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Securitization of Migration: speech act or sovereign act? Case Study of Poland in 2015-2025

Abstract

This article examines the Polish migration policy of 2015-2025 accompanied by security discourse, and asks the following question: Does the Polish case of migration policy fit into the classical model of securitization advanced by the Copenhagen School authors or the Schmittian concept of sovereign authority? If the latter was the case, then it raises an important question: in light of executive decisions made by the government, why was aggressive anti-migrant discourse even necessary? Drawing on discourse analysis of high-level government officials' statements, legal and policy documents related to the state of emergency and secondary analyses of Polish media coverage, the article argues that the Polish government did not primarily seek to securitize migration to persuade its domestic audience. Rather, executive authorities enacted exceptional measures through sovereign power and subsequently employed security rhetoric as justificatory discourse aimed largely at external audiences, including the European Union and international human rights organizations.

The research problem is derived from the theoretical assumption that security policy is largely shaped by the series of "speech acts" which constitute a so-called 'securitizing act' or a 'securitizing move' through which political actors introduce a particular issue as an existential threat and advance it to the forefront of the security agenda. Considering the urgency of the matter, restrictive or even unprecedented, measures are therefore justified to ensure survival.

The theoretical framework of this study combines the securitization theory associated with the Copenhagen School and the concept of sovereign power developed by Carl Schmitt. According to securitization theory, successful securitization takes place when political actors frame a specific issue as an existential threat to the referent object and this threat narrative is accepted and supported by a relevant audience. In contrast to securitization theory, which requires widespread public consent and mobilization, the Schmittian concept of sovereign power underscores the decisive role of the sovereign, who does not seek large-scale public approval and possesses the authority to identify or frame security threats and their respective countermeasures.

The study is based on a qualitative research methodology, namely discourse-analysis. The analysis examines official statements, public speeches and policy documents issued by political leaders and

state institutions to identify how discourse on migration is constructed in the context of security and how extraordinary measures are legitimized.

The findings suggest that securitization can function not necessarily as a prerequisite for extraordinary measures, but as a post-hoc narrative strategy accompanying and/or justifying sovereign acts already taken as is evident in the case of Polish migration case. Moreover, the research showed that securitization theory or Schmittian sovereign act separately does not explain the migration policy dynamic, rather these two theories are complementary in interpreting the issue.

Keywords: Copenhagen School (CS), Securitization, Speech act, Sovereign act, audience acceptance

Introduction

2015 migration crisis in Europe marked a turning point in political and security discourse among the European nations. While some countries viewed the issue purely as a humanitarian cause, others strongly opposed it under the pretense of the security threat it may have posed. Poland was among those countries who were highly skeptical of the EU's policy towards 1st - time asylum seekers. From the onset of the migrant influx, the government of Poland perpetrated a compelling threat narrative which was further supported by the imagery disseminated in Polish media. Polish government officials highlighted their role as a safeguard of the EU's eastern border and, to that end, adopted restrictive migration policies. Poland's migration policy has been explored through the lens of securitization theory, however, upon close study, the Polish case does not follow a classic securitization model as outlined by the Copenhagen School authors. In a classic sense, securitization operates according to the following process: a securitizing actor, which mostly consists of political leadership, initiates a securitizing move through security speech called a "speech act" which is aimed at a target audience who is supposed to believe the threat narrative and ask for exceptional measures to resolve the existential threat. Only in cases of audience persuasion do the securitizing actors have the legitimacy to impose exceptional, and sometimes even unprecedented, measures. The Polish migration case does not follow the timeline or sequence of classic securitization because the threat narrative and restrictive policies emerged almost instantaneously.

Therefore, the article attempts to address the gap in existing literature on migration policies through the lens of securitization theory. The research will try to answer the question as to what extent the Polish case of migration follows the classic securitization model and sovereign decision-making, and how these theoretical perspectives complement one another in explaining the case. This question raises another question: if the Polish case does not conform to the classic securitization model, then why was an extensive threat narrative advanced by both the government and the media? The research incorporates two theories: a meta-theory developed by Barry Buzan and Ole Waever, which underscores the role of threat construction through "speech acts," and Carl Schmitt's concept of sovereignty, where a sovereign can legitimately implement exceptional measures without the need for public persuasion. Given that in politics issues are

rarely straightforward and uniform, testing two theories allows me as a researcher to better explain the layers and nuances related to the Polish migration case. For example with their 1998 bold new vision of security, Copenhagen researchers ventured to “explain how issues become securitized, and to locate the relevant security dynamics of the different types of security on levels ranging from local through regional to global.” (Buzan et al., 1998, p.1) This is the critical point for the study because not all issues that are securitized follow the exact securitization model or have the same goals as a classic securitization actor, as is revealed through the Polish case discussed in this article.

Therefore, through the presented theoretical framework and qualitative methodology, not only does the study offer a deep, credible, and nuanced insight into the interplay between threat-discourse, audience perspective, and adopted migration policies in Poland, but it also offers a valuable contribution to broader migration securitization studies.

Literature Review

Interestingly, Poland raised red flags well before the migration crisis really struck Europe. As Cieślińska and Dziekońska point out “neither the increase in the number of refugees nor the phenomenon of large and uncontrolled inflow of foreigners from outside Europe were noticed.” (Cieślińska & Dziekońska, 2019, p.2) Nonetheless Polish media perpetuated narratives of the migration crisis worldwide, which greatly contributed to general public dissatisfaction with the migrants, even though Poland received the least amount of them. Migration was viewed as something undesirable from the beginning as Cieślińska notes that the term “migration crisis” in and of itself has a negative connotation (Cieślińska & Dziekońska, 2019) Perception of crisis quickly escalated to a threat level. As Liszkowska concludes the migrant-related language was militarized and often described as “a threat to state security and public order.” (Liszkowska, 2024, p. 35) Perception of threat and its respective discourse also had a racial and religious profile given that “a threat of migration refers to migrants from the Middle East and Africa associated with Islam, terrorism, infectious diseases or rising crime rates.” (Liszkowska, 2024, p. 35) Given their religious identity, threat narrative quickly escalated from asylum seekers to “cultural others” (Ceyhan & Tsoukala, 2002, p. 29) to dangerous criminals. However, such alienating approach towards migrants from MENA countries is not exclusive to Poland but rather is a common sentiment in Europe as Perocco notes about the early 2000s “During the last two decades of rising antimigrant racism in Europe, Islamophobia has proven to be the highest, most acute, and widely spread form of racism.” (2018) However, in contrast to other European countries, Poland was one of the few to actually exercise restrictive migration policies despite widespread criticism from their European counterparts. White and co-authors also claim that “migration impact is mediated rather than happening directly and spontaneously” (White et al., 2018, p. 216) – implying that the migration narrative is carefully and deliberately crafted via various agencies such as government and media channels.

Moreover White remarks that “The literature on impact in established receiving countries such as the Netherlands and the United Kingdom stresses the importance of the media and politicians in

shaping public perceptions of immigration, with consequences for incidence of hate crimes, election results, and so forth.” (2018, p. 216)

Theoretical Framework

The article employs two different theories which are rarely put together to explain certain cases. The first theory I use to test the Polish case is Securitization Theory, as developed by the Copenhagen School authors, and the concept of Sovereignty advanced by Carl Schmitt. Securitization Theory is a meta-theory and best described by its creators, Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver, in their 1998 monumental work “Security: A New Framework of Analysis. Securitization Theory claims that “It is when an issue is presented as posing an existential threat to a designated referent object (traditionally, but not necessarily, the state, incorporating government, territory, and society). The special nature of security threats justifies the use of extraordinary measures to handle them.” (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 21) CS further explains that “*Security* is the move that takes politics beyond the established rules of the game and frames the issue either as a special kind of politics or as above politics.” (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 23) Authors define a sort of spectrum on which threat moves from “non-politicized through politicized to securitized, meaning the issue is presented as an existential threat, requiring emergency measures and justifying actions outside the normal bounds of political procedure.” (Buzan et al., 1998, pp. 23-24) Moreover, security issue does not necessarily present an objective reality or absolute truth, rather it is a perceptive category, or as Buzan puts it “*Security* is thus a self-referential practice, because it is in this practice that the issue becomes a security issue – not necessarily because a real existential threat exists but because the issue is presented as such a threat.” (1998, p. 24)

Declaration of an issue as a security issue or an existential one happens by uttering so-called security language through a “security speech act.” (Huysmans, 2011, p. 373)

Researcher of security studies, Jonathan Bright was the first to test these two theories, securitization and Schmittian sovereignty, in unison: “Perhaps the most obvious way securitization manifests itself is through breaking rules which limit what certain actors are allowed to do. This can occur in several senses. Legally speaking, governments might invoke constitutional rights to declare a state of emergency in which the entire legal order ceases to apply.” (Bright, 2012, p. 867) Bright here draws parallel between the CS securitization theory and Carl Schmitt’s concept of sovereignty, where Schmitt claims that “Sovereign is he who decides on the exceptional case” (Schmitt, 2005) arguing that government actors can use predefined legal mechanisms such as executive decrees, emergency laws, or administrative powers to frame and act upon issues as “security threats” without having the need to persuade the public and win their consent.

Carl Schmitt's concept of the Sovereign Act is by no means competing with securitization theory. On the contrary, they can occasionally be complementary. The basic idea behind securitization is that political actors must take extraordinary actions or unprecedented measures once the audience has accepted the threat narrative. That could be a prerequisite for the Sovereign to act upon the threat narrative. However, successful securitization virtually never occurs without action, whereas the Sovereign Act does not have to be predicated on securitization and can occur without any existing threat narrative.

Methodology

The article employs a qualitative research methodology to answer the research question, namely discourse analysis. Using discourse analysis, I sought to determine how the speeches delivered by key political figures in Poland during 2015-2025 constructed and shaped security issues. To this end, I have analyzed public speeches, official statements delivered by high-level Polish decision-makers, including presidents, prime-ministers and ministers of foreign affairs, as well as public opinion such as referendums and election results.. These speeches were examined to assess in what terms migration was articulated, whether security and threat-related language was present, and who represented the target audience of these communications. Moreover, the research incorporates secondary analysis of Polish media coverage, focusing on Polish public broadcasting and other major national outlets. My goal was to assess how media covered the issue of migrants, namely whether it endorsed or opposed the government's position on the issue. Finally, to assess how government and media discourse were translated into the real political realm, I had to examine legal and policy documents such as executive orders, government decrees, and legislative acts adopted within the given timeline. To this end, I studied official speeches delivered by key political figures and decision-makers in Poland in 2015-2025 as well as policy documents. As far as media coverage is concerned, considering that most materials were in Polish language, I conducted second-hand analysis of media reporting, by referring to trusted and authoritative Polish scholars who have already studied media narratives regarding the migration issue in Poland. Afterward, I closely examined the collected qualitative materials and categorized them according to themes and key terms such as existential threat, crisis, national security, urgency, etc. I tried to identify recurring threat narratives, anti-migration sentiments translated into threat language, as well as negative biases and connotations concerning the migration issue. To ensure the credibility of the analysis, triangulation method was applied using multiple data sources such as official political discourse, legal documents, and second-hand analysis of media coverage.

The empirical corpus consists of 11 landmark speeches, as well as policy and strategy documents. The selection of speeches was guided by 3 principal criteria. First of all, I limited my sampling to speeches and statements delivered by top-level Polish politicians such as Prime Ministers and Ministers, within the proposed timeframe of 2015-2025. Secondly, only the statements that largely consisted of migration, asylum, refugees, and related concepts were selected for the study. And finally, each selected speech had to be delivered in a politically significant setting such as Parliament, European Council Summits or high-level multilateral and bilateral meetings.

Identifying the target audience is essential for reconstructing the securitization process. I distinguished between primary audiences, who were present during the speech, and secondary audiences, who were indirectly addressed. For example, members of parliament are the primary audience during a parliamentary address, but the speech may also target external groups. To determine the intended audience, I considered factors such as the institutional setting, the language used, and explicit references to specific groups. The context, whether domestic, parliamentary, or international, helps clarify the intended recipients of the security narrative. Using English, for instance, indicates an international audience. I also assessed who attended the events, including academic circles, media, the general public, international organizations, diplomatic corps, or EU leaders. Answering these questions is crucial for identifying the audience.

For each selected speech, I recorded the speaker's identity, date, institutional setting, and language. I also identified the target audience, referent object, threat narrative, evidence of audience acceptance, and any stated intention for extraordinary political measures. The detailed corpus is provided in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2.

Analysis and Findings

The article examined migration policy and the associated threat narrative from the 2015 EU migration crisis through the 2021 Poland-Belarus border crisis, concluding with the adoption of a new migration strategy in 2025. Over the course of several decades, Europe's approach to migrants and asylum seekers shifted from welcoming to increasingly discouraging and at times discriminatory "...Migrants, who were welcomed after World War II as a useful labor force, are now presented in political discourses as criminals, troublemakers, economic and social defrauders, terrorists, drug traffickers, unassimilable persons, and so forth." 2015-2025 border developments across Poland clearly indicate that Polish government did not need to securitize migration for the domestic public. Instead it exercised the sovereign authority, enforced restrictions, and established unprecedented policies, providing justification for securitization only after the fact. These justifications were directed at the EU member states and international NGOs, as well as their own citizens. One reason for the lack of active securitization may be that the Polish public was already skeptical about the influx of migrants due to earlier threat narratives and imagery perpetrated by the media and government in 2015. This creates a theoretical nexus: one could argue that the securitization process was already underway, so by 2020-2021, the Polish Government no longer required widespread domestic public consent as it had effectively been granted.

Based on the theoretical framework provided beforehand, it is clear that securitization components, including audience, are not static units, rather they are variables that can change over time. Evidently, the Polish case does not completely fit the classic Copenhagen School model of securitization. While migration was often described in terms of security, threat, and protecting Polish territory, the evidence for internal audience acceptance is more complicated and nuanced. For example, the nationwide referendum on 15 October 2023 included a question about admitting migrants under the EU relocation mechanism. 96.79% of votes on this question were negative. However, turnout was below the mandatory threshold for the referendum to be binding, so the result cannot be seen as clear institutional approval of government policy. Instead, it shows that the government's restrictive stance on migrant relocation resonated with a substantial part of the public. The intended audience for securitizing messages also changed depending on the political context. Some statements were aimed at the Polish public, especially during the 2023 election campaign and referendum, while others were directed mainly at EU institutions and member states. Therefore, audience acceptance should be seen as varying across different times, groups, and situations, rather than as a single moment of public approval or rejection.

Analysis of Political Discourse

Beata Szydło, Poland's former Prime Minister in 2015-2017 clearly stated in 2016 following the terror attacks in Brussels "I say very clearly that I see no possibility of immigrants coming to Poland." During parliamentary debates, she claimed that by not letting asylum-seekers in Poland would continue to resist coercion from the EU and safeguard the security of its citizens and of Europe. "Stenogram Exposé Premier Beaty Szydło - Kancelaria Prezesa Rady Ministrów - Portal

Gov.Pl,” 2024) Here, the Prime Minister securitizes not only Poland but the entire EU region. It is noteworthy that Polish officials often highlighted their role as a protector of the eastern border of the EU which leads us to believe that they directed their securitization move towards EU society. In his 2024 speech, Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk addresses the issue of migration using consistently negative terms such as “uncontrolled”, “illegal”, “corrupt system,” which clearly indicate that migration is not presented as a neutral phenomenon but rather as a threat to public security. Tusk employs diplomatic language by not directly labeling migrants as a “threat”, but instead indirectly portrays them as a destabilizing force weaponized by actors such as “Lukashenko, by Putin, by smugglers and human traffickers.” (“Taking Back Control, Ensuring Security - The Chancellery of the Prime Minister - Gov.Pl Website,” 2024) Only such negative mention is enough to frame migration as a critical issue for national security. In Tusk’s address, we see how a threat is being constructed and fear is being instilled by associating migration with instability, corruption, chaos and crime. He further noted “Poland is supposed to be safe. Polish women and men are supposed to feel free. Safe and free in their own country. Hence the importance of our migration policy” (“Taking Back Control, Ensuring Security - The Chancellery of the Prime Minister - Gov.Pl Website,” 2024) Here Tusk links migration policy directly to the safety of Polish people, hinting at the importance and urgency of a robust migration policy.

Moreover, Polish politicians frame migration not merely as a humanitarian issue, but rather an urgent matter of national security: “After recent events connected with acts of terror [Poland] will not accept refugees because there is no mechanism that would ensure security” (RT, 2016). Here Kaczynski uses threat language and moves the issue of migration to the forefront of the security agenda by associating it with terrorism. Additionally, Kaczynski names more than one referent object in his discourse “There are already signs of the emergence of very dangerous diseases which haven’t been seen in Europe for a long time: cholera on Greek islands; dysentery in Vienna; various types of parasites, protozoas, which aren’t dangerous in the organisms of these people [Middle East refugees], but which could be dangerous here. It doesn’t mean to discriminate against anyone. But we have to check it”. (Rettman, 2015). Here, anti- migration rhetoric goes beyond traditional security threats and assumes that middle eastern migrants could pose existential health threats to the local European population. Such security language is meant to alarm not only local Polish, but also the EU society.

Analysis of Media Discourse

Due to the language barrier, given the fact that media coverage in Poland is primarily in Polish language, I conducted the study of secondary sources that document, analyze and interpret relevant media discourse. The study results indicate that media framing of migration in Poland was characterized by a strong framing of threat and fear. This framing seems to have been quite influential in shaping public perceptions. Polish public opinion was initially quite skeptical of migrants, but the ongoing media representations helped to build up the perception of migration as an increasingly threatening phenomenon, despite the relatively limited scale of migration to Poland at the time. The media played an important role in this sense in amplifying perceptions of threat and contributing to the construction of migration as a security issue.

One cannot claim with absolute certainty that the Polish Government acted upon a securitization move instigated by the media as in this particular case, all divisions and actors aligned on the same 'anti-immigratory' page with different intensity. Troszynski and El-Ghamari conclude that "There was no positive migration discourse in the analysed data...The tone of scrutinized texts was verged between moderately negative and strongly negative." (Troszyński & El-Ghamari, 2022, p. 10) Hence the migrants from MENA countries were predominantly portrayed as potentially dangerous others who, as opposed to Ukrainian asylum seekers per se, were deemed culturally incompatible.

However, the mere presence of securitizing discourse and evidence of audience acceptance does not, in itself, constitute a fully developed securitization process in the sense of the Copenhagen School.

The synchronicity of threat-oriented media representations and increasing public concern about migration indicates that media discourse played a significant role in the construction and amplification of threat perceptions associated with migrants from MENA countries.

Troszynski and El-Ghamari in their comparative analysis of migration discourse in Polish media note that threat language was present in mass media regardless of political division "though the intensity of threats is more significant in the right-wing press." (2022, p.1) According to the thorough press-research conducted by Troszynski and El-Ghamari, the most recurring theme circulating in media was the term "illegal immigrants" and "muslim migrants" (2022, p. 1) which is by far not a neutral term considering that Ukrainian, Armenian or Georgian migrants would not have been described as "Christian migrants" by the same media sources. The language used and perpetrated by the media serves the polarizing purpose and robs the word migrant of its neutrality. Troszynski and El-Ghamari also note that some media sources heightened the drama by employing examples of civil unrest from other countries "portraying Poland as a victim of 'crazy' bureaucrats in Brussels...there already is a full overview of all possible threats related to migration. The attacks in London, the crisis caused by the migrations of 2015 in Western European countries, smuggling people across borders. The narrative tone was heightened by accounts of alleged crimes and attacks committed by migrants in EU countries." (2022, p. 8)

Analysis of Policy Documents and Public Opinion

Since 2015 Polish government strongly opposed the EU's open-arm approach to migration justifying their opposition by their strategic role of being the protector of the EU's eastern border "We are responsible for the safety of Poles and the tightness of our borders. For this reason, at the request of the Council of Ministers, President Andrzej Duda has issued a regulation declaring a state of emergency in certain towns and villages in the Podlaskie and Lubelskie Voivodeships. The state of emergency has been declared for 30 days and concerns only an approx. 3-km-long strip along the border with Belarus." ("The Safety of Poland Comes First – State of Emergency near the Border with Belarus - The Chancellery of the Prime Minister - Gov.Pl Website," n.d.)The list of restrictions, among other things, included "an obligation to carry an identity card or any other document to confirm the identity of persons who are 18 years of age or older (and in the case of those under 18 years of age, a school ID card) and were staying in public places in the area covered by the state of emergency." (Liszkowska, 2024, p.34) The provinces, Podlaskie and Lubelskie were crucial as they represented a border line between Belarus and Poland and a crossing hotspot for

Middle Eastern refugees. The Polish government justified its strict measures by associating irregular border crossing with threats to the security of Polish towns which were in the area. Interior Minister of Poland at that time, Mariusz Kaminski stated that these measures were “in the interests of the safety of our citizens, especially the inhabitants of border towns.” (“Poland Issues State of Emergency over Belarus Border Row,” 2021)

However, Amnesty International was quick to condemn Poland’s actions and called out on harsh mistreatment of migrants including children and teenagers who according to the organization were “held there without adequate food and clean water for over three weeks.” (“Poland Issues State of Emergency over Belarus Border Row,” 2021) As part of official justification of emergency measures at the border, Polish government made a public statement that “The Polish Government is responsible not only for our citizens and the safety of our country. The border between Poland and Belarus is the external border of the European Union, which we must protect in accordance with our obligations towards our allies. Its breach would cause hundreds of thousands of migrants to enter the European Union.” (“The Safety of Poland Comes First – State of Emergency near the Border with Belarus - The Chancellery of the Prime Minister - Gov.Pl Website,” n.d.)

Apart from the policy documents, some of the most important indicators of public support or opposition are referendums and elections. Having studied electoral landscape of Poland in 2015-2025 timeframe, it is obvious that anti-immigration parties were popular among Polish voters. In 2015 October elections Law and Justice Party of Poland, called Prawo i Sprawiedliwość or shortly, PiS in Polish, claimed electoral victory with its well-defined anti-refugee programme. While the purpose of the study is not to determine whether this victory was achieved mainly due to its anti-immigration policy, the said rhetoric likely contributed to the overall support of the voters.

October 15 of 2023 was another milestone in Polish election history, given the fact that both elections and referendum occurred on the same day. There were 4 questions in the referendum ballot, 2 out of those 4 were related to migration, namely questions number 3 inquired whether Poles support “the removal of the barrier on the border between the Republic of Poland and the Republic of Belarus” and question number 4 whether Poles “support the acceptance of thousands of illegal immigrants from the Middle East and Africa, in accordance with the forced relocation mechanism imposed by the European bureaucracy.” (*Referendum Ogólnokrajowe W 2023 R.*, 2023) Regarding the last question, almost 97% of referendum participants were anti-EU relocation mechanism, however the referendum results were declared invalid due to a fact that only 40% of population took part in the process, as opposed to mandatory threshold of 50%. Therefore the referendum results, although do provide valuable information about anti-immigration sentiment among the 40% of population, cannot be classified as direct measurement of audience acceptance.

As far as October 15, 2023 parliamentary elections are concerned, both major parties PiS and Civic Coalition (Koalicja Obywatelska) displayed strong anti-immigration stances, with Coalition being more nationalist and against the EU policies regarding refugees. However, PiS received about 42% of mandates, while Coalition received – 34%. (“Wybory Do Sejmu I Senatu Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej W 2023 R.,” 2023). These results do not necessarily mean that the victory of PiS was caused by their less intense anti-immigration policy compared to that of their political rivals. However, it is evident that anti-illegal immigration and restrictive legal immigration policies were

nonetheless a substantial part of political agenda for both parties which indicates general public support against immigration.

In conclusion, increasingly bold use of threat narrative was not translated into extra-ordinary measures associated with securitization theory. However, as evident from the research, the Polish government did occasionally exerted its sovereign decision-making authority, for example when Poland did not comply with the EU conventions and international laws regarding forced acceptance of asylum seekers. Here an interesting dynamic can be observed between two theoretical frameworks: on the one hand, securitization theory helps explain how migration was constructed as a threat and how this threat narrative was directed both at the domestic and the EU-level. On the other hand, Poland did not seek unanimous public consent. Instead, the state independently employed its sovereign power to reject the migration policy imposed by the EU.

Conclusion

The research demonstrates that state policy towards migration within the selected 2015-2025 timeframe cannot be explained solely by securitization theory or the Schmittian Sovereign act. Instead, both theories come into play to explain and interpret different phases and processes of the migration issue. Particularly, throughout 2015-2025, the threat narrative was increasingly aggressive - fitting into the discourse associated with securitization theory. However, not only is the evidence limited for widespread public support, but apparently the state itself did not seek it either. There was still substantial public support for restrictive migration policies, as is shown by election and referendum results, but we cannot say that these results are decisive. On the other hand, the study shows that the state exercised its sovereign will not to participate in the EU's mandatory refugee relocation program, which caused heterogeneous reactions among EU states.

Therefore, it is safe to conclude that the application of theory is complementary rather than binary. The combination of these two theoretical frameworks allowed me to draw a more nuanced and precise conclusion than either theory alone would have.

მირანდა ანდრონიკაშვილი

დოქტორანტი

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მიგრაციის სეკურიტიზაცია: სიტყვიერი თუ სუვერენული აქტი? პოლონეთის შემთხვევის ანალიზი 2015-2025 წლებში

აბსტრაქტი

სტატია განიხილავს 2015-2025 წლების პოლონეთის მიგრაციის პოლიტიკას და მის თანმდევ უსაფრთხოების დისკურსს. სტატია სვამს შემდეგ საკვლევ კითხვას: რომელ თეორიას ერგება პოლონეთის შემთხვევა; კოპენჰაგენის სკოლის ავტორების მიერ შემუშავებულ სეკურიტიზაციის თეორიას თუ კარლ შმიტისეულ სუვერენული ხელისუფლების მოდელს? ამ უკანასკნელის შემთხვევაში, ჩნდება ახალი ქვე-შეკითხვა: რატომ იყო აქტიური ანტი-საიმიგრაციო ნარატივი გავრცელებული სამთავრობო შტოების მიერ თუკი პოლონეთის ხელისუფლებამ კონსენსუსის გარეშე განსაკუთრებული ზომების მიღებით გაამკაცრა საიმიგრაციო პოლიტიკა. მაღალი რანგის თანამდებობის პირების, საჯარო პოლიტიკის დოკუმენტებისა და მედიის მეორეული წყაროების ანალიზზე დაყრდნობით, კვლევა ამტკიცებს, რომ პოლონეთის მთავრობის მიზანი ანტი-საიმიგრაციო ნარატივის გავრცელებისას სულაც არ ყოფილა შიდა აუდიტორიის დარწმუნება. პირიქით, ხელისუფლებამ სუვერენული ძალაუფლების მეშვეობით გაატარა მკაცრი ზომები და მის პარალელურად საფრთხის რიტორიკა გამოიყენა, როგორც მათი გადაწყვეტილებების გამამართლებელი, რომელიც დიდწილად მიმართული იყო არა პოლონელი ხალხის, არამედ ევროკავშირისა და ადამიანის უფლებათა დაცვის ორგანიზაციების მისამართით. შესაბამისად, კვლევითი პრობლემა გამომდინარეობს დაშვებიდან, რომ უსაფრთხოების პოლიტიკა დიდწილად ყალიბდება „სიტყვიერი აქტების“ კასკადით, რომელიც ქმნის სეკურიტიზაციის აქტს, რომლის მეშვეობითაც პოლიტიკური აქტორები კონკრეტულ საკითხს ეგზისტენციალურ საფრთხედ წარმოაჩენენ და ეს საკითხი უსაფრთხოების დღის წესრიგის თავში გადააქვთ. საკითხის მნიშვნელობიდან და მისი გადაუდებლობიდან გამომდინარე, გამართლებული ხდება განსაკუთრებული, შემზღუდავი და ზოგჯერ უპრეცედენტო ზომების გამოყენებაც კი.

წინამდებარე კვლევის თეორიული ჩარჩო მოიცავს კოპენჰაგენის სკოლის ავტორების მიერ შემუშავებულ სეკურიტიზაციის თეორიას და კარლ შმიტისეულ სუვერენული ძალაუფლების კონცეფციას. სეკურიტიზაციის კლასიკური მოდელის თანახმად, სეკურიტიზაციის პროცესი მაშინ არის წარმატებული, როდესაც მასეკურიტიზებული აქტორების მიერ წინ წამოწეული საკითხი მოიპოვებს აუდიტორიის ყურადღებას და განსაკუთრებული ზომების მიღებას მხარს დაუჭერს. სეკურიტიზაციის თეორიისგან განსხვავებით, შმიტისეული სუვერენული ხელისუფლების ცნება ხაზს უსვამს სუვერენის

ერთპიროვნულ და გადამწყვეტ როლს, რომლის დროსაც სუვერენს არ სჭირდება ფართო მასების მობილიზაცია და მხარდაჭერა. სუვერენს შეუძლია თვითონ შექმნას უსაფრთხოების დღის წესრიგი, მოახდინოს საფრთხეების იდენტიფიცირება და მიიღოს შესაბამისი კონტროლშომები.

კვლევა ეფუძნება თვისებრივი კვლევის მეთოდოლოგიას, კერძოდ, დისკურს-ანალიზის მეთოდს. ანალიზი იკვლევს პოლიტიკური ლიდერებისა და სახელმწიფო ინსტიტუტების მიერ წარმოებულ ოფიციალურ განცხადებებს და საჯარო პოლიტიკის დოკუმენტებს, რათა ამის მეშვეობით დადგინდეს თუ როგორ არის წარმოჩენილი მიგრაციის საკითხი ოფიციალურ დისკურსში და როგორ ხდება საგანგებო ზომების ლეგიტიმაცია.

მიგნებებმა უჩვენა, რომ სეკურიტიზაციის პროცესი, შესაძლოა, ნაწილობრივ მიმდინარეობდეს არა როგორც საგანგებო ზომების აუცილებელი წინაპირობა, არამედ როგორც პოსტ-ჰოკ ნარატივი, რომელიც სტრატეგიულად თან ახლავს და გამართლებას უძებნის უკვე მიღებულ სუვერენულ აქტებს, როგორც აშკარად გამოიკვეთა პოლონეთის შემთხვევის შესწავლისას. ასევე, ცალკე აღებული არც სეკურიტიზაციის თეორია და არც შმიტისეული სუვერენული აქტის კონცეფცია ძირეულად არც ხსნის საკვლევ ობიექტს. შესაბამისად, ორივე თეორიის გამოყენებამ პროცესების უფრო ზუსტი ინტერპრეტაციის შესაძლებლობა მომცა.

საკვანძო სიტყვები: კოპენჰაგენის სკოლა, სეკურიტიზაცია, სიტყვიერი აქტი, სუვერენული აქტი

AI Disclosure: ChatGPT was used to help me find reading materials on Polish websites for the discourse-analysis.

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Appendix 1

Coding table of selected speeches

D o c #	Date	Acto r	Settin g	L a n g	Audience	Refe rent Obje ct
D 1	18/11/2 015 ¹	Beat a Szyd ło PM	Parlia ment of Polan d	P o l	Domestic: President, Members of the Parliament, compatriots	Secu rity of Poles
D 2	21/06/2 018 ²	Mate usz Mor awie cki PM	Joint Press Confe rence at Austri a Summ it	P o l	External: V4 governments, Austrian government, European media	Nati onal inter ests of Pola nd
D 3	29/06/2 018 ³	Mate usz Mor awie cki, PM	Europ ean Counc il	P o l	Primary: EU state governments Secondary: Polish people	EU and Pola nd secur ity

¹ Stenogram exposé premier Beaty Szydło - Kancelaria Prezesa Rady Ministrów - Portal Gov.pl. (2024). In *Kancelaria Prezesa Rady Ministrów*. <https://www.gov.pl/web/premier/stenogram-expos-premier-beaty-szydlo> speech accessed on August 15 2026

² Premier Mateusz Morawiecki: *Mówimy absolutnie jednym głosem* - Kancelaria Prezesa Rady Ministrów - Portal Gov.pl. (2025). Kancelaria Prezesa Rady Ministrów. <https://www.gov.pl/web/premier/premier-mateusz-morawiecki-mowimy-absolutnie-jednym-glosem> speech accessed on August 14 2026

³ Premier Mateusz Morawiecki: *Stanowisko Polski w sprawie uchodźców jest od teraz stanowiskiem UE* - Kancelaria Prezesa Rady Ministrów - Portal Gov.pl. (2025). Kancelaria Prezesa Rady Ministrów. <https://www.gov.pl/web/premier/premier-mateusz-morawiecki-stanowisko-polski-w-sprawie-uchodzcow-jest-od-teraz-stanowiskiem-ue> Speech accessed on August 15 2026

D 4	18/11/2 021 ⁴	Mateusz Morawiecki, PM	Telephone conversation			
D 5	06/09/2 021 ⁵	Zbigniew Rau, Minister of Foreign Affairs				
D 6	21/12/2 021 ⁶	Zbigniew Rau, Minister of Foreign Affairs			Primary: visegrad group countries; Secondary: EU and NATO's European state heads	
D 7	16/07/2 021 ⁷	Mariusz				

⁴ *Premier Mateusz Morawiecki odbył rozmowy telefoniczne z premierem Republiki Iraku i premierem Regionalnego Rządu Kurdystanu - Kancelaria Prezesa Rady Ministrów - Portal Gov.pl.* (2025). Kancelaria Prezesa Rady Ministrów. <https://www.gov.pl/web/premier/premier-mateusz-morawiecki-odbyl-rozmowy-telefoniczne-z-premierem-republiki-iraku-i-premierem-regionalnego-rzadu-kurdystanu> speech accessed on August 14 2026

⁵ *Minister Zbigniew Rau złożył oficjalną wizytę na Litwie - Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych - Portal Gov.pl.* (2018). Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych. <https://www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja/minister-zbigniew-rau-zlozyl-oficjalna-wizyte-na-litwie2> speech accessed on August 15 2026

⁶ *Meeting of V4 and Turkish foreign ministers - Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Poland - Gov.pl website.* (2021). Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Poland. <https://www.gov.pl/web/diplomacy/meeting-of-v4-and-turkish-foreign-ministers> Speech accessed on August 15 2026

⁷ *Rozmowy ministrów spraw wewnętrznych Polski i Litwy - Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych i Administracji - Portal Gov.pl.* (2021). Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych i Administracji.

		Kami nski Inter ior Mini ster				
D 8	06/10/2 023 ⁸	Mate usz Mor awie cki, PM				
D 9	18/10/2 024 ⁹	Don ald Tusk , PM				
D 1 0	22/01/2 025 ¹⁰	Don ald Tusk , PM	Europ ean Counc il			
D 1 1	20/05/2 025 ¹¹	Don ald Tusk , PM				

<https://www.gov.pl/web/mswia/rozmowy-ministrow-spraw-wewnetrznych-polski-i-litwy> August 15 2026

⁸ Premier Mateusz Morawiecki postawił weto ws. nielegalnej migracji - Kancelaria Prezesa Rady Ministrów - Portal Gov.pl. (2025). Kancelaria Prezesa Rady Ministrów.

<https://www.gov.pl/web/premier/premier-mateusz-morawiecki-postawil-weto-ws-nielegalnej-migracji> Speech accessed August 15 2026

⁹ European Council addresses migration unanimously - The Chancellery of the Prime Minister - Gov.pl website. (2024). In *The Chancellery of the Prime Minister*.

<https://www.gov.pl/web/primeminister/european-council-addresses-migration-unanimously> Speech accessed August 15 2026

¹⁰ Polskie granice są skutecznie chronione - ruszyła kampania informacyjna skierowana do nielegalnych migrantów - Kancelaria Prezesa Rady Ministrów - Portal Gov.pl. (2025). Kancelaria Prezesa Rady Ministrów. <https://www.gov.pl/web/premier/polskie-granice-sa-skutecznie-chronione-ruszyła-kampania-informacyjna-skierowana-do-nielegalnych-migrantow> speech accessed August 15 2026

¹¹ 10. kadencja, 35. posiedzenie, 1. dzień - Prezes Rady Ministrów Donald Tusk. (2025). Sejm.Gov.Pl. <https://api.sejm.gov.pl/sejm/term10/proceedings/35/2025-05-20/transcripts/063> speech accessed August 15 2026

Appendix 2

Discourse-Analysis of selected speeches

Doc #	Threat Narrative	Securitization	Audience Acceptance	Policy measure	Sovereign Act
Doc1	“The refugee issue also reminds us that solidarity must be clearly defined...how ever attempts to export problems created by certain countries without any involvement of others who are supposed to be burdened by them cannot be called solidarity.”	Weak	No evidence	No direct measure	Not demonstrated
Doc2	“In the area of refugee relocation and migration, which are of course a huge challenge, Poland emphasized our role – which I also mentioned to chancellor Merkel, who expressed great appreciation	weak	No evidence	Yes, but not extraordinary	Not demonstrated

	for how much we are doing on the eastern flank. I am glad this is very well understood by our friends from the Visegrad Group.”				
Doc3	“We spoke with one voice and convinced everyone that refugee relocation cannot be carried out against the will of sovereign states.”	Moderate	Yes	Yes: rejection of forced refugee relocation	Yes: “will” of “sovereign state” explicitly mentioned
Doc4	A. “Belarusian regime has been conducting hybrid warfare against the European Union.” B. “Illegal migration supported by Belarusian secret services are deepening migration crises.”	Strong: explicit mention of migration as “hybrid warfare”	No evidence	No direct measure	Not demonstrated
Doc5	“Poland and Lithuania must work together to combat the ongoing hybrid war.”	Strong: explicit mention of “ongoing hybrid war”	No evidence	Yes: call for action – “must work together	Not demonstrated

	We cannot accept illegal migration organized by Belarusian state.”			to combat”	
Doc6	“A hybrid operation run by Belarusian regime at Poland’s eastern border, which is also the eastern border of the EU and NATO, would not be possible without external support.”	Strong: “hybrid operation” intended against Poland	No evidence	No direct measure	Not demonstrated
Doc7	“Belarus instrumentalization of migration”	Moderate: “instrumentalization of migration”	No evidence	No direct measure	Not demonstrated
Doc8	A.”Poland does not consent to someone else furnishing our house. For us, the border is truly our sacred place, not a relic.” B.”In our country, Polish citizens will decide a further direction of migration policy in a referendum on	Moderate: treating border as “sacred”, “home”, condemnation of forced acceptance of migrants	No evidence	Yes: Poland vetoed provisions expressing the will to forcibly accept immigrants. Legislation hence failed to pass because of Polish veto, not	Partial: Poland exerted its sovereign will to veto, however, not in Schmittian sense.

	October 15, 2023.” C.”We strongly condemn all attempt to force EU states to accept illegal immigrants against the will of their citizens.”			because of mutual acceptance	
Doc9	“Russia, Belarus or any other country must not abuse our values, including the right to asylum, or undermine our democracy.”	Strong: portraying Russia and Belarus as capable of “undermining democracy” in Poland.	No evidence	Yes: implied deterrence policy	Not demonstrated
Doc10	“I remember how from this podium many years ago, as President of the European Council, I warned against a naïve approach to the threat of illegal migration. It was then that I said this category is the most important responsibility that every government	Strong: illegal immigration is equated to security threat and is presented as “the most important” governmental responsibility	No evidence	Yes: implied protection of state’s borders.	Not demonstrated

	has - for a safe border and safe territory.”				
Doc11	A. “Today marks another step in the process of taking responsibility for Poland, working to secure the Polish border and effectively combat illegal migration, as well as limiting legal migration, which is inadequate to Poland’s needs and threatens the internal stability of the Polish state.” B. “Today, I hope that Members of Parliament will make the necessary decision to extend the regulations that allow Polish state to refuse asylum applications from those who cross the Polish border illegally. This, of course,	Strong: migration is treated as a “threat to the stability of Europe”, Explicitly mentioned as a “serious version of hybrid warfare”, migrants identified as “smugglers and gangsters.”	Yes: explicit claim of “having convinced various country leaders.”	Yes: Request to Minister Council to extend the temporary restriction of the right to submit an application for international protection at the state border with Belarus. Limiting legal migration as well as combating illegal migration.	Yes: Sovereign act on a EU level, Poland exerts its sovereign will and deviates from common international law of granting asylum. The speaker acknowledges the importance of the right to asylum under international conventions and legal frameworks but argues that its application may be restricted when migration

	concerns a border under great pressure from Lukashenko and Putin, namely the Polish-Belarusian border.” C. “Lukashenko and Putin, with the help of smugglers, are mobilizing thousands of illegal migrants and gathering them at the border with Poland, as well as Finland, Lithuania and Latvia. This is both lucrative business for them, and a serious version of hybrid warfare.” D. “Sometimes when we went to our partners across Europe and the world and said it would not be possible to apply for asylum in Poland, do you know how				n is perceived as being deliberately orchestrated by Russia, Belarus, and non-state actors such as smugglers who are weaponized by Russia and Belarus leadership.
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	many times I heard: Jesus, how can that be? That's impossible, after all, there are conventions and international laws. And I say: yes, I realize that the right to asylum is an important right-but not when migration is orchestrated by Russia, Belarus, smugglers, gangsters, and when it's not only illegal but also extremely mass-scale and, in a sense, a form of aggression against Poland" E. "I also managed to convince leaders of various countries in numerous personal conversations." F. "We would like the border with Belarus				
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	and Russia to be sealed along its entire length. Because if someone passes through Belarus and Russia and then uses the Latvian and Lithuanian routes, we will have a problem again. So the fact that we, together with Finland, have encouraged states to firmly and legally block the possibility of asylum for illegal migrants finally provides a real opportunity to effectively discourage smugglers and the politicians who organize this heinous practice.” G. “I also appeal to all Poles – to really pay attention, especially in the coming days, to who,				
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	in a solid, competent, perhaps not always impressive, and without shouting, is trying effectively to take care of the safe Polish border, the safe Polish territory.				
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