.
- Foucault, M. (2007). *Security, territory, population: lectures at the Collège de France, 1977-78*. Springer.
- Fratzke, S. (2015). Not adding up. *The fading promise of Europe's Dublin system*. <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/not-adding-fading-promise-europes-dublin-system>
- Galarraga, n. (2016, 25 October). Grecia reclama ayuda a la UE ante la creciente tensión de la crisis migratoria, El País, https://elpais.com/internacional/2016/10/24/actualidad/1477330226_927169.html
- Galarraga, n. (October 25, 2016). Greece demands help from the EU in the face of the growing tension of the migration crisis, El País. Retrieved on: https://elpais.com/internacional/2016/10/24/actualidad/1477330226_927169.html.
- Garcés-Mascareñas, B. (2015). Why Dublin “doesn’t work”, Notes internationals *Barcelona.Centre for International Affairs* [CIDOB], n. ° 135, pp.1-5.
- Guild, E. (2004). Who is an irregular migrant?. In *Irregular migration and human rights: Theoretical, European and international perspectives* (pp. 3-28). Brill Nijhoff.
- Hansen, L. (2012). Reconstructing desecuritisation: the normative-political in the Copenhagen School and directions for how to apply it. *Review of international studies*, 38(3), 525-546.
- Hansen, P., & Hager, S. B. (2012). The politics of European citizenship: deepening contradictions in social rights and migration policy. Berghahn Books.

- Honwana, A. (2011, September). Youth and the Tunisian revolution. In *Conflict Prevention and Peace Forum policy paper*.
- Huysmans, J. (1995). Migrants as a security problem: Dangers of ‘securitizing’ societal issues. *Migration and European integration: The dynamics of inclusion and exclusion*, 53, 72.
- Huysmans, J. (2000). The European Union and the securitisation of migration. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, 38(5), 751-777.
- Huysmans, J. (2004). A Foucaultian view on spill-over: freedom and security in the EU. *Journal of international relations and development*, 7(3), 294-318.
- Huysmans, J. (2006). *The politics of insecurity: Fear, migration and asylum in the EU*. Routledge.
- Juncker, J.C. (2015, 9 September). State of the Union 2015: Time for sincerity, unity and solidarity, European Commission, http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-15-5614_en.htm
- Juncker, J.C. (2017, 7 December). Forward-looking migration management: the European Commission presents the way forward, European Commission, http://europa.eu/rapid/pressrelease_IP-17-5132_es.htm
- Kaufmann, M., & Jeandesboz, J. (2017). Politics and ‘the digital’ From singularity to specificity. *European Journal of Social Theory*, 20(3), 309-328.
- Lazaridis, G. (2011). *Security, insecurity and migration in Europe*. Routledge.
- Lazaridis, G., & Skleparis, D. (2016). Securitisation of migration and the far right: the case of Greek security professionals. *International Migration*, 54(2), 176-192.
- Lazaridis, G., & Wadia, K. (Eds.). (2015). *The Securitisation of Migration in the EU: Debates since 9/11*. Springer.

- Lehtonen, P., & Aalto, P. (2017). Smart and secure borders through automated border control systems in the EU? The views of political stakeholders in the Member States. *European Security*, 26(2), 207-225.
- Léonard, S. (2010). EU border security and migration into the European Union: FRONTEX and securitisation through practices. *European security*, 19(2), 231-254.
- Léonard, S., & Kaunert, C. (2019). Refugees, security and the European Union. Routledge.
- Lipshitz, R., Popper, M., & Friedman, V. J. (2002). A multifacet model of organizational learning. *The journal of applied behavioral science*, 38(1), 78-98.
- McDonald, M. (2008). Securitisation and the Construction of Security. *European journal of international relations*, 14(4), 563-587.
- Miller, M. (2001). A Durable Migration and Security Nexus: The Problem of the Islamic Periphery in Transatlantic Ties. *Migration, globalization and human security*, 92-108.
- Mogherini, F (2015, 18 November). European Neighbourhood Policy Review: stronger partnerships for a stronger neighbourhood, European Commission, http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-15-6121_en.htm
- Mogherini, f. (2017, 27 September). State of the Union 2017: the Commission presents the next steps for a stronger, more effective and fairer EU immigration and asylum policy, European Commission, http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-3406_es.htm
- Murphy, E., & Maguire, M. (2015). Speed, time and security: Anthropological perspectives on automated border control. *Etnofoor*, 27(2), 157-177.
- Neal, A. W. (2009). Securitisation and risk at the EU border: The origins of FRONTEX. *JCMS: Journal of common market studies*, 47(2), 333-356.
- Nicholson, F. (2006). Challenges to Forging a Common European Asylum System in Line with International Obligations. In *EU Immigration and Asylum Law* (pp. 505-537). Brill Nijhoff.

- Ospina, G. I. (2016). The challenges of migration for a Global Strategy of the European Union. *Unisci Journal*, (42), 99-158.
- Planas, c. (2017, 29 June). Italy asks Europe for help to take in refugees, El Periódico, <https://www.elperiodico.com/es/internacional/20170629/italia-pide-ayuda-a-europapara-acoger-a-los-refugiados-6137157>
- Prieto, B. (2016). Hotspots, a weak link in the management of the refugee crisis, ARI, n. 25.
- Prodi, r. (2002, 5-6 December). A wieder Europe. A Proximity Policy as the key to stability,
- Ragazzi, F. (2016). Suspect community or suspect category? The impact of counter-terrorism as ‘policed multiculturalism’. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 42(5), 724-741.
- Rijpma, J., & Vermeulen, M. (2015). EUROSUR: saving lives or building borders?. *European security*, 24(3), 454-472.
- Saidin, M. I. S. (2018). Rethinking the ‘Arab Spring’: The Root Causes of the Tunisian Jasmine Revolution and Egyptian January 25 Revolution. *International Journal of Islamic Thought*, 13, 69-79.
- Salter, M. B., Cohn, C., Neal, A. W., Wibben, A. T., Burgess, J. P., Elbe, S., ... & Hansen, L. (2019). Horizon Scan: Critical security studies for the next 50 years. *Security Dialogue*, 50, 9-37.
- Sanahuja, J. A. (2016). The European Union and the refugee crisis: governance failures, securitisation and “chequebook diplomacy”.
- Sánchez-Montijano, E & Zaragoza-Cristiani, J (2017). The Balkans as a buffer zone for CIDOB.
- Sarah Léonard (2010) EU border security and migration into the European Union: FRONTEX and securitisation through practices, *European Security*, 19:2, 231-254, DOI: [10.1080/09662839.2010.526937](https://doi.org/10.1080/09662839.2010.526937)
- Sarah Léonard, Christian Kaunert. (2022) The securitisation of migration in the European Union: Frontex and its evolving security practices. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*.

- Sperling, J., & Webber, M. (2019). The European Union: security governance and collective securitisation. *West European Politics*, 42(2), 228-260.
- Squire, V. (2015). The securitisation of migration: An absent presence? In *The Securitisation of Migration in the EU* (pp. 19-36). Palgrave Macmillan, London.
- Stępką, M. (2022). Identifying Security Logics in the EU Policy Discourse: The “Migration Crisis” and the EU (p. 204). Springer Nature.
- Stokes-Dupass, N. (2017). Mass migration, tightening borders, and emerging forms of statelessness in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. *Journal of Applied Security Research*, 12(1), 40-60.
- Stritzel, H. (2007). Towards a theory of securitisation: Copenhagen and beyond. *European journal of international relations*, 13(3), 357-383.
- The Economist (2014, 20 September). Europe’s ring of fire, <https://www.economist.com/news/europe/21618846-european-unions-neighbourhood-more-troubled-ever-europes-ring-fire>.
- Thielemann, E., & Armstrong, C. (2013). Understanding European asylum cooperation under the Schengen/Dublin system: a public goods framework. *European security*, 22(2), 148-164.
- Timmermans, f. (2017a, 15 November). European Agenda on Migration: Consolidating the progress made, European Commission, http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-4484_es.htm
- Timmermans, f. (2017b, 6 September). European Agenda on Migration: Good progress must continue to be made in managing migration flows, European Commission, http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-3081_en.htm.
- Tirman, J. (2004). The migration-security nexus. *GSC Quarterly*, 13, 1-8.
- UNHCR (2014, 3 January). UNHCR calls for temporary halt to Dublin transfers of asylumseekers back to Bulgaria, UNHCR,

<http://www.unhcr.org/news/briefing/2014/1/52c691d59/unhcr-calls-temporary-halt-dublin-transfers-asylum-seekers-bulgaria.html>

UNHCR (2016, 18 March). UNHCR position on the EU-Turkey deal: asylum safeguards must prevail, UNHCR, <http://acnur.es/noticias/notas-deprensa/2445-2016-03-21-10-57-17>

UNHCR (2017). UNHCR Statistical Yearbook 2016, UNHCR, <http://www.unhcr.org/statistics/country/5a8ee0387/unhcr-statistical-yearbook-2016-16th-edition.html>

UNHCR (2018, 19 April). Syria Regional Refugee Response, Operational Portal Refugee Situations, <http://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria>

Van Munster, R. (2009). *Securitizing immigration: The politics of risk in the EU*. Springer.

Vega Fernández, E., Echeverría Jesús, C., Sánchez de Rojas Díaz, E., Algora Weber, M., & Caldach Cervera, R. (2013). *Analysis and evaluation of the stability of the Maghreb*.

Vuori, J. A. (2011). *How To Do Security with Words. A Grammar of Securitisation in the People's Republic of China*. Turku: Turun Yliopisto, University of Turku.

Vuori, J. A. (2011). *How To Do Security with Words. A Grammar of Securitisation in the People's Republic of China*. Turku: Turun Yliopisto, University of Turku.

Waeber, O. (1995). Identity, integration and security: Solving the sovereignty puzzle in EU studies. *Journal of international affairs*, 389-431.

Williams, Michael C. "Words, images, enemies: Securitisation and international politics." *International studies quarterly* 47, no. 4 (2003): 511-531.

Wodak, R. (2015). *The politics of fear: What right-wing populist discourses mean*. Sage.

Zapata-Barrero, R. (2013). The external dimension of migration policies in the Mediterranean area: premises for a normative debate. *Journal of the Spanish Institute for Strategic Studies*, (2).