

Abstract: In order to securitize something, it must successfully be *represented* as such for the audience to accept the securitizing move. Consequently, this dissertation heavily stresses that images are a salient part of the representation and construction of immigration as a security issue. The research aims to elucidate how images fit within security studies by examining their place within the process that generates the 'speaking of security' as an outcome, i.e. the securitization process. Primarily, the research provides a visual analysis of online news sources from within the United Kingdom, and their construction of immigration as a security issue during the lead up to the EU Referendum. By reviewing three major news platforms (the BBC Online, The Guardian Online, and the Daily Mail Online) from February 2016 to June 2016 (via the methods of Content Analysis and Compositional interpretation), this thesis investigates how visuals, accompanying different articles about immigration, were used to construct the meaning of immigration as a security issue. Consequently it was found that, the images analyzed have the potential to represent immigration and immigrants as securitized, via visuals depicting large groups of mainly men (sometimes depicted as criminal), other images that kept many factors 'unknown' (such as who these people were and where they were and/or where they were coming from), and some photographs which portrayed such 'threatening individuals' behind barriers. Not only were the images seen to aid to the construction and/or continuation of immigration as a security issue, but they also showed who was given the authority to securitize via visuals coded for speaking showing a high proportion of individual politicians. As previous studies have highlighted how certain frames surrounding an issue have the potential to effect attitudes about policy, the visual representation and construction of immigration and immigrants, is thus something to seriously consider within the realm of international relations.

Keywords: Image(s), Visual(s), Security, Securitization, Immigration, Immigrant, Media, Online News, United Kingdom, EU Referendum, Representation(s), Construction