Securitization of Migration

The influence of migration discourse on securitization of migration in the Netherlands

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Introduction

A key aspect of contemporary Western society is migration and with al the international population movements in the modern world it has become 'the age of migration (Castles & Miller, 2009). This idea has sparked a lot of debates and lead to the migration discourse, which influenced the securitization of migration (Ibrahim, 2005; Buonfino, 2006; Khosarovinik, 2009; Buzan & Wæver, 2009; Neal, 2009; Koemans, 2010). Kangas, Niemelä and Varjonen (2014) state that a lot of scholars argue that discourse should be taken seriously in explaining their influence on changing agenda's based on the topic of immigration, migration and securitizing them. Although the correlation between the influence of migration discourse and securitization exists, Boswell (2007) thinks differently and states in his research "Migration control policies in Europe do not appear to have become securitized" (p. 60). By stating this, no relations appear to evolve around the concept of discourse or any other kind of influence is affecting securitization measures of migration, but Boswell seems to be the only one in the field who tries to disagree.

In the Netherlands, migration discourse influencing securitization of migration is often described in literature related to the Dutch political arena, where in the last 13 years two very influential politicians, Pim Fortuyn (who was murdered in 2002) and Wilders carried the discourse on migration and going as far by making the statement that the Dutch borders should be closed for any migrant whom is not from the west (Koopmans & Muis, 2009; Duyvendak & Scholten, 2010; Kessel, 2011). Both became quite successful during elections and attracted voters by using this topic. But the lineage of the migration discourse goes even back more, to the 1970's and 80's to be precise. This was the time when migrants from various Non-Western countries came to the Netherlands and tried to settle or work temporarily to make ends meet in their home country, but even back then the migration discourse in the Netherlands influenced the securitization of migration (Prins, 2002; Mamadouh, 2012).

The existing accounts fail to make a comprehensive study on this topic and therefore I will argue in this paper the influence of the migration discourse on securitizing migration, summarized in a small state of the art with the focus on the Dutch context by stating the question: *What are the main reasons for the migration discourse its influence on the securitization of migration in Dutch context?* The aim of this paper is to summarize the dominant factors in the discourse of migration and their influence on securitizing of migration by a structured summary of the most important and contemporary concepts.

Firstly, I will define securitizing and what the theory of securitization of migration means. Secondly, the explanation of the influence of discourse in general and thirdly a brief history on the discourse of migration, and how this influenced the securitization of migration

in the Netherlands.

Due to practical constraints, this paper cannot provide a comprehensive review of all the migration policies and legislations and their discourse, rather a small summary of dominant returning factors and premises found in most literature on these topics. The reader should bear in mind that the common study is based on various interpretations of discourse, but this research have only a few implications and explanations given on this topic. Another potential problem is that the scope of my paper may be too broad. Explaining everything briefly as possible should solve this.

Securitization

In the light of transnationalism, Humphrey (2009) argues: 'securitisation is a policy of social defence defining political community at the national level and a project of transnational governmentality constituted by inter-state cooperation, the harmonising of policies and laws and the forging of a transnational Western public sphere focused by threats' (p.138). He also mentions Foucault (1977) his famous thesis on security by referring to securitization and how it combines 'dispersed self-disciplining through surveillance' and mixes it with Debord (1977) his thesis on society where management of fear and citizen-spectatorship leads to collective disciplining (2014, p.85).

Huysmans (2006) claims a different perspective on securitization by describing it as 'a political technique of framing policy questions in logics of survival with a capacity to mobilize politics of fear in which social relations are structured on the basis of distrust'. Although securitizing could be seen as negative and based on the hostility against the well being of a society and therefore in need of protection, Roé (2012) explains that this isn't always the case. He examines various schools of thoughts on securitization and comes to the conclusion that the transnational identity of securitizing connects every person and embraces the potential for human equality by creating dignity trough justice.

Securitization of Migration

Ceyhan and Tsoukala (2002) describe securitization of migration as a symbolic process with a consensus to mechanical transmission cogwheels in a machine, where every cogwheel rotates into another wheel turning around their axis's. The first one is a socioeconomic one, where migration is associated with unemployment, the rise of informal economy, the crisis of the welfare state, and urban environment deterioration. The second wheel turns around a securitarian axis, where migration is linked to the loss of a control narrative that associates the issues of sovereignty, borders, and both internal and external security. The third on is an

identitarian axis, where migrants are considered as being a threat to the host societies' national identity and demographic equilibrium. The fourth and last on is the political axis, where anti-immigrant, racist, and xenophobic discourses are often expected to facilitate the obtaining of political benefits. This whole mechanism describes the four main premises for the securitization of migration and their interconnectedness and is often used in contemporary studies on this topic (Browning & Macdonald, 2013; Bourbeau, 2014; Menjìvar, 2014).

Influence of Discourse

Securitization is said to be the process by which ostensibly non-security issues, such as immigration, are transformed into urgent security concerns as a consequence of securitizing speech acts (Messina, 2014, p. 530). These speech acts related to migration, which leads undoubtley to securitization, is a great connection to explain the influence of discourse. Weaver-Hightower (2014) has a very good contemporary explanation of influence within the context of discourse and the influence on policies and legislations, by defining influence with combining various notions such as: "influence is meant ability to get others to act, think, or feel as one intends; the appropriate people must be persuaded, deceived, coerced, inveigled, or otherwise induced to do what is required of them". He also state that others use influence as if it were synonymous with ''power,'' a particularly problematic conflation given its connotations of ''power over'' rather than ''power to''. Weaver-Hightower finishes with making the connection of influence with ''success,'' particularly the successes of gaining benefits or recognition for putting factors, premises or arguments within the discourse on the agenda. Currently the general thought is that there is a lot of evidence that discourse influences the thoughts and actions of actors (Ismer, Von Scheve & Zink, 2014). A great example in the Netherlands of how debates on different levels can influence components of discourse is the media influence on the public and political debate on anti-immigration by giving Pim Fortuyn a platform to ventilate his opinion, which contributed to the influence of the discourse on migration (Muis, 2012).

Influence migration discourse on securitization of migration in the Netherlands

The migration discourse is influencing the securitization of migration in the Netherlands on various stages: international, European, national and local. The past forty years a rapid development of migration discourse in the Netherlands have shown a paradigm shift; a transition from problematizing migration, because of the rise of population to securitizing of migration (Huysman, 2000). Bosworth and Guild (2008) build on this fact and state that: 'there has been a growing tendency to lump together quite disparate groups of non-citizens,

from asylum seekers to so-called 'economic migrants' or foreign nationals in prison, effectively erasing differences between them. The unknown and the undocumented are not just unwanted, but dangerous' (703). Garland (2002) explains that this creates politics of fear; one of the strongest arguments of the migration discourse: to mobilize a society with message that contains simple premises of fear. Therefore, a claim could be made that in the Netherlands securitization of migration is being placed high on the political agenda, but is a way to control society.

The history behind the influence that have lead to securitization in the Netherlands is described by Mamadouh (2012) by explaining every step of the Dutch migration discourse influencing securitization of migration through forty years. He describes three phases in his analyse on migration discourse in the Netherlands in political context and emphasises the face that the migrant discourse is focused on the concept of the Netherlands being invaded or "the invasion" of migrants. The importance lies in his research that the concept of being a migrant had to be made an issue first and then focus on the fact that there are also irregular immigrants whom cause even more problems. The first phase is focused on the migrants that landed in 70s and the way they were portrayed and seen as a local problem and during the elections "Housing problems became the main locus of exclusion practices against immigrants".

The second phase emerged in the 80s among anti-immigrant groups. It stressed the failure of national governments to stop immigration after the first oil crisis and the subsequent economic crisis. Return migration programmes also failed to attract sizeable numbers of participants, and even more strongly, family reunification and family formation generated unplanned and unanticipated but sustained immigration flows after the termination of guest worker programmes. The integration and assimilation policies that were implemented in the begin 1990 and 2000 developed the idea around promoting an independent lifestyle of immigrants by becoming active members in Dutch society (Duyvendak & Scholten, 2010) And while integration and assimilation are seen as part of the migration discourse, it too became a way of influencing the securitization of migration. More locally, in Amsterdam to be precise, The Aliens Law 2000 influenced the police 'to do raids targeting allegedly criminal migrants, but this eventually caused major social unrest when they led to the apprehension of a large number of migrants whom many Amsterdammers did not consider so "criminal" after all', as Leerkes, Varsanyi and Engbersen stated (2012, p. 476). The criminalization of immigrants in the case of Amsterdam leads to discrimination (Mutsaers, 2014) and is once again one of the direct conclusion of the migration discourse and their influence on securitization of migration in the Netherlands.

The third phase in Mamadouh his research addresses the "invasion" at the supranational level: (Western) Europe is under siege. It points to the notion of a common fate

of a Western European society unified in the European Union and facing similar population flows. In that case, it is used to emphasize the need to act at the EU level to limit these flows and to construct a Fortress Europe. Gabrielli (2014) adds that securitizing of the migration starts at the European stage, where discourse and practices can easily move to the national scene, searching for various political benefits, such as electoral legitimacy or gaining power and influence inside state institutions. Practical examples within European regulations such as of the Dublin Convention aiming to reduce number of applicants, but can also be seen as trying to separate the good from evildoers; a way to prevent society of any harm from outside their borders. Another step towards securitization was the preservation of domestic stability and migration challenging the welfare state; migration as a danger to domestic society. 1990 Convention applying the Schengen Agreement, which connects immigration and asylum with terrorism, transnational crime and border control (Huysmans, 2000; Léonard, 2009; Leerkes, 2012).

Although these phases claim to be the main reason in this paper for the contemporary migration discourse in the Netherlands, there is also the more institutionalised form and relatively new in the field of both social sciences and law: crimmigration. This term was coined by Stumpf in 2006 and is a mix of criminal law and forged they both talk about inclusion and exclusion of individuals in society (Stumpf, 2006). Van Der Woude et al. (2014) give a great addition on how 'the dynamics between societal developments and steps taken by the legislature' are equal to the influence of the migration discourse on securitization of migration in the Netherlands. By stating: 'political discussions and policy developments in the areas of criminal justice and migration not only coexisted but also started to overlap, which may have opened up the road for the legal process of crimmigration and this is definitely the case in the Netherlands', definitely adds up to this comprehensive overview on this topic.

Conclusion

The main goal of the current study was to describe a structured summary of the most important and contemporary concepts on the discourse of migration and their influence on securitizing of migration in Dutch context. This study has shown that, although often the migration discourse seems to be dominant on the dramatic increases in sheer numbers of illegal immigrants and their issues (Broeders, 2007), there are a lot more premises evolve around this topic. These findings enhance our understanding of not only the influence of the discourse of migration and how the solutions continuously aims to securitize issues around this topic, but that there is a definite need for more studies that will advocate for desecuritization of migration in the political debate and the democratic arena.

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