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The securitisation and politicisation of migration

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Lecture overview

- Define securitization and politicisation
- Examine the politicisation and securitization of migration
- Consider the impacts of politicisation and securitization at multiple levels (primarily focusing on Europe from 2015)
 - Within high level politics
 - On public responses to migration

Politicisation

- The rendering of an event, action or phenomenon as a political issue
 - Migration becomes a focus of political debate
 - A range of positions/opinions on migration are expressed
 - Migration policies are initiated or developed in order to address multiple concerns


Securitisation

- The rendering of an event, action or phenomenon as a security issue
 - Migration is defined as a threat (e.g. to society, to state sovereignty)
 - Migration moves from low to high politics (an extreme form of politicisation)
 - Migration policies move out of the democratic process (expedited, intelligence driven policy-making)

The securitisation of (illegal) migration

- Context for securitisation in Europe (1990s onwards)
 - End of the Cold War/geopolitical shift
 - Globalisation/increasing cross-border dynamics
- Securitisation/criminalisation of unwanted migration (linkage of security/policing mechanisms)
 - Concerns over increased asylum applications/migration GS
- Combination of state security/human security approach (linking of border control/aid)
 - Migration-development nexus

European Agenda on Migration



The current migration and security challenges know no borders, and require a truly European approach. Where Frontex used to be limited to supporting Member States in managing their external borders, the new Border Agency will go beyond this. What we are creating today is more Europe: to manage our external borders, to step up returns of irregular migrants, to allow our asylum system to function properly for those in need and to strengthen checks at the external borders of the European Union. The Border Package we are presenting today will increase security for our citizens and ensure high standards of border management.

Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship,
Dimitris Avramopoulos
December 2015

We are deeply concerned by the sharp increase in flows of refugees, asylum seekers and irregular migrants which entails suffering, abuse and exploitation, particularly for children and women, and unacceptable loss of life in the desert or at sea. Such an increase places the most affected countries under severe pressure, with serious humanitarian consequences and security challenges.

Valletta Summit, November 2015



Migration as a security threat?

- Whose security? (Security of what/whom, from what, by whom and by what means?)
 - Security of the state (sovereignty)
 - Security of society/citizens (identity, culture)
 - Security of [vulnerable] people (human security)

The rise of border fences



Everyone in Europe is doing
their own business, now
Italy is also raising its head.
Let's stop the business of
illegal immigration

Matteo Salvini
Deputy Prime Minister, Italy
June 2018



Those arriving have been raised in another religion, and represent a radically different culture. Most of them are not Christians, but Muslims...This is an important question, because Europe and European identity is rooted in Christianity... Is it not worrying in itself that European Christianity is now barely able to keep Europe Christian? There is no alternative, and we have no option but to defend our borders.

Hungarian Prime Minister,
Victor Orbán
September 2015



Germany acted humanely
and correctly in a very
difficult situation. It was a
question of averting a
humanitarian catastrophe

Angela Merkel
German Chancellor
August 2017





Modes of securitisation

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- Securitisation emerges in various modes:
 - Linkage of migration with *terrorism*
 - *Military* and intelligence based action
 - *Emergency* and anticipatory interventions
- Policy interventions driven by *fear* or unease
- Increased linkage with humanitarianism



Migration is the
Trojan wooden horse
of terrorism

Hungarian Prime Minister,
Victor Orbán
March 2017



The mission core mandate is to undertake systematic efforts to identify, capture and dispose of vessels and enabling assets used or suspected of being used by migrant smugglers or traffickers...

EUNAVFOR Med

Frontex: Rapid Intervention and Risk Analysis



A Politics of Fear: Vote.Leave

BREAKING POINT

The EU has failed us all



I will suggest to Member States that we change the name of our Operation: instead of calling it EUNAVFOR MED, I suggest we use the name: Sophia. To honour the lives of the people we are saving, the lives of people we want to protect, and to pass the message to the world that fighting the smugglers and the criminal networks is a way of protecting human life

High Rep of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy,
European Commission Vice President
Federica Mogherini
September 2015



Politicisation and securitization

- Where does politicisation end and securitization begin?
- Does the securitisation of an issue become cumulative over time (associative vs explicit securitization)?
- Is desecuritisation possible - what does re-politicization mean, and how can this be achieved?



We are at the peak of two crises – security and migration – and while they overlap in timing they should not be confused. Those people who arrived on our shores are fleeing precisely the same terror that struck the heart of Europe.

Commissioner for Migration,
Home Affairs and Citizenship,
Dimitris Avramopoulos
March 2016

Commission européenne
European Commission



Europe is no longer
experiencing the migration
crisis we lived in 2015

First Vice President European
Commission

Frans Timmermans

March 2019

Anti-migrant populism





Criminalisation of activists





UNITED NATIONS SUMMIT FOR REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

19 September 2016 + UN Headquarters

all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights
UN Declaration, September 2016



A failure of “trust,
determination and
solidarity”?

Global Compact for
Safe, Orderly and
Regular Migration,
December 2018

Summary

- Securitisation as an extreme form of politicisation – but also involves *depoliticisation*
- Difficulties of desecuritisation – long-standing association of migration and security, proliferation of a politics of fear
- High level conflict over migration and public responses caught in antagonism

Thank you!