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University
of Glasgow

School of Social and Political Sciences

**An End to Asylum? The Securitization of Asylum
Seekers in the United Kingdom from 2010-2017**

Presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the

Degree of

M.Sc. in International Relations

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Abstract

The recent UK ‘Brexit’ referendum on EU membership saw immigration emerge as a divisive debate. While the referendum did not initiate the insecurities and social divide regarding asylum policy, it did help to politically mobilize them. Many studies have explored the security logic on migration and asylum in the EU, which has served to legitimize restrictive measures. This dissertation explores the extent and ways in which asylum seekers have entered the security agenda in the United Kingdom (UK). As a global leader, the UK provides a fitting setting to consider how asylum policy has become securitized. Examining the timeframe of May 2010 to May 2017, this study provides a contemporary analysis of securitization of migration and asylum seekers in the UK. A restrictive approach to asylum has become dominant within the EU; the process through which this has happened warrants attention. A narrow focus on speech acts and discourse analysis is inadequate to answer this research question. Rather, this paper examines the discursive and nondiscursive processes of securitization. This study will draw on the strengths of the Copenhagen School (CS) and the Paris School (PS) to provide a comprehensive understanding of the process of securitization. It offers a theoretical contribution to securitization theory, underlining the necessity of looking at both discursive and nondiscursive elements of the process of securitization.

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Notes on Terminology

There are numerous categories used to describe migration identities. This paper will use certain words and not others, and it is important to have an understanding of what is understood by these terms.

Migrant: This term is used to denote a person who has moved either temporary or permanently from one country to another.

Asylum Seeker: a person who has left their country of origin and formally applied for asylum in another country.

Refugee: A legal category set out in the 1951 Refugee Convention: "A person who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country;"

Economic migrant: a person who moves to another country for work.

Irregular/undocumented migrant: Rather than using the word 'illegal', irregular or undocumented will be used to describe those without a visa or necessary documentation to remain in the UK.

Introduction

Since the 1980s there has been an intensification of security concerns relating to migration at the national and European Union level. A sense of “moral panic” has emerged about undocumented migrants and asylum seekers (Koser and Lutz, 1998, p.3). Mass media, public opinion and political discourse, have overlapped, leading to the perception of migration as a threat (Buonfino, 2004, p.24). Coupled with the social construction of migration as a threat has been a blurring of categories of immigration, with all forms of migration lumped into the same class (Squire, 2009; Shacknove, 1993). There is a widely held belief by many politicians, sections of the media and, large groups of the public that most asylum seekers are in reality economic migrants (Crawley, 2005, p.13). As a result, asylum seekers and refugees are included in restrictive policies. This figure is perceived as a ‘bogus’ one that ‘poses’ as a refugee in need of protection. The asylum seeker is constructed as an ambiguous figure in contemporary politics, warranting the need for control and restriction if territorial order is to be maintained (Squire, 2009, p.5). Through the establishment of the asylum seeker as one who does not belong, the notion of citizenship is reinforced and strengthened. This divide has resulted in what Squire terms “an exclusionary approach” to asylum (Squire, 2009, p.6).

It is crucial to recognize that the asylum seeker is protected in international law. However, increasingly asylum seekers are mixed with other migrants. The right to seek asylum is enshrined in Article 14 of the *1948 Declaration of Human Rights*. Despite their legal entitlement to seek asylum, they are frequently lumped into the same category with ‘illegal migrants’ and EU migrants. Immigration and border control are prioritized over refugee protection throughout most of Europe (Orchard, 2014, p.2). Several writers on migration and asylum attribute the end of the Cold War and a change in the nature of conflict for the significant rise in asylum numbers and restrictive policies which have emerged (Orchard, 2014; Schuster, 2005). However, as Squire (2009) contends, it is necessary to develop a more sophisticated view of the shift toward restrictive policies. She engages with further contributing factors, such as the framing of asylum seekers as a threat. It is argued that a combination of economic, social, and political problems that

have resulted in asylum seekers being framed as a risk to the host community (Squire, 2009, p.9).

According to Christina Boswell (2007), there is little evidence that migration in Europe has been securitized. She claims that migration debates in Europe have been “unaffected by the anti-terrorism agenda” (Boswell, 2007, p.590). This paper disputes this view, arguing that migration has undoubtedly been framed as a security issue in Europe and has been intensified by the 9/11 attacks and the 7/7 London bombings. Arguably, the security/migration nexus has been further fueled by recent attacks across Europe creating a widespread sense of panic. Arguing against Boswell, Squire, (2015) writes that: “it is more appropriate to pose this as a question regarding how far and in what ways, and with what consequence migration has been securitized over the past 15 years (Squire, 2015, p.20). This research paper seeks to address this question, uncovering how far and in what way asylum seekers have been securitized in the United Kingdom. The UK offers an ideal setting for exploring dynamics relevant to the process of securitization. It is a country with extremely divided views on immigration which have been further fueled by the recent Brexit referendum. Rather than engaging with the question of whether or not immigration has been constructed as a security risk, this paper seeks to consider the extent and ways in which this process has taken place. Considering this, the aim of this study is to uncover the processes through which asylum seekers have been constructed as a threat to security within the UK. It will explore the discursive and non-discursive elements which have contributed to the process of securitization since 2010.

The security/migration nexus is addressed utilizing the theoretical concept of ‘securitization’ coined by Ole Wæver. The dissertation will seek to contribute to existing literature on the subject by applying the conceptual framework of securitization to the analysis. In doing so, this paper aims to uncover how the UK government constructs migration as a threat despite the fact it poses no real danger (Karyotis, 2007). Chapter One will set the stage for the analysis, looking at migration patterns in the European and national context. First off, a history of EU attitudes towards immigration is provided, situating British immigration views within the wider EU context. Following this,

attention is given over to the UK's immigration history, giving context to the situation that the 2010 government inherited. Lastly, an outline of the security-migration nexus is provided, exploring the four axes around which anti-immigration is typically articulated.

Following this, Chapter Three will introduce the theoretical framework: securitization. Both the Copenhagen School (CS) and the Paris School (PS) approach to securitization are applied, using the strengths of both logics to provide the most comprehensive discussion of the process of securitization. In isolation, both logics are limited and do not provide a thorough representation of the process of securitization (Bourbeau, 2014, p.192). There has been limited research which uses the CS and PS approach to securitization in tandem. This paper will address this gap through an examination of the process of securitization within the UK. Through this, the dissertation will offer a theoretical contribution, expanding the traditional notion of securitization theory, gaining a more nuanced understanding of the process through which an issue is pushed into the security field. Further to its theoretical contribution, this is an important research topic because of its current political relevance and as a human rights concern. Considering the number of displaced people in the world is at a record high, the move to securitize asylum seekers is a cause for concern. The adoption of restrictive asylum policies has implications for the larger human rights framework as countries become primarily concerned with borders and internal security.

Further contributions of this dissertation are empirical. Chapter Three offers a detailed Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of the main immigration speeches by political elites. This chapter is divided into three sections to cover all governments since 2010. This will highlight the hegemonic discourse and frames used concerning migration in the UK. Chapter Four will provide an analysis of nondiscursive processes of securitization. It will examine policies and administrative procedures in the UK which arguably reinforce the migration-security nexus. The overall study underlines the value of applying the strengths of both the CS and PS rather than viewing them as "mutually exclusive" (Bourbeau, 2014, p.188). The conclusion will shift the focus back to a more theoretical level, considering the potential for a movement beyond restrictive asylum policies through a desecuritization process.

Chapter One: Contextual Background

2.1 European Union and Attitudes towards Immigration

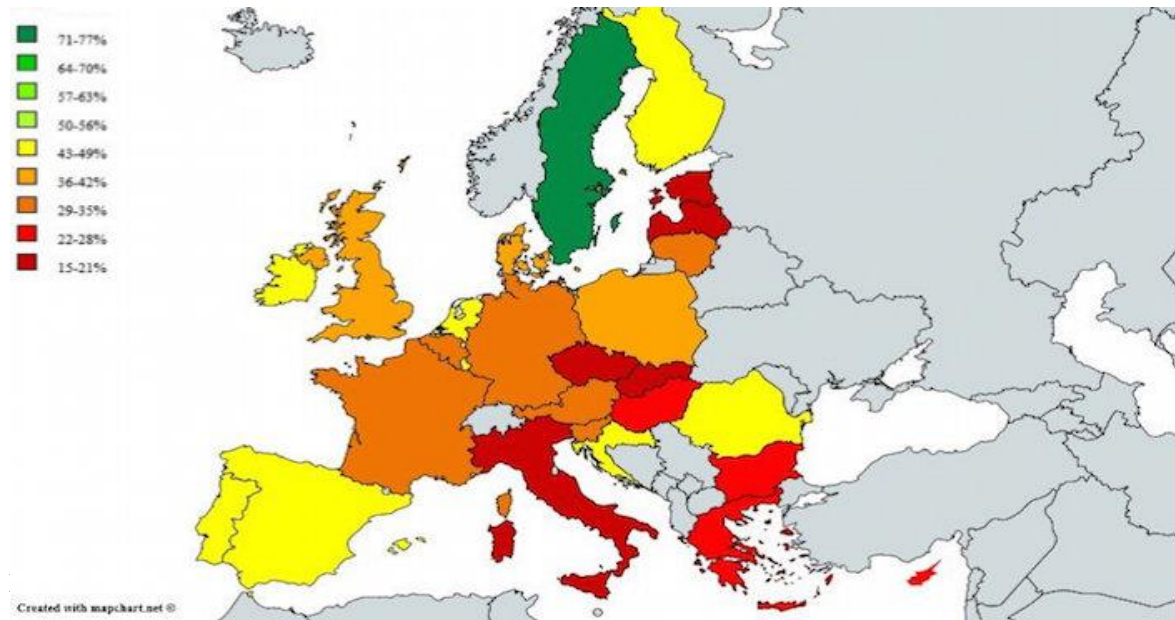


Figure 1. Positive feelings towards non-Eu Immigration

Source: Eurobarometer 82; Survey Nov.2014; QA 11.2

The above graph gives an overview of EU attitudes towards immigration. Since the end of World War II, European countries received significant numbers of immigrants. In the early years of the construction of the European Union, migration was not considered an important issue (Larrabee, 1992). However, historical circumstances such as the oil crisis in the 1970s and growing unemployment led to the shrinkage of guest worker programmes across Europe, paving the way for a restrictive approach to migration (Squire, 2009). With immigration and asylum policy entering the political agenda, national fears were transferred to the European community. The end of the Cold War led to an intensification of anti-migrant sentiment with a rather large number of Europeans considering immigration to be problematic (McLaren, 2015). The terrorist attacks of September 11th intensified security concerns. The change which has taken place in Europe is noticeable in the attitudes of governments, media and populations which now tend to be hostile toward asylum seekers and refugees

According to Human Rights Watch, EU member states agree on little about sharing responsibility for asylum seekers. However, a topic they do agree on is the need to limit and restrict the arrival of asylum seekers (Frelick, 2015). Crawley purports that it is EU member state's obsession with the number of asylum applications in Europe which have contributed to a restrictive approach (Crawley, 2005). Interestingly, of the world's 65.3 million displaced people, only a small portion make it to Europe. The majority of those displaced remain within their own country or in border countries (UNHCR, 2015). Although neighbouring countries take on far greater responsibility, the large rise in asylum applications toward the end of the 1980s and the continuing high numbers have resulted in policy change in EU countries (Crawley, 2005). It is this combination of policy and practices which culminate to form the notion of 'Fortress Europe'.

The *Maastricht Treaty*, signed in February 1992, was the beginning of greater European integration with the adoption of free movement between member states. The opening of internal borders brought with it the need to strengthen external borders and enhance security (Karyotis, 2007; Squire 2009). Through the process of Europeanisation of internal security policies, a greater sense of exclusion for third country nationals was created, establishing a higher degree of prejudice towards non-EU nationals. The following *Amsterdam Treaty*, signed in 1997 came into force in 1999. It amended the *Maastricht Treaty*, increasing powers for the Union. It set out to establish a common EU immigration and policy. However, through the attempt to harmonize policy and prevent the establishment of a 'Fortress Europe', it actually worked to ensure this process (Crawley, 2005, p.14). According to Bigo, the Europeanisation of migration issues was driven by a vision of the migrant as a "personal adversary" with the adoption of policies which verge on xenophobia (Bigo, 2001, p.125). Concerning the societal element of anti-immigration discourse, free movement for EU nationals strengthens the notion of inclusion and exclusion. As the Europeanisation of migration progressed, so did the logic of security (Karyotis, 2007; Huysmans, 2000). There was a proliferation of security practices, associating terrorism with migration within intelligence channels such as the Schengen Information System (Karyotis, 2007, p.6).

The *Dublin Regulation* was a further means of deterrence for asylum seekers coming to Europe. At face value, it appears as a convention which improves the situation for asylum, speeding up the process (Huysmans, 2006). However, in reality, the regulation was adopted in 2003 with the aim of reducing the number of applications. It determines which EU state is responsible for examining an asylum application, making it impossible to claim asylum in different member states. This regulation operates on the assumption that asylum laws and practices are the same across all EU states. However, the reality is that asylum legislation varies widely from country to country (UNHCR, 2009). Because EU countries near external borders such as Greece and Italy receive the largest numbers of asylum seekers, these states are under increased pressure and cannot provide adequate services and protection. Rates of asylum approval vary widely across Europe. For example, of all asylum claims made in 2016, the highest rates of first instance decisions were in Slovakia and Greece. In contrast, the highest rejection rates (above 75%) were recorded in Greece, Ireland, Hungary and Poland (Eurostat, 2017). From this, it is apparent that asylum policies are not the same across Europe.

Further to restrictive policies, practices have been crucial to the establishment of a restrictive approach to asylum seekers in the EU. With the establishment of free movement within the EU, external borders were tightened. Measures employed by the EU have not stopped at external borders but extend into bordering countries, establishing what can be considered a “buffer zone” (Amnesty, 2014, p.5). In total, EU member states have built more than 235 km of fences at the EU’s external borders costing more than 175 million Euros, including:

- a 175 km fence along the Hungary-Serbia border
- a 30 km fence along the Bulgaria-Turkey border, which is to be extended by a further 130 km
- 18.7 km of fences along the borders of the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla with Morocco, and
- a 10.5 km fence in the Evros region along the Greece-Turkey border (Amnesty, 2015).

First Time Applications

2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
182,040	226,725	229,570	290,910	313,265	403,600	595,530	1,325,560	1,233,340

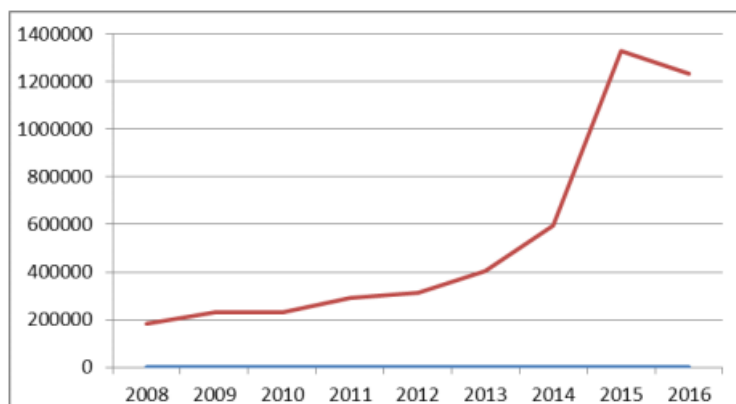


Figure 2. Total number of first time applications in Europe each year since 2008

Source: Refugee Council (2017) “Asylum Seekers in Europe” *Refugee Council*

As is clear from the above table and chart, there has been a large increase in the number of asylum applications, particularly in 2015. The recent ‘European refugee crisis’ and the rise of terrorism across Europe has severely tested European solidarity, highlighting the rise in a restrictive approach to asylum seekers. Filippo Grandi, the 11th United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, has called the response to the crisis a “failure” with states resorting to “policies of containment rather than shared responsibility, with even the relevance of the 1951 Convention being called into question by some” (Grandi, 2016). So far in 2017 there have been 120,167 arrivals to Europe by sea and an estimated 2,421 dead and missing (UNHCR, 2017). The majority arrive in Italy, Greece and Spain.

The combination of policies and practices within the EU highlight a hostile approach towards asylum seekers. Undoubtedly, the European integration process played a role in the social construction of migration as a security issue. Moreover, EU solidarity has been tested and strained with the recent refugee crisis and the rise of terrorist attacks across Europe. The paper will now look more specifically at attitudes within the UK, providing some contextualization before engaging with a contemporary analysis of asylum policy in the United Kingdom.

2.2 United Kingdom History and Attitudes

UK Figures

The numbers of asylum applications have increased in the UK, but not as steeply as in Europe as a whole. The table and chart below use Home Office statistics. These figures include dependants.

2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
31,313	30,673	22,644	25,898	27,978	29,875	32,344	39,968	38,517

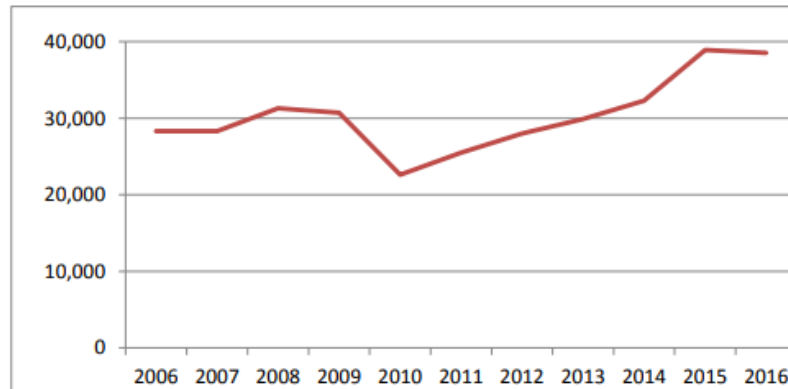


Figure 3. Total number of first time applications in the UK

Source: Refugee Council (2017b) “Asylum Seekers in Europe” *Refugee Council*

The above graph highlights an increase in asylum applications in the UK since 2006; however, as evident from the previous section, it is not as high as Europe as a whole. Germany was noted as receiving eighteen times the UK figure (Refugee Council, 2017b). The UK’s geographical position means it is harder to reach to claim asylum, with southern European states such as Greece and Italy experiencing the largest rise in asylum applicants. Despite this, the UK is increasingly restrictive in its approach toward migrants. In the context of the 2016 “Brexit” referendum on European membership, it is essential to consider the role of anti-immigration attitudes. As previously mentioned, immigration was a divisive issue on both sides of the campaign. The majority of the Leave side considered immigration to be the largest issue at stake (Glencross, 2016, p.41). With the Leave camp receiving 51.9% of votes, it is evident that UK society is incredibly divided. To understand why immigration was considered such an important issue in the Brexit referendum, an understanding of the UK’s historical relationship to immigration is integral.

According to Buonfino (2004) immigration has become the most significant security concern of this century. Migration was a defining issue in the UK's June 2016 EU membership referendum. Following the vote to leave the EU on the 23rd of June, there was a 42% rise in reports of hate crimes across Britain according to Police Chief, Mark Hamilton (Dodd, 2016). The 31st NatCen Social Research British Social Attitudes survey revealed a hardline view on immigrants with a "clear majority" believing the UK loses more than it gains from migration. According to the survey, based on responses from 3,000 Britons: "around half regards the impact of immigration as negative" (Park et al., 2014, p.86). From this, it is apparent that anti-immigration opinion has become well established within the United Kingdom. Immigrants are framed as 'scroungers' coming to the UK to claim benefits or criminals, threatening the social, economic and security of the UK.

Unlike some other European states, the UK has a long history of immigration. However, the consensus of an open immigration system ended in the 1970s with the first large recession of the post war period. The issue of immigration control would continue to be hotly debated in the UK throughout the 80s and 90s and remains one of the most important issues in the current political debate. The 1987 Conservative Party Manifesto stated that the top priority was: "tackling the problem of those who fraudulently pose as refugees and who seek to exploit Britain's long tradition of giving refuge to the victims of persecution". Three new bills were introduced which were primarily aimed at asylum seekers: *The Immigration Act 1987* (Carrier's Liability Act), the *Asylum and Immigration Appeals Act 1993* and the *Asylum and Immigration Act 1996*. *The Carriers' Liability Act* essentially made airlines and shipping companies act "as an arm of the British immigration control" (Hayter, 2000, p.76). Fines would be imposed for each passenger carried into the UK without correct documentation. The *1993 Asylum and Immigration Appeals Act* extended the right of appeal but subjected cases which are deemed "frivolous" and cases of people who travelled through third countries to fast-track procedures (Hayter, 2000, p.76). It was argued that this would speed up the process for 'genuine refugees'; however, the act led to a significant increase in refusal rates. The *1996 Asylum and Immigration Act* further extended the grounds under which a case could be fast tracked, also introducing a 'white list' of safe countries.

The Labour Party expressed strong opposition to these legislative developments. Despite this, when Labour came to power, they continued on the same path, adopting increasingly restrictive immigration policies. In 1998, the Labour government produced the white paper entitled *Fairer, Faster and Firmer – A Modern Approach to Immigration and Asylum*. There were some objections put forward by organizations, including the Refugee Council and Amnesty International. Despite complaints, it was turned into a bill in 1999 and passed on its third reading. Deterrence remained central to New Labour's approach to asylum. At this point, hostility towards immigration seemed to be taken as a given in the UK. Beginning with the Conservative government, New Labour continued on the same path, embedding anti-migrant practices. With this acceptance of migration as a threat in the UK, it has become the norm for government resources to be invested in demonstrating a "tough approach to controlling borders" (Jones et al., p.13).

Despite legislative adoptions on asylum and immigration in the 70s and 80s, asylum was not a primary policy focus in the UK until 1993. According to Squire: "It was at this point that the Asylum and Immigration Appeals Act incorporated the 1951 United Nations Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees into British law, and the UK was formally obliged to acknowledge Article 14" (Squire, 2009, p.6). Before this, asylum was granted on an ad-hoc basis. Interestingly, this commitment came at a time when there was a shift toward a more limited interpretation of the *Refugee Convention*. Although contemporary political elites in the UK continually celebrate Britain's history as a welcoming country, it undoubtedly has a history of restriction. Former prime minister, Margaret Thatcher stated that: "We joined Europe to have free movement of goods... I did not join Europe to have free movement of terrorists, criminals, drugs, plant and animal disease and illegal immigrants" (cited in Baimbridge et al., 1994, p.422). Additionally, although Britain offered refuge to 10,000 Vietnamese Boat People in the 1970s, it was with reluctance on the part of Thatcher who asked if they could be "shifted from one warehouse in Hong Kong to another in the UK" (cited in Travis, 2009). From this statement, it is undeniable that an exclusionary approach to asylum seekers has a long history within the United Kingdom.

Anti-immigration discourse was crucial to the Brexit vote, with the majority of leave voters believing that immigration was negative for the UK. From the 1970s onward, a connection between immigration and party perception is recognized (McLaren, 2015). In light of this, political parties within the UK have competed to appear tougher on immigration. Although Brexit did not create the divide on immigration in the UK, the campaign functioned to politically mobilize them (BES, p.25).

2.3 The Four Axes for Securitizing Migration

The structure selected to carry out this study is informed by an established framework which is deployed to securitize migration. The anti-immigration arguments put forward by various states and actors are more or less similar. According to Ceyhan and Tsoukala (2002, p.24), there are four main axes around which anti-immigration arguments are typically articulated: economic, societal, criminological and political. A short outline of each axis is provided, offering a basis to critically analyze both the discourse of political elites and policies and practices.

Societal security is central to the security-migration nexus (Wæver, 1993). It sets out the groundwork for the other three axes. In the case of societal security, identity is the referent object. The arrival of migrants is perceived as a threat to hegemonic identity (Buonfino, 2004, p.33). Migration comes to be framed as a threat to the cultural identity of the state (Huysmans, 2000). Despite the fact that European society originates from a history of migration, homogeneity is promoted as a stabilizing factor. The homogenous 'us' is contrasted with the foreign 'them'. This security language establishes a perceived threat. Said (1978) argued that it is a fear of the 'other' which led to the construction of European identity. The European identity is presented as superior in comparison to the other who is perceived as a threat to society. This 'othering' has led to the scapegoating of the migrant for societal issues such as unemployment. Political discourse, policy and administrative policies intentionally or unintentionally place migrants in a "liminal state of marginalization (Furman et al., 2016, p.3). Through the perceived otherness of the migrant, a rise in discrimination and exclusion emerges.

Similar to the societal axis, the binary of 'us' and 'them' is ingrained in the economic axis. According to McLaren (2015), one of the largest concerns relating to

migration revolves around welfare which is viewed as being for country nationals. The 'us' and 'them' binary establishes an image of insider/outsider, deserving/undeserving. The migrant 'other' is blamed for the lowering of wages and for creating economic insecurity for the 'deserving' people of that country. The issue of welfare remains particularly controversial, with immigrants vilified for abusing the welfare system. There is a significant correlation between times of economic down turn and reactions against inflows of asylum seekers (Den Boer, 1995, p.107). Times of economic uncertainty such as the 2007 financial crisis undoubtedly lead to a rise in anti-immigration attitudes as there is a perceived competition over resources. Media and political elites put forward discourses which suggest irregular immigration can have adverse effects on employment and wages for nationals, along with abuse of the welfare system (Ceyhan and Tsoukala, 2002). According to Buonfino public opposition to immigration emerges from fear of "further financial decline" (Buonfino, 2004, p.34). The media and politicians deploy discourses of economic insecurity, playing on the public's fear to increase support for anti-immigration views.

The societal axis links with the criminological dimension. Through the of othering of migrants, they are perceived as a threat to society, cementing them into the criminal-migrant thesis (Karyotis, 2007, p. 9-10). The discourse of the problem is intensified through aligning migration with illegal activities and terrorism. Immigrants are demonized and stigmatized as terrorists, allowing for the adoption of exceptional measures to counteract the alleged threat (Ceyhan and Tsoukala p.25). Once political elites and the public in a particular context reach a shared understanding of migrants as a threat, they become criminalized (Karyotis and Skleparis, 2016, p.266). The establishment of the criminal/migrant nexus, which is frequently supported in media reports, is fundamental to the social construction of migrants as a threatening figure, warranting exclusionary practices.

Lastly, immigration is securitized on a political axis. Buonfino (2004, p.38) purports that in a society where insecurity is present, governments must reassure the public. Essentially politicians are goal maximizing actors who will adopt whatever discourse they believe will result in the greatest degree of public satisfaction, in turn,

guaranteeing the party's success in the polls. Parties compete to appear tough on migration to gain more votes. This was clear in the lead up to the 2015 UK election with the Labour party, traditionally a liberal party, selling mugs bearing the line: "Controls on Immigration". In the face of a large backlash, their only defence was that the large numbers of the public believe immigration numbers are too high (Bush, 2015). This supports Buonfino's (2004) argument that politicians adopt any discourse which will result in the most votes. It is this supply and demand frame which reinforces securitization of migration.

To summarize, the securitization of migration is articulated around the societal, economic, criminological and political axes. These axes provide a clear framework to examine the rhetoric of political elites in Chapter Three and to consider the wording and drafting of existing and new immigration legislation in Chapter Four.

Chapter Two – Theory and Methodology

1.1 Theory

The traditional state-centric notion of security has undergone a reconceptualization since the 1980s. Securitization theory is considered the most significant and innovative addition to security studies. According to Karyotis and Patrikios (2010, p.43), it offers the most convincing alternative to the “state-military approach prescribed by realism”. The objective of securitization theory is to understand the process by which an issue is cast as a threat to a referent object (Bourbeau, 2014, p.190). Securitization is described as a process whereby an issue is presented as a threat. It may not be an inherently dangerous issue, such as the case of migration; however, states securitize migration to exert control (Faist, 2002). Securitization theory essentially argues that the objective significance of a threat is irrelevant, it is perceptions which matter. Barry Buzan (1983) is credited with starting the security debate, arguing that security is an “underdeveloped” concept in International Relations. This traditional approach to national security grows out of the anarchic model of realist theory which focuses on survival. According to Buzan, the traditional notion of security “bound to the level of individual states is inherently inadequate” (Buzan, 1983, p.5). With this in mind, Buzan and his colleagues focused on broadening the concept of security to include other issue areas.

Scholars associated with the establishment of this theory were labelled ‘The Copenhagen School’ (CS). The CS sought to move security studies beyond its realist focus, widening the notion of what is considered a security issue. They purport that security consists of a broad range of issues beyond state and military. In this more diverse approach to security, there are five sectors: economic, societal, environmental, political and military (Buzan et al., 1998, p.7). The CS dismiss the notion that security is a given. Instead, they adopt a constructivist approach, viewing security as a process by which an issue is framed as a security threat. Securitization theory is essentially an analytical tool which can be used to understand the process of threat construction. The CS view threats as social constructions which do not necessarily reflect objective reality.

Securitization marks the linguistic turn in security studies. According to Wæver (1995), security can be considered a “speech act”. Through the use of security language,

political actors can move an issue into the security realm, claiming the right to use exceptional means to gain control over the perceived threat (Wæver, 1995, p.55). However, the CS argue that this cannot be carried out by the securitizer alone, it is decided by the audience of the security speech act (Buzan et al. 1998, p.31). Whether or not the audience accepts the speech act determines if an issue becomes securitized. Through saying that “the defining criterion of security is textual” the process of securitization is limited to discourse (Buzan et al., 1998, p.176). Channeling Carl Schmitt’s work on politics of exception, the CS contend that in the face of an extraordinary threat, governments are in a position to stop it by any means, bypassing standard rules. Through framing an issue as a security threat, the state is empowered with the right to use exceptional means to block the issue (Buzan et al., 1998, p.21). This is what Bourbeau (2014) refers to as the logic of exception. Through language, an issue is transformed into a security threat which requires an exceptional response.

The CS has reformulated notions of national security, revealing some of the techniques used to support security discourse on migration. However, it comes with limitations, and its insufficiencies have been exposed by a theoretical and methodological widening from a large number of scholars. The Paris School (PS) offers an alternative to the logic of exception with the logic of routine. The PS argues that discourse is not the sole contributor to the securitization process; rather, it is: “a collection of routinized and patterned practices, typically carried out by bureaucrats and security professionals” (Bourbeau, 2014, p.188). As Bourbeau (2014) argues, to suggest that the securitization process can only occur through speech acts is lacking. This is not to delegitimize the importance of discourse; rather, it is an acknowledgement that the CS version of securitization fails to provide a thorough representation of the process through which an issue is articulated as a threat. Balzacq et al. (2010) purport that security is the combination of a “kaleidoscope of practices” rather than solely discourse.

Scholars loosely associated with the PS have offered several non-verbal processes through which an issue can enter the security realm. Balzacq argues that: “some manifestations of securitization might best be understood by focusing on the nature and functions of policy tools” (Balzacq, 2008, p.15). Drawing on the work of Foucault, other

scholars focus on governmentality suggesting that: “more mundane bureaucratic decisions of everyday politics” contribute to the process of securitization (Bigo and Tsoukala, 2008, p.5) Foucault coined this term to refer to the ways in which a government exerts control or governs its populace. Both approaches are inherently connected with policy tools directing governmental practices. Policy tools shape social relations, establishing an image of a threat and outlining what should be done about it (Balzacq, 2010, p.16). What Balzacq (2010) refers to as “regulatory tools” are essential to an understanding of non-discursive methods of securitization. These are essentially policy instruments introduced by governments to permit certain practices to reduce a perceived threat (Balzacq, 2010, p.17). Regulatory tools function to routinize procedures of threat management, reinforcing the security discourse of political elites.

From the above, it is evident that a clear distinction between the two security logics cannot be drawn. Rather, the two approaches are inherently linked. Through examining both the logic of exception and the logic of routine, multiple intersections arise as discursive and non-discursive elements of securitization reinforce the other. This paper will draw on the strengths of the CS and PS to provide the most comprehensive understanding of how asylum seekers have become securitized in the UK.

1.2 Methodology

With the theoretical agenda of this paper set, the general methodological approach will be outlined. This dissertation is based on evidence gathered through an in-depth review of existing literature, political speeches, and government policies and reports. The dates were chosen to provide a contemporary understanding of migration attitudes in the UK, specifically attitudes towards asylum seekers. The objective of this research is to uncover the extent and ways in which asylum seekers have been cast as a threat to the UK’s national security and social cohesion. Because this paper is concerned with how a social phenomenon is constructed, qualitative methods are deemed essential. The narrow and focused scope of a qualitative approach will allow for rigorous theory application. The generalizability of a quantitative design would not be advantageous to this study; arguably, it would be parsimonious. As King, Keohane and Verber (1994) wrote, there is no reason to adopt parsimony unless a lot is already known about a subject.

Buzan, Wæver and de Wilder advise that: “security analysis (must be) interested mainly in successful instances of securitization” (1998, p.39). Considering this, case studies are the primary research strategy in empirical research on securitization (Balzacq, 2011). According to Richard Yin (2012), case studies are pertinent when an explanatory question is being addressed. This dissertation seeks to explain how and to what extent asylum seekers have been securitized. It makes the most sense to ground this research in a particular context to allow for engagement with the social construction of security threats. The UK will be used as a single case study, focusing on the timeframe of May 2010 to the May election 2017. One rationale for choosing a single case is where it represents the common case. The objective of a typical case is to: “capture the circumstances and conditions of an everyday situation – again because of the lessons it might provide about the social processes related to some theoretical interest” (Yin, 2012, p.52). With this in mind, the UK has been selected as an example of securitization of asylum seekers and this research seeks to gain insights into the processes which have allowed this to occur. Furthermore, Yin (2012) writes that the theoretical interest should also influence a decision to use a case study approach. According to the CS: “the way to study securitization is to study discourse and political constellations” (Buzan et al. p.25) Through the adoption of a single-case study, depth of analysis can be given over to the discourse of political elites and policy practices within a specific context.

The application of securitization theory prompts the use of discourse analysis. As mentioned in the previous section, the CS claim that social reality is constructed through ‘speech acts’. The CS prescribe discourse analysis as “the most obvious method” for studying cases of securitization since the interest is in how an issue is established as a threat (Buzan et al. 1998, p.178). Like securitization, discourse analysis focuses on text. According to Van Dijk the rationale for using discourse analysis is to know “who uses language, how, why and when” (1997, p.2). Although there are a number of approaches within discourse analysis, it is generally agreed that discourse is not neutral; rather, discourse has the ability to construct social reality (Jorgensen and Philips, 2002). For the purpose of this research, critical discourse analysis (CDA) will be used. The primary aim of CDA is to analyze the connections between language and social practice. Key speeches by political elites will be examined, noting the ways in which migration is

framed as a threat to national security in the UK. Anybody can be a securitizer, however, it is those with authority, such as political elites who have the greatest legitimacy; therefore, the discourse of prime ministers and home secretaries is the most authoritative for this study.

The second empirical chapter in this study will make up for what are considered weaknesses in both discourse analysis and securitization prescribed by the CS. Through saying that text is the defining criteria of security, the CS simplifies the process of securitization. It fails to engage with the complex way through which an issue is raised to the security agenda (Karyotis, 2012). Rather than focusing exclusively on linguistics, Balzacq (2011) argues that policies and practices also need attention. He writes that: “tools embody a specific image of the threat and, to a large extent, what ought to be done about it” (Balzacq, 2011, p.16). This non-discursive approach has been associated with the so-called Paris School. Process tracing will be used to examine non-discursive practices of securitization. Process tracing is used to examine the way in which initial conditions in a case become outcomes (George, 1979). An extensive review has been undertaken of existing literature, policies, research reports from the UK government, as well as research reports from non-governmental organizations. The aim of this all-encompassing review is to map the processes which have contributed and normalized the securitization of asylum seekers in the UK.

1.3 Data Gathering

Securitization is typically viewed as a top-down process whereby elites construct an issue as a threat. If the “securitizing move” is accepted by the audience, exceptional measures can be adopted, breaking standard norms of accepted behaviors. Proponents of securitization argue that securitization takes place in critical debates and speeches and is unlikely to be hidden. Considering this, they claim: “one does not need to read everything, particularly not obscure texts” (Buzan et al., 1998, p177). Given this, the paper focuses on the discourse of ruling elites and on policy to examine how asylum seekers have been securitized in the UK. The data selection process was conducted by reviewing all speeches on immigration by prime ministers and home secretaries during the timeframe specified. In the first instance, all key speeches made by political elites

referencing the word 'immigration' were sourced. The second stage of selection involved searching through the speeches and looking for references to the terms immigration, migration, refugee, asylum seeker, bogus, control. These speeches were then read for meaning, connecting the prevailing themes and frames. The purpose was to understand whether and how the debates linked migration with security. This analysis, thus, sought to understand the process through which asylum seekers are framed as a security threat. An in depth review allowed for the project to be rigorous and consistent, ensuring a depth of analysis.

For the second empirical chapter, data was collected from official documents, published statistics, from published research and other primary and secondary sources. The primary focus was on existing and new immigration policies. The Home Office website was used to examine existing immigration policies, rule amendments and the introduction of new policies such as the 2014 and 2016 Immigration Acts. The following chapter will outline the theoretical framework which will be adopted for the purpose of this study.

Chapter Three: Discursive Securitization – Copenhagen School

3.1 Introduction

So far, this dissertation has set the stage for the analysis, examining historical developments which highlight security as a motivation in UK migration policies. In this chapter, a CDA will be conducted on several important speeches made by prime ministers and home secretaries in the UK concerning the debate on migration. It will focus on “security moves” by these political elites since 2010. The language used to articulate migration as a threat will be examined, gaining insight into how this has become the hegemonic discourse on migration in the UK. The way in which both major stake holders frame migration will be explored, considering differences in how the prime minister speaks about migration versus the home secretary. Following this analysis, a summary will be provided to bring together the dominant themes which emerge. Securitization is a top-down approach, and therefore political elites are the focus. This study will highlight the prevailing frames which are operationalized by politicians to construct an image of an enemy, threatening Britain. As previously discussed in Chapter Two, anti-immigration discourse is articulated around four axes: societal, criminological, economic, and political (Karyotis, 2007). Politically leaders in the UK articulate migration as a threat through attention to these four axes, particularly the economic and societal axes.

3.2 The 2010 Government

3.2.1 Manifesto¹

The Conservative Party 2010 Manifesto makes direct reference to immigration in a section titled “Attract the brightest and best to our country”. Here immigration is mentioned in relation to three of the axes: economic, social and criminological. Firstly, in relation to the economy, controlled immigration is framed as an advantage to the UK. There is an establishment of a British ‘us’ and foreign ‘them’ as it is said that: “we do not need to attract people to do jobs that could be carried out by British citizens”. However, there is an acknowledgement that immigration has “enriched our nation” and that there is

¹ All quotations in this section are from the 2010 Conservative Party Manifesto

a need to “attract the brightest and best people”. This line immediately draws a line between those who are ‘desirables’ and ‘undesirables’.

Next, the societal axis is deployed with a stress on integration, stating that “everyone coming to this country must be ready to embrace our core values”. This seems to emphasize a promotion of cultural homogenization where there is no room for difference.

Regarding the criminological axis, the Conservative party claim that:

Extremists, serious criminals and others find our borders far too easy to penetrate. That is why we will create a dedicated Border Police Force, as part of a refocused Serious Organized Crime Agency, to enhance national security, improve migration controls and crack down on the trafficking of people, weapons and drugs.

A direct link is made between crime and immigration, establishing an image of migrants as inherently connected with crime.

3.2.2 Prime Minister: David Cameron²

In March 2013, the Prime Minister, David Cameron gave a speech addressing immigration. Cameron acknowledges and celebrates the fact that British society is a product of continuous migrations, cautious to recognize that: “immigration has brought significant benefits to Britain”. Despite this, the speech focuses on the economic axis of securitization, centralizing on the theme of control, a word which appears 24 times: “has to be properly controlled”, “Without proper controls”, “badly out of control” etc.

This focus on the economic axis comes through early on as Cameron notes how “resources are stretched” with the British welfare system being used as a “soft touch”. This reinforces public opinion, with 55% of those with the most negative views on immigration believing the main reason migrants come to the UK is to claim benefits (Park et al., 2014, p.78). He repeats the phrase: “we cannot have a culture of something for nothing” three times during the speech, strengthening the image of migrants as

² All quotations in this section are taken from David Cameron’s speech on immigration and welfare reform at University Campus Suffolk, accessed via Gov.uk

scroungers. According to Cameron, the benefits system suggests that “the British taxpayer owes you a living for as long as you like, no matter how little you have contributed to social security since you arrived”. Thus, the speech goes on to announce policy changes which will limit access to benefits for migrants, restricting migrants to six months of jobseeker’s allowance. The NHS and social housing are then discussed, with mention of proposed to limits:

Again, we cannot have a culture of something for nothing. New migrants should not expect to be given a home on arrival. And yet at present almost one in ten new social lettings go to foreign nationals. So, I am going to introduce new statutory housing allocation guidance this spring to create a local residence test. Now, what this should mean is that local people rightly get priority in the social housing system. And migrants will need to have lived here and contributing – contributed to this country for at least two years before they can qualify.

This prioritization of “local people” emphasizes the sense of separateness between the British ‘us’ and the foreign ‘them’. Furthermore, the suggestion that migrants “expect” to have a home provided verges on racist. It reinforces a stereotype of migrants as spongers coming to the UK to abuse the welfare system. The emphasis in this speech is on the ‘right’ kind of migrant: “ensuring that those who do come here are the brightest and the best, the people we really need”. There are references to “bogus colleges”, “bogus students” and people coming “through the back door”. Cameron contributes to the blurring of categories of migrants, fueling discrimination and strengthening anti-immigrant views held by members of the public.

3.2.4 Deputy Prime Minister: Nick Clegg³

As Deputy Prime Minister in the 2010 government, Nick Clegg gave one speech that is of interest to this research on the 5th of August 2014. Initially he sets out less restrictive views on immigration, contradicting those held by Cameron. He says in stark contrast, that: “this nation is always at its best when we are open and outward-facing”. His speech can be viewed as offering a desecuritising move, beginning with the societal axis:

³ All quotations in this section are taken from Nick Clegg’s 2014 speech on immigration accessed from the Liberal Democrat’s website

So I am never going to advocate pulling up the drawbridge because I think it's what people want to hear. The Liberal Democrats are never going to mimic the likes of UKIP and others – the scaremongering, the immigrant-bashing, the seductive promise that all our problems will disappear if only we shut up shop and stick a 'closed' sign on the door.

However, despite initial attempts to present the Liberal Democrats as “Britain's only real internationalist party”, the speech does not continue with a trajectory of desecuritization and wavers on the criminological axis with the subject of “illegal immigration”. Clegg claims it damages society: “The Crime. The black economy. The slave labour. The beds-in-sheds”. According to Clegg, the only beneficiaries are “rogue employers and dodgy landlords”. There is no acknowledgement of the fact that the only way to enter the UK to claim asylum is by illegal means, despite this being a right guaranteed in the 1948 UDHR. Similar to Cameron, Clegg calls for the right kind of migrants, echoing “Britain must remain a magnet for the brightest and the best.” Although Clegg makes an attempt to seem more positive on immigration, he ultimately calls for similar restrictions, reinforcing the aims of the Conservative party.

3.2.3 Home Secretary: Theresa May⁴

At the Conservative Party conference in Birmingham on the 9th of October 2012, Theresa May was particularly vocal on immigration. She celebrates the achievements of the Conservatives since their return to government in 2010, specifically the implementation of “proper controls on immigration”. In this speech the threat around immigration is framed primarily in relation to societal and criminological axes. According to May, communities take “pride in our British identity instead of fragmented, separate identities”. No evidence is given for this and there is no acknowledgment of the reality that British society is made up of a history of migration with many ethnic groups. She goes on to speak of immigration as a threat to “social cohesion” which leads on to the economic axis. May says that we need to admit the “fact” that immigration is to blame for

⁴ All quotations in this section are taken from Theresa May's speech at the 2012 Conservative Party Conference

undercutting the wages of local workers. Again, no evidence is provided. Here, May is playing on the audience's sense of economic insecurity.

One of the most startling aspects of the speech is May's comments on the larger human rights regime. May purports that human rights laws are misused, specifically Article Eight of the *European Convention on Human Rights* – Right to respect of private and family life. May argues that “we should scrap the Human Rights Act altogether – but for now, we're doing everything we can to stop human rights laws getting in the way of immigration controls.” This part of the speech provides an insight into the Conservative Party's wider opinion on the value of human rights. Rather than viewing human rights as a positive development, May articulates the human rights framework as a regime which benefits non-UK citizens at the expense of UK citizens.

Following engagement with social and economic axes, the speech moves directly on to discuss crime. This reinforces the manifesto connection between crime and migration. Although May does not make a direct association between the two, the associational links are arguably even more powerful, reinforcing opinions voiced through mass media. There is a clear difference in tone between May and Cameron on the topic of immigration. As Home Secretary, May adopts an extremely hostile and tough approach to the immigration debate.

3.3 The 2015 Government

3.3.1 Manifesto⁵

Immigration was very much the focus of the 2015 Conservative Party Manifesto with a section titled “Controlled immigration that benefits Britain”. The Conservative government commits to a plan which will control immigration and put “you, your family and the British people first”. The manifesto makes an ironic claim that the Conservative party “will always be a party that is open, outward-looking and welcoming” which verges on the absurd as it proceeds to stress an urgent need to “control immigration and put Britain first”. The manifesto primarily operationalizes two axes of securitization: economic and societal.

⁵ All quotations in this section are taken from the 2015 Conservative Party manifesto

The first plan focuses on the economic axis concerning welfare access. The manifesto commits to regaining control of EU migration through reforming welfare rules. Essentially, it seeks to reduce the incentives for EU citizens coming to the UK through barring access to job seekers allowance and it proposes that those who are unemployed for more than six months will be required to leave the UK. Additionally, it proposes to prevent free movement for new EU members until their economies improve. The manifesto also promises to tackle “health tourism”, with a plan to recover an alleged £500 million from migrants using the NHS.

There is a shift away from a more humanitarian rhetoric seen under the coalition government, with appeal claims noted as “clogging up our courts”. The societal axis is given attention with the promise of protection of “British values and our way of life” with emphasis on the need for integration through English language; however, no provisions for classes for asylum seekers or refugees are set out. A promise is made to legislate on language tests for those coming to the UK, something which does, in fact, take place in the *Immigration Act 2016*.

3.3.2 Prime Minister: David Cameron⁶

On the 21st of May 2015, two weeks after the general election and the victory of a Conservative majority, David Cameron made a speech on the government’s plans to control immigration. This speech emphasizes the political element of securitization as it is said that in voting Conservative, the people have signaled their desire for “immigration properly controlled”. He states that control over immigration was, in fact, the instruction of this election. This claim shows that governments compete to appear tougher to maintain the support of the public, as mentioned in Chapter Two. Furthermore, it reinforces the notion of securitization as a supply and demand process.

Moving from the political axis, in keeping with his 2014 speech, Cameron emphasizes immigration as a threat to the British economy, purporting that immigration pushes down wages. He argues that there is a need to make the UK a “less attractive place to come and work illegally”. It is stressed that these measures will not prevent “the

⁶ All quotations in this section are taken from Cameron’s 2015 immigration speech ahead of the Queen’s Speech

brightest and the best” from being welcomed. He briefly touches on the refugee crisis but focuses on “addressing the conditions that make people set off on such a perilous journey” rather than suggesting that refugees will be welcomed into the UK.

It is not solely “illegal immigrants” who are targeted in this speech. Notably, EU citizens are also viewed as a group to be controlled, voicing the plans of the 2015 manifesto. Cameron proposes to “reduce the incentives which bring people here”, suggesting that people choose to migrate here because of the British welfare system.

3.3.3 Home Secretary: Theresa May⁷

On the 8th of October 2015, May spoke at the Conservative Party Conference in Manchester. The primary focus of this conference was the conflict in Syria and the resulting refugee crisis. In this speech, May states that there are “millions” of people in poor countries “who would love to live in Britain”. There is no clear evidence that people specifically wish to come to the UK, however, in saying this a sense of fear is established. This fear is reinforced by media reports with the deployment of words such as ‘swarms’. Framing devices are evident in this speech as May is tactful to frame restrictive policies to immigration as a humanitarian response. She argues that rather than bringing refugees to the UK it would be best to work with those who remain in the region.

Further, May says that: “we need to distinguish carefully between economic migrants and genuine refugees.” This is an important line as it implies that the asylum system is being abused, feeding into anti-asylum discourse within the UK. This blurring of categories threatens legitimate asylum seekers, opening them up to discrimination despite their legal entitlement to protection under international law.

3.4 The 2016 Government

3.4.1 Manifesto

There was no 2016 Manifesto, with Theresa May taking over following Cameron’s resignation in light of the EU membership referendum which saw the UK vote to leave the EU. The first opportunity this government had to publish a manifesto was in the lead up to the 2017 election, following nine months in government. In light of Brexit, this

⁷ All quotation in this section are taken from May’s speech at the 2015 Conservative Party conference

manifesto is less immigration focused with the core message attaining to the plans for a “strong and stable” government. It includes a small section on immigration, mainly summarizing previous discourse from the Conservative Party, continuing on the line of “controlled” immigration, including that from within the EU, prioritizing the British people.

3.4.2 Prime Minister: Theresa May⁸

Following the Brexit vote and May’s subsequent take over from Cameron as Prime Minister on the 11th of July 2016, she spoke at the Conservative Party Conference on the 5th of October 2016 in Birmingham. Although this speech is primarily focused on Brexit, there is a lot of engagement with the issue of immigration. With May assuming the role of prime minister, her discourse comes to mirror that of Cameron. Her language is no longer as tough and hostile on the topic of migration; rather, she shifts her emphasis towards the economic and political axes of securitization, leaving the criminological and societal axes to Rudd, the new home secretary.

Similar to previous speeches, immigration is blamed for economic insecurity. No other factors are mentioned with May using migrants as a scapegoat for the struggles which working class people in Britain have faced. This is not done through associational links as in previous cases but directly. Irregular immigration is explicitly blamed for unemployment in the UK, with May saying: “I know a lot of people don’t like to admit this – someone who finds themselves out of work or on lower wages because of low skilled immigration”. Here she shamelessly blames migrants, offering no other explanation for unemployment in the UK. As discussed in Chapter Two, economic factors are integral to understanding the move to more restrictive policies.

May’s language regarding the economic threat posed by immigration connects with the political axis. As seen in previous speeches, she plays upon working class people’s economic insecurity to create and reinforce a sense of unease. Through doing so, the Conservative party increase support for their party, adopting a tough response towards immigration, warranting the use of exceptional measures. Under Thatcher’s

⁸ All quotations in this section are taken from May’s speech at the 2016 Conservative Party Conference which appeared in *The Independent*

leadership, the 1980s saw a resurgence of nationalistic, authoritarian discourse (Squire, 2009). Recent years have seen a reappearance of this discourse with an intensification following the Brexit vote. May's speech adopts this nationalistic discourse stating that: "We are leaving to become, once more, a fully sovereign and independent country – and the deal is going to have to work for Britain." As Squire (2009) argues, this nationalistic language creates a hostile environment which allows for the establishment of asylum seekers as a scapegoat.

3.4.3 Home Secretary: Amber Rudd⁹

Following Rudd's 2016 Conservative Party Conference, there was a lot of backlash accusing her of racism. Similar to other speeches, she stresses the benefits of immigration: "it has enhanced our economy, our society and our culture", but goes on to emphasize the need to control and restrict immigration. Similar to May's speech, Rudd adopts a nationalist discourse concerning Brexit. The overall stress of the speech is the need to "put the interests of the British people first". Rudd directly links Brexit with the desire for greater control over immigration:

Now, the British people sent a clear message in the referendum. There can be no question that recent levels of immigration motivated a large part of the vote. But concerns about immigration did not just spring up out of nowhere.

Again, immigration is framed as an economic threat, robbing British people of employment opportunities: "work with us, not against us, and we'll better control immigration and protect our economy."

The societal axis is a crucial aspect of Rudd's anti-immigration discourse. Similar to the 2015 Conservative Party Manifesto, the phrase "our way of life" is deployed by Rudd five times, calling on the need for restrictive measures. Further, she refers to British towns which have been 'overwhelmed' by migration, putting pressure on housing and public services. "British people" is also repeated throughout the speech, reinforcing the nationalist approach to immigration. This speech highlights the increasingly hostile view towards EU nationals at a political level. This sense of exclusion is evidently moved

⁹ All quotations in this section unless otherwise stated are taken from Rudd's speech on immigration at the 2016 Conservative Party Conference which appeared in *The Spectator*

beyond third country nationals with Rudd suggesting EU nationals will soon be within the same category: “easier to deport EU criminals, aligning their fortunes more closely with those from outside the EU.”

Moving beyond, immigration as an economic and societal threat, Rudd explicitly draws on the criminological axis to further the notion of the migrant as a danger. Rudd links immigration with terrorism, suggesting that it is through the UK’s security services that attacks have been prevented, unlike in France which she says is “forever scarred”. She states that action is urgently required to “help communities affected by high levels of immigration, and stopping people coming here that threaten our security.” Rudd plays on the public’s fear, suggesting a need for exceptional measures: “intelligence sharing must continue, and continue to improve.” She goes on to introduce the *Investigatory Powers Bill* which is deemed “crucial” to the safety of the people of the UK, keeping us “safe in an uncertain world”. Through the framing of immigrants as a threat, Rudd draws on public fears, reinforcing a sense of unease.

3.5 Conclusion

The above analysis reveals that the attitudes of the political elites in the UK are in line with most of Europe, with calls for greater migration controls. UK leaders take advantage of all four axes to securitize migrants and asylum seekers. The construction of a binary “us” and “them” dynamic, placing the migrant in the role of other establishes an exclusionary discourse. It renders migrants as a threat to the identity of Britain, the economy, public order and political stability. Ironically, political leaders in the UK celebrate Britain’s history of immigration, celebrating diversity while insisting on the need to restrict further immigration. The majority of speeches follow a similar formula. The prime ministers tend to focus on the economic and societal axes, offering a tough approach to immigration; however, home secretaries tend to use more hostile language, drawing on all four axes to construct immigration as a threat, fueling public unease. The only speech which veers from the standard pattern is Clegg, who despite his attempt to desecuritize the issue, arguably contributes to the reinforcement of security frames.

Following the Brexit referendum, speeches from May and Rudd are increasingly nationalistic, creating a hostile environment with Rudd’s 2016 speech receiving a

significant amount of backlash from the more liberal press. Earlier speeches create more associational links between migration and crime; however, recent speeches explicitly link immigration and terrorism. This analysis has also drawn attention to the blurring of categories of migrants, as a strategy deployed by both prime ministers and home secretaries. Through using the term 'immigration', which constitutes several categories, connections are established which would not be possible with words like 'foreigner' or 'non-national (Bigo, 2001, p.140). This vagueness is a strategy deployed to allow for the blurring of different categories of migrants, questioning the legitimacy of those seeking protection. This threatens legitimate asylum seekers, opening them up to discrimination despite their legal entitlement to protection under international law. From the above CDA it is clear that discourse from political elites in the UK functions to securitize immigration, fueling public unease and increasing discrimination.

Chapter Four: Non-Discursive Securitization – The Paris School

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter examined how political leaders in the UK utilize security language to construct asylum seekers as a threat to national security. Security moves by political elites push the issue of migration into the security realm, and once the audience accepts it, it becomes securitized, allowing for the use of exceptional means. To focus only on political discourse in the process of securitization underestimates the role of bureaucratic procedures of inclusion and exclusion (Bigo, 2002). This chapter validates the view that securitization is a practice which is both discursive and nondiscursive (Balzacq, 2010, p.22). It does not seek to moot the arguments of the CS, but rather, develop greater insights into the process of securitization. Existing immigration and asylum policies and new policies introduced since 2010 will be considered, examining how they reinforce the notion of immigration as a threat. As was discussed in Chapter Two, this section will focus on what is referred to as “regulatory tools” which relate to the process of governmentality (Balzacq, 2010; Huysmans, 2006). As Bourbeau argues, it is these practices which have worked to “lock in and normalize the image of migrant as a threat in the UK (Bourbeau, 2014, p.197). Policies establish norms on the necessary response to a threat, thus participating in the social construction of migration as a threat in the UK.

As discussed in Chapter One, there have been several policies introduced in the UK since the 1970s with the objective of curbing immigration and restricting access to asylum. This trend has continued, and since 2010 there have been several immigration policies implemented with the aim of lowering the number of migrants coming to the UK. It is often argued that these policies are implemented to deter future immigrants and refugees. Policy is used to establish distance between the host population and asylum seekers and refugees, creating a dynamic of inclusion and exclusion (Huysmans, 2006, p.55). This chapter will provide a multifaceted answer to the question of how asylum seekers have become securitized in the UK through non-discursive methods. In undertaking this analysis, the chapter is divided into two parts. The first part will examine existing policy practices which recent governments have maintained, mainly what can be

considered “exclusionary” policies of detention, dispersal and juxtaposed borders. It is argued that these policies function to reinforce modern anti-asylum discourse through constructing an image of migrants as a threat which must be contained. Following on from this, policies which have been implemented since 2010 will be analyzed. For many years now successive administrations have adopted new legislation in attempts to look “tough” on immigration and gain greater support in elections. It will be contended that these policies largely work to reinforce popular anti-asylum discourse. Through attention to regulatory policies in the UK, a thorough understanding of the process of securitization is achieved.

4.2 Existing Policy Tools

4.2.1 Detention: Immigration and Asylum Act 1999

Immigration detention is an administrative practice which has become widely used across EU states. It is used to detain asylum seekers, and other foreign nationals subject to immigration controls for administrative purposes. The policy of detention articulates a need to create distance between the host population and asylum seekers (Huysmans, 2006). The *Immigration Act 1971* first introduced the power to detain immigrants and the *Asylum and Immigration Appeals Act 1993* built on this, allowing for asylum seekers to be detained. More recently, the *Immigration and Asylum Act 1999* established a new legal framework for detention of asylum seekers, offering the most detailed framework for management of detention. However, despite these legislative moves, before the 1990s, detention was considered a practice of exceptionality. Yet, detention has now become a routine procedure and is no longer a last resort.

The acceptability of detaining migrants reached new heights in the 2000s. According to Welsh and Schuster there were only 250 people detained in 1993 in comparison to 2260 detained ten years later (Welsh and Schuster, 2005, p.402). Some detainees are failed asylum seekers, foreign national offenders and undocumented migrants awaiting deportation. Detention was introduced under the 1970 Conservative government, but it was expanded and became a regular, normalized practice under New Labour (Bloch and Schuster, 2005). The past two decades have witnessed the institutionalization of detention as a security practice in the UK. Although detention is an

administrative practice adopted in most EU countries, the UK facilities are among the largest (Migration Observatory, 2017). Under the New Labour government, the detention estate significantly expanded.

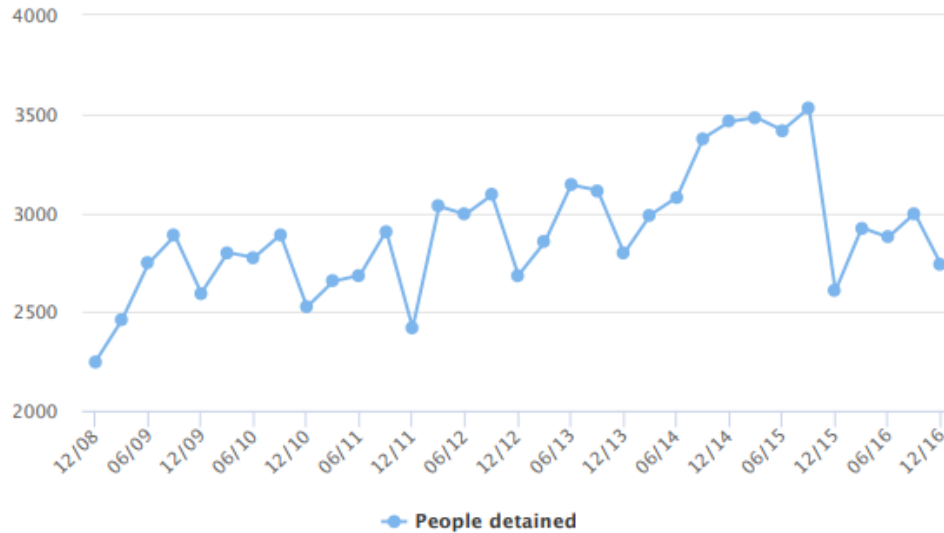


Figure 4. People detained in the UK under Immigration Act Powers 2008-2016

Source: Silverman, S.J. (2017) “Immigration Detention in the UK” *Migration Observatory*

It is evident from figure 4. that the use of detention has been consistently high throughout the past decade with a particularly high number in 2015, at the height of the ‘European refugee crisis’. Currently, there are thirteen immigration removal centers (IRCs) in the UK and four short-term holding facilities. The largest IRC is Harmondsworth near Heathrow airport with a bed capacity of 600 (Refugee Council, 2017). In 2014, the detention estate was expanded with 600-bed spaces added as the Verne IRC in the former Verne Prison, Portland, came into use (Refugee Council, 2017). Most facilities are in isolated rural areas, creating a sense of isolation for detainees. They tend to be located away from towns and are poorly serviced by public transport making it difficult for visitors to get there (Wadia, 2015, p.106). Examples include Yarl’s Wood in rural Bedfordshire and Dungavel in rural Lanarkshire.

Unlike most EU countries, the UK has no limit on the amount of time a person can be detained. In France for example, a detainee may initially be held for forty-eight hours, and must immediately be informed of their rights (Bloch and Schuster, 2005,

p.500). According to Home Office statistics, the number of people entering detention in the year ending March 2016 increased by 4% to 32,163 from 30,902 in the previous year (Home Office, 2016). This included a large number of European Union nationals, primarily from Romania, Lithuania and Poland. In the year ending March 2010, the average detention period was 29 days; however, 7% had been in detention for between one and two years (Home Office, 2016). In a 1998 visit to the UK, the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention recommended the implementation of a limit on the time a person is detained (Welch and Schuster, 2005, p.402). Despite this, the *Immigration and Asylum Act 1999* made no mention of a time limit. Periods of detention vary massively from several days to couple of years (AIDA, 2016).

According to the Migration Observatory, “the most common category of immigration is people who have sought asylum in the UK at some point” (Silverman, 2017, p.2). The right to seek asylum is enshrined in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. Article 14 states that “Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution” (UDHR, 1948). Despite this, irregular arrivals to the UK frequently end up in detention. Although no crime has been committed, detainees are held in prison-like conditions with no time limit (Wadia, 2015, p.97). Their only ‘crime’ is that they lack the correct documentation to be considered ‘legal’ in the UK. According to Refugee Council statistics (2017), there were 13,230 asylum seekers detained in 2016 and 3% had been detained for at least six months. Of all those detained in 2016, the majority were not removed from the UK but given temporary admission or released. This indicates that detention is not the last resort as it is portrayed by the Home Office.

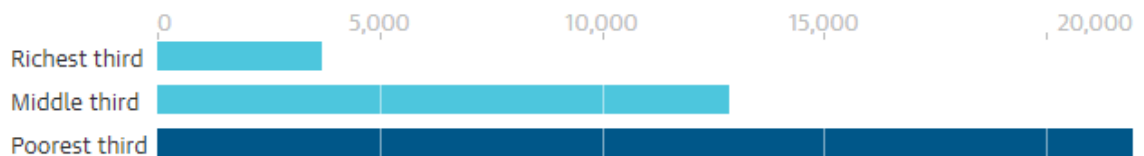
Although detention is an existing administrative practice and was not introduced by the 2010 coalition government, it is a practice which continues to be maintained. The only alteration which was made was that in May 2010, the new coalition government announced there would be an end to child detention. In December 2012 a new process for the removal of families with children from the UK was published (Refugee Council, 2017). However, the Home Office still detains some children with their families. Although there has been a drop in child detention, 71 children were detained at some point in 2016. Of these 71, 70% were asylum detainees, and 42 were under the age of 11.

4.2.2 Dispersal – Immigration and Asylum Act 1999

Welfare benefits for asylum seekers were replaced under the *Immigration and Asylum Act 1999* with vouchers worth £35 introduced instead. Through providing vouchers rather than cash, asylum seekers are immediately identifiable as outsiders (Huysmans, 2006). Arguably, administrative practices work to establish boundaries in everyday situations. Additionally, accommodation was introduced on a non-choice basis around the UK, legislating a policy of dispersal. The purpose of this legislation was to prevent overburdening certain areas with supporting asylum seekers (House of Commons, 2016). Despite these intentions, it is undoubtedly an isolating practice which further removes agency from asylum seekers and refugees. Huysmans (2006) argues that it is a less severe method of exclusion which involves moving resettled refugees to different parts of the UK. The government argue that this is for service issues, but it means that the process of settling in can be extremely difficult and isolating for newly arrived asylum seekers. Undoubtedly, this administrative practice functions to further marginalize and exclude as asylum seekers (Bloch and Schuster, p.493).

57% of asylum seekers in the UK are in the poorest third of the country

Based on the number of asylum seekers living in each council area on December 31 2016



Guardian graphic | Source: Home Office, ONS

Figure 5: Number of asylum seekers in varying economic areas

Source: Lyons, K. and Duncan, P. (2017) “‘It’s a shambles’: data shows most asylum seekers put in poorest parts of Britain” *The Guardian*

As can be seen in the above graph, more than half of asylum seekers are housed in the poorest parts of the UK (Lyons and Duncan, 2017). Further, the majority are placed in Labour-led councils with only about 1,680 in Conservative held areas (Lyons and Duncan, 2017). Asylum seekers can apply for support while waiting for their claim or appeal and if accommodation is offered it is in a dispersal area. This means that if an asylum seeker wishes to avoid destitution in some circumstances, they have no option but

to leave the area where they potentially have a support network. This policy establishes the UK as a less welcoming country for asylum seekers, further removing autonomy.

4.2.3 External Borders

Over recent decades, the UK government has invested heavily in measures to strengthen UK borders. These actions have been portrayed as “essential” for the prevention of irregular migration (Refugee Council and Oxfam, 2005). However, what is not discussed is the impact of these measures on asylum seekers. The introduction of external borders for the purpose of restricting access for immigrants and refugees can be viewed as a strategy of creating distance between society and “a dangerous external environment” (Huysmans, 2006, p.55). This section considers existing policies which introduced external borders, intercepting those attempting to seek asylum in the UK. EU states no longer view internal controls as sufficient; In light of this, EU states have been working to intercept refugees well before they arrive at European borders (Hayter, 2000; Bloch and Schuster, 2005). The only way to become a refugee outside of the country of asylum is through the UNHCR resettlement program; however, this is extremely selective, prioritizing the most vulnerable. Because of this, many asylum seekers continue to make dangerous journeys into and through Europe to reach Northern European states.

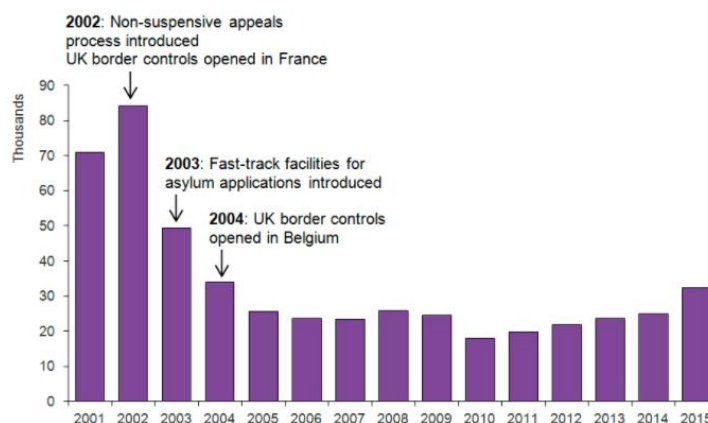


Figure 6: The chart below shows the annual number of asylum applications made since 2001

Source: Home Office (2016) National Statistics: Asylum

A juxtaposed border is defined as: “situations where full immigration control procedures are performed by UK immigration staff in a country outside the UK” (Refugee Council and Oxfam, 2005). Juxtaposed borders were first established in 1991 before the opening of the Channel Tunnel under the *Sangatte Protocol* which came into force two years later. This protocol marked a change in national attitudes towards immigration (Martin, 2016). An additional protocol was agreed in 1998, extending controls to Eurostar stations following an increase in undocumented arrivals and asylum seekers (Clayton, 2010, p.414). In 2004, these controls were extended again with an agreement between the UK and Belgium, allowing for controls to operate on trains stopping between the two countries. The Eurostar controls are important because unlike the Channel Tunnel controls, they were focused only on immigration. As can be seen in Figure 6, the introduction of border controls in France and Belgium has coincided with a lower number of asylum applications in the UK as it becomes increasingly difficult to reach to claim asylum. This chart from the Home Office (2016), is a clear acknowledgment of the purpose of implementing controls to reduce the number of asylum applications. According to the UK Border Agency, there was a 90% reduction in undocumented passengers arriving at Waterloo following the introduction of border control on Eurostar services (Clayton, 2010, p.417). It is likely that of that 90% a percentage were legitimate asylum seekers in need of protection.

The *Frontier Control Treaty 2003*, or *Le Touquet*, essentially moved the UK frontier to Calais, meaning that France is responsible for any asylum seekers who are stopped there. It authorized the exercise of powers “concerning immigration controls and the investigation of offences relating to immigration;” (Le Touquet, Article 2.a). It is explicitly acknowledged that the purpose of this agreement was to stop people reaching the UK via sea ports to claim asylum. According to a recent report inspecting juxtaposed controls: “the principal reasons for the existence of these juxtaposed controls are to prevent undocumented passengers reaching the UK to lodge and asylum application” (Vine, 2013, p.11).

4.3 New Policy Tools since 2010¹⁰

4.3.1 Family and private life immigration rule changes 2012

Immigration Rules are made under powers conferred on the Home Secretary by section 3(2) of the *Immigration Act 1971* which describes them as:

statements of the rules...as to the practice to be followed in the administration of this Act for regulating the entry into and stay in the United Kingdom of persons required by this Act to have leave to enter, including any rules as to the period for which leave is to be given and conditions to be attached in different circumstances.

This rule change focuses on Article 8 of the *European Convention on Human Rights* – the right to respect for private and family life. It works to ensure that those who claim the right to remain in the UK under Article 8 of the ECHR do not do so without regard to Immigration Rules. The objectives are stated as being to protect the “economic well-being of the UK” and “to protect the public from foreign criminals”. This rule change sets out thresholds on the “impact of an applicant’s criminality on the scope for them to be granted leave to enter the UK on the bases of their family life”. Further to this, the rule change introduces a minimum income threshold of £18,600 to sponsor the settlement of a non-EEA partner in the UK. This threshold is higher to additionally sponsor a child. Partners who come to the UK, applicants for settlement will need to need to possess an English language qualification at B1 or above.

It is said that it will primarily affect “those of non-European Economic Area nationality applying for leave to enter or remain in the UK on the basis of their family relationship with a British citizen or a person settled in the UK”. A number of migrants fit within this group, most notably asylum seekers and refugees. It introduces minimum income thresholds for partners and children who are not EEA nationals and are applying to settle in the UK with somebody who is already a resident.

¹⁰ All quotations in this section are from the Home Office (2012) “Statement of Intent: Family Migration” unless otherwise stated.

This policy was introduced in response to Article 8 of the *European Convention on Human Rights* which the Conservative party claim has been widely abused. The object of this bill is stated as “to safeguard the economic well-being of the UK by controlling immigration and to protect the public from foreign criminals”. This bill works to give the UK government greater control over the application of Article 8 of the ECHR. It is explicitly stated that when an Article 8 is considered under an asylum application, the applicant will be expected to meet the requirements of the Immigration Rules. This leads to a legitimate concern regarding further restrictions to asylum.

4.3.2 Immigration Act 2014

Before the passing of the *Immigration Act 2014*, Operation Vaken was a memorable campaign to promote voluntary departures of undocumented migrants. It took place between 22 July and 22 August 2013 in six London boroughs. It is most commonly associated with the two “Go Home” vans that were driven round ethnically diverse areas of London. The campaign was condemned by the Advertising Standards Authority for using false information, the statement: “106 ARRESTS LAST WEEK IN YOUR AREA” was “misleading and had not been substantiated” (ASA, 2013). The Home Office used hyperbole and inaccurate data to create a sense of fear and unease. This aligns with Bigo’s (2002) argument regarding the management of “unease”.

This operation is important because it represented a harsh, confrontational approach to immigration, paving the way for May’s 2014 Immigration Act. Even the Home Office themselves later acknowledged “the vans, in particular, were too much of a blunt instrument and will not be used again” (Home Office, 2013). The Go Home vans have been described as a “turning point” in immigration debate (Jones et al., 2017, p.3). It represents an intensification of anti-migrant feeling with a government funded advertisement utilizing racist language. As has been examined in Chapter Three, the use of anti-migrant rhetoric in government works to legitimize and fuel hostility towards migrants in the UK (Jones et al., 2017). It creates suspicion and racism towards ‘legal’ migrants and British citizens from different ethnic backgrounds.

The *Immigration Act 2014* embodies May’s desire to establish “a really hostile environment for illegal migration” in Britain (cited in Kirkcup and Winnett, 2012). It

goes further than the 2012 bill and is one of the most important piece of immigration legislation introduced during the timeframe of this study. The bill has three primary objectives: 1. To make it easier and quicker to remove those who have no right to be in the UK. 2. To end abuse to Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights 3. To prevent illegal immigrants accessing public services (Home Office, 2014). This legislation has arguably exceeded its objectives, creating an environment which is not only hostile toward those who deliberately remain in the UK without documentation, but also those whose status may be irregular for legitimate reasons.

One of the most controversial aspects of the Act was the objective of making it “more difficult for immigrants to live in the UK” (Home Office, 2013). One way of achieving this goal was the implementation of the need for landlords to “carry out checks to establish that new tenants have the right to rent in the UK” (Home Office, 2014). This rule essentially shifts the responsibility from the Home Office on to independent bodies. Those who rent to undocumented migrants run the risk of civil penalty up to a maximum of £3000. Some housing organisations have opposed this legislation, including the Scottish Association of Landlords, Shelter Scotland and the Scottish Refugee Council (SAL, 2015). This arguably reinforces securitisation discourse, potentially leading to landlords discriminating against minorities and foreign nationals (Perry, 2014). It primarily works to transform ordinary citizens into immigration officers. Ordinary citizens who are unqualified to understand complex legal immigration documents become liable the maintenance of border controls (Jones et al., 2017). Banks would also be prohibited from opening accounts for those not in the UK lawfully through requiring banks to check a database against known immigration offenders.

This Bill is stated to benefit “British citizen and legal migrants” (Home Office, 2013); however, it does not account for the potential rise in discrimination this bill promotes. Parliament’s joint committee on human rights stated that the provisions in the Bill on tenancy led to concerns about the “risk of racial discrimination against prospective tenants” (Joint Committee, 2017). Further, regarding appeal rights, the committee concluded that a restriction on appeal rights could affect the practicalities of accessing the legal system to challenge an unlawful asylum decision.

4.3.3 Immigration Act 2016

The most recent piece of immigration legislation, the *Immigration Act 2016*, builds on the foundations set out by the *Immigration Act 2014*. By and large, the measures brought in by this Bill create an increasingly hostile environment for asylum seekers, migrants and members of ethnic minorities in the UK. It introduces several powers and offences which will have an adverse impact on both migrants and British citizens, particularly those belonging to ethnic minorities with the Act essentially legislating for greater discrimination. It introduces new sanctions on rogue employers, further restricts irregular migrants from accessing houses, driving licenses and bank accounts, and makes it easier to remove irregular migrants (Home Office, 2016). With the 2014 act so recently introduced, the introduction of more new rules establishes a further complex environment.

First off, where the *Immigration Act 2014* imposed fine on landlords who rented to undocumented migrants, this Act goes further, making it a criminal offence to rent to somebody who lacks the documentation to live in the UK. Landlords who do not abide by the renting rules could face a fine along with five years' imprisonment. Further, the legislation aims to make it easier to "evict illegal migrant tenants more easily, and in some circumstances without a court order" (Home Office, 2016). In light of the Joint Committee on Human Rights concern regarding the 2014 Act and the risk of increased discrimination against ethnic minorities, it is evident that the Home Office took no heed of recommendations. Rather, they have provided landlords with a greater incentive to prioritize renting to British nationals where there are no questions on immigration status to be considered. According to the JCWI Independent Evaluation, the 'right to rent' scheme is largely unworkable. Furthermore, it is damaging for race relations in the UK with 42% of landlords saying that they were less likely to consider someone who does not have a British passport in light of the 'right to rent' requirements (JCWI, 2015). The introduction of prison time to those who rent to irregular migrants is likely to increase unwarranted suspicion toward those who appear foreign. Rather than deterring irregular migrants, it is likely to fuel racial discrimination (JCWI, 2015, p2.).

In addition, the 2016 Bill amends the *Immigration Act 1971*, making it an offence to work if a person is disqualified from working because of their immigration status. This offence is liable to a conviction of 51 weeks imprisonment or a fine, or both. Furthermore, the bill makes employing an illegal worker an offence. Similar to the 'right to rent' legislation, this may lead to further discrimination through the government management of unease, making it more appealing to hire British nationals. It introduces an Immigration Skills Charge from April 2017 on UK employers recruiting skilled migrant labour from outside the EEA to: "Encourage businesses to source the skilled workers that they need from the resident labour market" (Home Office, 2017). This legislates the discourse of the home secretaries who argue for the prioritisation of British people, reinforcing the British 'us' and foreign 'them'.

4.4 Conclusion

Through attention to existing policies maintained by recent governments and new legislation introduced since 2010, it is evident that there have been continued moves to restrict migrants and asylum seekers from reaching the UK. The 2014 and 2016 Immigration Acts represent an increasingly hostile approach to immigration in the UK. Both policies are likely to fuel racial discrimination, damaging race relations within the UK. This is a worrying trend and suggests that increasingly restrictive policies will be adopted in relation to immigration and asylum with the UK largely regressing in its commitment to the *1951 Refugee Convention*.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

5.1 Summary

This dissertation has sought to uncover the extent and ways in which asylum seekers have been framed as a security threat in the UK. It has been argued that a combination of discursive and nondiscursive practices have led to the securitization of asylum policy. The 2016 Brexit referendum did not initiate the insecurities, complexities and social divisions on perceptions towards migrants within the UK; rather, it worked to reinforce them. The referendum has opened up an opportunity for a comprehensive debate on immigration policy in the UK. Considering this, it is more important than ever to understand the framing of securitizing and desecuritising discourse and practices relating to asylum seekers and migrants to assist with the construction of future immigration policy.

Securitization theory has offered an influential framework for this study, providing the tools to examine the processes which establish anti-immigration views, leading to an increasingly restrictive approach to asylum. An analysis of the mechanisms involved in the securitization of migration in the UK has displayed the points of intersection between the CS and PS. Utilizing the strengths of both logics allows for a greater understanding of the emergence of the social construction of migration as a threat to the UK's security. This paper supports Bourbeau's (2014) view that employing one approach leads to a limited account of the securitization process. Using the two approaches together moves the theory forward, enriching our understanding of the securitization process.

In line with the CS, speech acts by political elites were recognized as one catalyst for the social construction of asylum seekers as a threat. Because of their position of power, prime ministers and home secretaries in the UK have the power to both construct notions of migrants as a threat and to reinforce public fears. However, it was argued that the process of securitization extends beyond speech acts. Drawing on strengths of the PS, it was acknowledged that policy and administrative practices function to routinize and reinforce security discourse, contributing to the process of securitization. The research

findings presented and examined in the previous chapters have shown that this thesis has fully met the set goals.

5.2 Empirical Implications

From an empirical standpoint, the case of the UK provided rich material for analysis. Unsurprisingly, all political elites framed migration as a threat, with the exception of Nick Clegg. It was discovered that the language used by political elites became increasingly explicit in its framing of asylum seekers as a threat. Additionally, there is a clear difference in how prime ministers speak about migration versus home secretaries. Cameron's more cautious language was replaced with May and Rudd's nationalistic, hostile approach with the deployment of much clearer links between migration and crime. When May assumes her role of prime minister she begins to take a more crafted approach, focusing primarily on the economic axis of securitization with Rudd continuing with a harsh approach. Attention to existing and new policies within the UK show how the nondiscursive processes work to establish norms on the required response to a threat, thus participating in the social construction of migration as a danger. Despite these important implications, this is not a purely empirical project. The prevalence of migration, particularly asylum seekers in a time of global unrest makes this an essential topic to consider in relation to the larger human rights framework.

5.3 Areas for future research

While this dissertation has provided a significant contribution to understanding the extent and ways in which asylum policy has become securitized in the UK, gaining insight into why it became a key debate in the Brexit referendum, there is room for expansion. This paper has supported the view that securitization is socially constructed, it is not inevitable and can be prevented and challenged. With this in mind, an essential area for further research is desecuritization. Another area for further research which was beyond the scope of this specific project is the effect and consequences of securitization on asylum seekers; specifically examining how it affects those who are in need of protection and what this means for the international human rights framework.

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