Whose security are we talking about?

The concept of security is hindering, rather than enhancing, EU policy-making as far as migration issues are concerned[1]

Abstract

This article analyses the nature of the EU migration crisis of 2015. The first step for the analysis is to apply the Constructivist rhetoric and provide a clear understanding of what security is. Constructivists believe that the reality where we live in is socially constructed, and that meanings are conveyed through discourse. Wæver indeed believes that security is an act of speech, and that solely by uttering the word *security*, an issue becomes securitised. Securitisation is, thus, the process of defining something or someone as a security threat, a menace that must be dealt with immediately and that requires exceptional measures. Following the Constructivist principle that reality is socially constructed, the identity of migration in the space of the European Union has changed over time, shifting from a non-issue to an issue of utmost priority in 2015, when the term "migration crisis" entered the political and social discourse. The political discourses have led to the securitisation of migration, which has thus been labelled "migration crisis". Two important implications should be highlighted. First, the EU Member States do not agree on what the "migration crisis" is, and therefore a unified definition is lacking. Several diverse words are used to refer to the migration crisis, according to the different states, but never the word migration. Second, several EU Member States have issued policies with the aim of building border walls, hoping to put an end to the migratory flows. The EU has signed the EU-Turkey Statement to deal with the migration crisis. However, the Statement is lacking in both efficiency and legality, and has not ended the migratory flows of the third-country nationals.

Points for practitioners

This article aims at deconstructing and analysing the meaning of the word *security*, following the Constructivist perspective, and to link it to the so-known "EU migration crisis" of 2015 in order to build a non-traditional interpretation. The focus is on some of the official documents issued by the EU, especially on the ones that contributed to create a division between its external and internal dimensions; some of the consequences of this division will be analysed as far as the "migration crisis" is concerned. This article can be useful for the researchers and academics interested in the Constructivist theory, in an alternative interpretation of *security*, as well as in an alternative interpretation of the so-known EU "migration crisis".

Key words

Border Walls, EU Policy-Making, EU Turkey-Statement, Security, Securitization.

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Introduction

Ever since the post-Cold War era, the meaning of the word security has changed. Before, the narratives on security revolved around the security of the state, and the military capability to defend its borders. Since the end of the Cold War, however, the narratives on security have started to be increasingly focused on the individuals, both people and global entities. The more traditional, realist view of security has been explored further by the Copenhagen School, according to which non-issues become security issues when they are labelled as such, for they pose an existential threat to an actor. The concept of securitization, interconnected with the one of security, is defined by Wæver as an "act of speech", that is, a discursive process. Securitization is the process of declaring something a "security threat" by describing it as an issue of utmost importance and priority. Since 2015, the inflow of third-country nationals in the EU has been securitized and labelled as "migration crisis" owing to the huge number of people – 1.3 million asylum applications were received in 2015 only – that crossed the EU border. However, the EU lacks a common, shared definition of the word *migrant*: in the Italian *Testo Unico*, the word *migrant* is rarely present, substituted by the words *foreign/alien*; in Germany, *Migranten* has only a socio-scientific connotation, and the words *Zuwanderung* (referring to unwanted, uncontrolled entries) and *Einwanderung* (referring to permanent establishment and social integration) are used instead; the Hungarian legal system uses the term *illegal* migrants, but never refers to *legal* migrants; in Sweden, migrants are referred to as *aliens* in the Aliens Act of 2005. Moreover, as a result of the securitization process, eleven out of twenty-eight EU member states (Spain, Greece, Hungary, Bulgaria, Austria, Slovenia, Slovakia, the UK, Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania) and Norway issued policies in order to build border walls to prevent third-country nationals to cross them. Borders have always symbolised the security physical boundary that could not be crossed. While Spain started to build its walls already in the 1990s, and Greece completed its walls in 2012, it was 2015 that saw a dramatic increase in the construction of border walls: the number increased from 5 to 12. In 2016, the EU officialised one of its key policy measures concerning migration, the EU-Turkey Statement, according to which all new irregular migrants, including asylum-seekers, crossing from Turkey to the Greek islands must be returned to Turkey; for every Syrian being returned to Turkey from the Greek islands, another Syrian must be resettled to the EU. Not only the EU-Turkey Statement fails to guarantee the safety of the third-country nationals, but it shifts the problem outside the borders of the EU by blocking the migrants inside Turkey. As a consequence of these policies, the concept of security has gradually shifted from guaranteeing the security of the people seeking international protection to the one of guaranteeing the security of the citizens of the EU member states which have been gradually bordering themselves to keep the migrants out. The lack of a unified and coherent EU policy-making has led not only to the securitization of the migration flows at the EU level, which resulted in the EU-Turkey Statement, but also at the EU Member States level, as their actions of building walls and increasing military security along the borders recall the Realist, more traditional approach to security of the Cold War era. So, whose security is the EU talking about?

Methodology

According to the Constructivist theory, social reality is produced and conveyed through discourses. Social interactions cannot be fully understood without taking in consideration the discourses that give them meaning. Without discourse, there is no social reality, and without understanding discourse, we cannot understand our reality, our experiences, or ourselves. The interplay between text, discourse and context is helpful to understand not only how individuals become *refugees*, but also how the bigger reality of the refugee policies and the determination of the procedures of the refugees

are built. Therefore, texts and discourses play a vital role in constituting social reality. The realm of social identity is connected to the concept of *identity*, a concept that changes over time with diverse implications. The identity of the refugees, for example, is generally contested, unstable and discursively constructed. The actors involved in the refugee system had an active part in building these identities and acted discursively to support them – it was the governments that differentiated between *political refugees* and *economic migrants*.

The methodology used for this article consists in collecting all the official documents mentioned in this article with regard to migration policies. The UN Geneva Convention related to the Status of Refugees, the Single European Act (SEA), the Schengen Agreement, the Dublin Convention have been read carefully to understand the legal framework of the rights of the migrants internationally (UN Geneva Convention related to the Status of Refugees) and with a specific focus in the area of the EU (SEA, Schengen Agreement, Dublin Convention). Several academic articles and books have been read and consulted as well. Moreover, the chart concerning the situation of the border walls has been provided in order to understand better some of the responses to the migration crisis taken by some EU Member States.

1. Security, Securitization Theory and Societal Security: Theoretical Basis to Understand EU Policies On Migration

Security is a word that can be applied to almost any layers of society. The security of the state and the military capability to defend its borders are the key concepts of the traditional narratives on security. Since the 1980s, however, the word *security* began to acquire a broader meaning, and the focus shifted from the national security of the state to the one of the individuals. The analyses made by the Copenhagen School are particularly helpful with regard to the change of the meaning of the word security. Giving *security* a new meaning implied that the military defense of the state was no longer the only focus of the narratives on security. If *security* is understood as the absence of threats, then the security of the individuals implies that the individuals do not feel threatened. Nowadays, however, the safety of the individuals is undermined by several threats such as environmental concerns, cultural identity, political rights, economic welfare, that have become steadily more prominent with respect to the military ones. Consequently, the security of the individuals could potentially acquire an all-inclusive meaning and lose its chore meaning (Wæver, 1995, p.3). Understanding what security is, how it is interconnected with the concept of *securitisation*, and how the narratives on security and securitisation enter the discourse of migration is, thus, necessary.

Wæver defines security as a *speech act*: "By uttering 'security', a state-representative moves a particular development into a specific area, and thereby claims a special right to use whatever means are necessary to block it" (Wæver, 1995, p.7). If security is interpreted as a discursive process, then any issue could be turned into *security issues* if uttered as such. Security threats pose such an existential threat to the sovereignty or independence of a state, that they require to be dealt with immediately. Wæver says that "in naming a certain development a security problem, the 'state' can claim a special right" (Wæver, 1995, p.6) on how to address and deal with the security threats. When the authorities define a certain issue a security problem, or a security threat, they are *securitising* it. Securitization, thus, means turning issues into security threats by declaring them as such or, as Wæver explained it: "something is a security problem when the elites declare it to be so" (Wæver, 1995, p.6). The main claim of securitization is that "security is a speech act, that solely by uttering 'security' something is being done" (Taureck, 2006, p.2). A successful securitization process requires a *securitizing move*. A securitizing move is performed successfully when actors persuade an audience that there exists, indeed, a security threat

which needs to be dealt with immediately and with exceptional measures. Securitisation is, thus, "based on power and capability as well as the means to socially and politically create a threat" (Taureck, 2006, p.3).

Societal security is another key concept that has been investigated by the Copenhagen School, which is linked to the narrative of security and securitization. Analysed by the point of view of the state, *societal security* means guaranteeing the security of the state by protecting it from all the external societies, that is, all the societies that do not belong to the internal territory of the state. Societal security has, thus, an external dimension, and it can be perceived as a threat to the integrity and independence of the state. The difference between state security and societal security is that state security perceives *sovereignty* as the most important element that guarantees its survival, whereas societal security focuses on *identity* as its main criterion of survival. Both perceive *survival* as the necessary precondition for the legitimacy of their existence. "Political security has to do with the organizational stability of states, systems of government, and the ideologies that give governments and states their legitimacy" (Wæver, 1995, p.14), whereas "society is about identity, the self-conception of communities, and those individuals who identify themselves as members of a particular community" (Wæver, 1995, p.15). Legitimacy is necessary for the survival of both states and societies - if states lose their legitimacy, they lose their sovereignty; if societies lose their legitimacy, they lose their identity and cannot survive.

The securitization of societal security made by the states is a process that results in identifying external actors as threats to both the sovereignty and the independence of the states. Defining migrants and refugees as security threats is an example of the process of securitization that identifies external actors as potentially dangerous, owing to identity reasons – they have a different, external identity. Societal security, in the case of migration, describes a situation where a conspicuous number of individuals within a state feel that their identity is threatened by some external actors, such as migrants.

2. Brief Historical Background: The Securitization of Migration

To understand how the issue of migration has been linked to the realm of societal security, it is worth analysing the development of the policies on the migratory flows implemented by the EU. The attempt to design a common migration policy in the EU is not a new phenomenon. Neither is the search for a solution on how to deal with the migratory flows. During the 1950s and 1960s, owing to the economic situation that needed a low-cost and malleable workforce, countries such as France, Germany, and the Netherlands issued policies aimed at welcoming migrants (Huysmans, 2000, p. 753). However, in the space of the European Union, migrants have been "increasingly presented as a danger to public order, cultural identity, and domestic and labour market stability" (Huysmans, 2000, p. 752). The migratory flows have thus, been securitized.

At the Paris summit of 1973, the European Council decided that the free movement of individuals within the European Community would be granted to the citizens of the Member States, reinforcing the Regulation 1612/68 that differentiated the right of free movement for citizens of the EU Member States and of third countries (Huysmans, 2000, p. 754). In 1974, owing to the enlargement of the European Community, an action programme for migrant workers and their families was implemented. So, until the 1970s, the issue of migration focused on how to integrate the migrant workers into the social and economic rights of the new country. From the 1970s, migration started to become a debated issue and, since the 1980s, the (il)legal status of the migrants entered the political debates. Since the mid-1980s, though, the perception of the migrants started to change, and the migration policy became increasingly Europeanized (Huysmans, 2000, p. 755).

This change from a positive to a negative connotation seems to confirm how speech acts influence an audience on some issues. The political rhetoric had already started to depict migration as a destabilizing threat, even though the members of the European Community did not put much emphasis on the negative connotation of migration. A series of documents and policies were issued with the aim to incorporate the issue of migration into the constitutional structure of the EU. This is how migration finally became securitized.

2.1 Migration in the EU Policies: Geneva Convention, Schengen Agreement, the Single European Act, Dublin Convention

The United Nations Convention related to the Status of Refugees is one of the most remarkable documents as far as the rights of the refugees are concerned. It was issued in 1951, as a result of the tragic events of the Second World War, and it entered into force in 1954. In 1967, a Protocol was issued, and the Convention acquired a universal character. According to the UN Convention, a refugee is "someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion" (United Nations Convention to the Status of Refugees, 1951, p. 3). Its three core principles – non-discrimination, non-penalization and *non-refoulement* – "are to be applied without discrimination as to race, religion or country of origin" (United Nations Convention to the Status of Refugees, 1951, p. 3).

Article 2 of the Schengen Agreement, issued in 1985, states that within the European Community (EC) "internal borders may be crossed at any point without any checks on persons being carried out" (Official Journal of the European Communities, 2000, p. 20). The Schengen Agreement lists all the regulations that must be implemented with regard to *aliens*, described in Article 1 as "any person other than a national of a Member State of the European Communities" (Official Journal of the European Communities, 2000, p. 19). Article 6 affirms that "cross-border movement at external borders shall be subject to checks by the competent authorities" (Official Journal of the European Communities, 2000, p. 21). The Schengen Agreement should be based upon the principles of freedom of movement and mutual trust. However, this is true only in the internal dimension of the European Community, as the Schengen Agreement has led to strengthening external borders as well as border controls (Benedicto and Brunet, 2018, p. 16). The Schengen Agreement, thus, institutionalised a clear disparity between the citizens of the Member States of the European Community and third-country citizens.

In 1987, the Single European Act (SEA) was issued. Article 13 of the SEA states that "the internal market shall comprise an area without internal frontiers in which the free movement of goods, persons, services and capital is ensured in accordance with the provisions of this Treaty" (Official Journal of the European Communities, 1985, p. 7). So, the SEA proclaimed the end of the internal borders within the European Community. The abolition of the internal borders among the Member States has had important security implications on the external borders of the European Community, which have been increasingly subject to greater checks and controls. The decision to decrease internal border controls and to strengthen external border controls is based upon the supposition that the illegal flow of goods, services and people take place almost exclusively at the external border of the EC.

Another important implication of the European Community's policies is that the third-country nationals, or *aliens*, are the ones who are irregular. *Aliens* are frequently associated with the adjectives *irregular* and *illegal*, creating a strong implication that third-country citizens behave against the law. Article 6 of the Dublin Convention, implemented in 1997,

reinforces this assumption by affirming that "when it can be proved that an applicant for asylum has *irregularly* crossed the border into a Member State by land, sea or air, having come from a non-member State of the European Communities […]" (Official Journal of the European Communities, 1997, p. 4). This implication was already present at the end of the Schengen Agreement: "In view of the risks in the fields of security and illegal immigration, the Ministers and State Secretaries underline the need for effective external border controls" (Official Journal of the European Communities, 2000, p. 62).

However, migration was never described as a security threat in any EU documents prior to the European Union Global Strategy (EUGS), which was published in 2016. The European Security Strategy of 2003 did not even mention migration, but it focused on some other security threats such as terrorism and organised crime. In 2003, the European Security Strategy merely "recognised the possibility of migration movements as a consequence of disruptive events, such as conflicts or competition for natural resources" (Ceccorulli, Lucarelli, 2017, p. 85). The reason why migration was not perceived as a threat at that time is that the phenomenon was present, but it was not perceived as an emergency or as a threat to be dealt with immediately. The situation changed in 2011, as a consequence of the Arab Spring, when an increasingly number of migrants started to illegally cross the border of the EU. The situation reached a breaking point in 2014, when "illegal border crossings almost tripled […] with respect to 2013" (Ceccorulli, Lucarelli, 2017, p. 85) and in 2015, when "there were more than 1 million arrivals by the sea" (Ceccorulli, Lucarelli, 2017, p. 85). In 2015, the EU has issued two complementary Agendas, one on Security and the other one on Migration. One of the most relevant aspect of the documents is that the "internal and external aspects of security are indissolubly linked" (Ceccorulli, Lucarelli, 2017, p. 86) in the realm of the European Union.

3. "Migration crisis" In Europe

When it comes to the "migration crisis" of 2015, the actors involved are numerous: the European Union (EU), the EU Member States, and the migrants. The migrants are third-country nationals - they come from countries that are external to the EU dimension - who want to reach the EU border to apply for asylum. The rights of the asylum-seekers are defined by the UN Geneva Convention related to the Status of Refugees. The expression "migration crisis" is used generally to refer to the inflow of third-country nationals that crossed the EU border starting in 2015 to ask for asylum. There are three main routes that migrants undertake to enter the EU. The Eastern Mediterranean route (from Turkey to the Greek islands), the Western Balkan route (from Serbia towards Hungary and Croatia), and the Central Mediterranean route (from Libya to Italy).
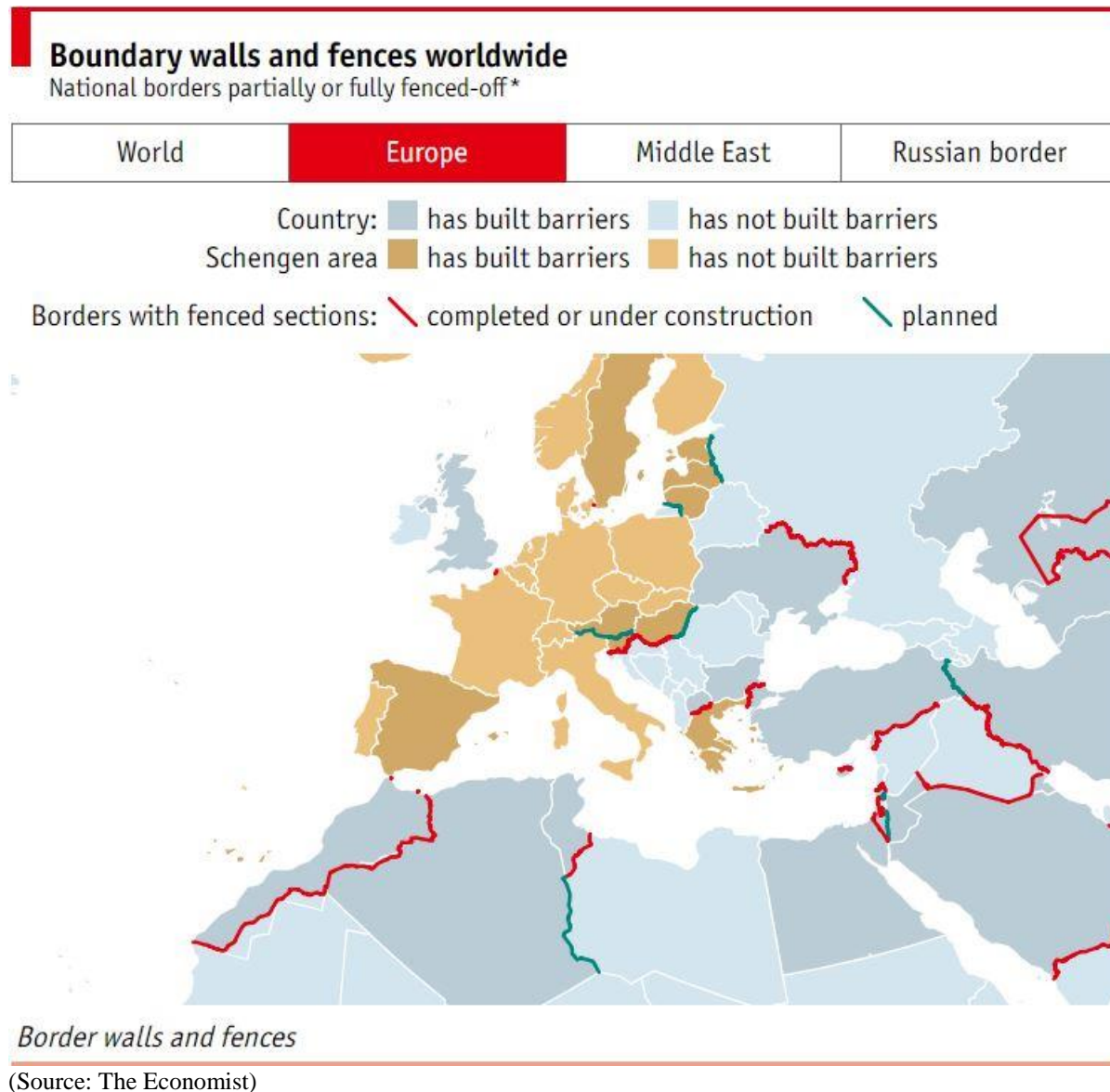
It is worth noting that, despite the well-known "migration crisis", the EU Member States do not share a common definition of *migration*. The Italian *Testo Unico,* issued with the aim to regulate migration, refers to the migrants as *foreign/alien*, and only uses the word *migrant* to refer to "clandestine immigration and extra-communitarian immigration" (Ceccorulli, 2017, p. 88). The French law uses the word *migrant* only to refer to the activity of easing the irregular entry and stay in France, such as "'illicit traffic of migrants ('traffic illicite de migrants'); the projects of co-development ('codéveloppement des migrants'); or the help to migrants ('aide aux migrants')" (Grappi, 2017, p. 98). The words *Migration* and *Migranten* exist in the German language, but they are used merely with a socio-scientific connotation; the two words *Zuwanderung* and *Einwanderung* refer instead to the inflow of people coming from abroad. *Zuwanderung* implicitly refers "to unwanted and uncontrolled entry and the governance thereof" (Zotti, 2017, p. 104), whereas

Einwanderung refers to the "willing relocation of people moving to a foreign country in need of additional population for demographic, economic, cultural or any other kind of reasons" (Zotti, 2017, p. 104).

Illegal immigrants is a recurrent expression in the English language which describes all the immigrants that "are not entitled to reside in the UK, either because they have never had a legal residence permit or because they have overstayed their time-limited permit or who are legally resident but breaching the conditions attached to their immigration status" (Zotti, 2017, p.110). Ever since the 1990s, the Greek media and public debates have been the most common scenario for expressions such as *illegal immigrant* and *illegal immigration*. However, the term *migrant* is not present in the Greek law. The closest term is *allodapos*, which refers to a "natural person who does not have Greek nationality or is stateless" (Karamanidou, 2017, p. 118). Moreover, whereas the term *illegal immigrant* does not exist in the Greek law, the expression *illegal immigration* is sometimes used (Karamanidou, 2017, p. 118). The Hungarian law does not refer to *migrants* specifically either. The usage of the term *migráns* has spread in public and media discourses owing to the "migration crisis" in the EU. Furthermore, the Hungarian legal system "uses the term 'illegal migration/migrants' instead of 'irregular', but it does not refer to 'legal' or 'regular migration/migrants'" (Hunyadi, Melegh, Mendly, Vadasi, Vancsó, 2017, p. 126). The Norwegian Immigration Act never uses the term *migrant*, it rather uses the word *utlending* which means "foreigner". Moreover, the term *migrant* is not described clearly in the Norwegian Immigration Act (Olsen, 2017, p. 136).

The so-known *migration crisis* can be interpreted as the result of the securitization process as well as several policies issued by the European Union aimed at easing the free movement within the Union and to strengthen the checks and controls at the external borders of the Union. The security narrative on migration "draws largely on the idea of an increasingly blurred internal-external divide and the alleged connection between migration and other security threats (especially smuggling and terrorism)" (Ceccorulli, Lucarelli, 2017, p. 89). The EU security narrative has acquired a specific focus: the external border management. As mentioned in the EUGS, "the external cannot be separated from the internal. In fact, internal policies often deal only with the consequences of external dynamics" (European Union, *EUGS*, p. 17).

3.1 Border walls in Europe

Boundary walls and fences worldwide
National borders partially or fully fenced-off*

| World | Europe | Middle East | Russian border |

Country: ☐ has built barriers ☐ has not built barriers
Schengen area ☐ has built barriers ☐ has not built barriers

Borders with fenced sections: \ completed or under construction \ planned

Border walls and fences

(Source: The Economist)

As a consequence of the migratory flows, and of the inadequate response of the EU, several EU Member States have found their own ways to deal with the migratory flows. Some of them built and are currently building border walls in order to prevent third-country nationals to enter the European Union. The securitization discourse of migration together with the lack of a common definition of the term *migrant* have had important consequences in Europe. Issuing policies aimed at building border walls is one of them.

The practice of building border walls started during the 1990s – when the first two walls were built – and has witnessed a dramatic rise in 2015, when the number of walls grew from two to twelve (Benedicto and Brunet, 2018, p. 6). Building border walls seemed to be the immediate response to the allegedly unmanageable "migration crisis". Ten out of twenty-eight member states have already built border walls to keep the migrants out; some border walls are under construction or planned to be built soon.

Ever since the 1990s, over 1000 km of border walls have been built among the EU Member States or members of the Schengen area (Benedicto and Brunet, 2018, p. 6). Spain was the first country to start building border walls, in 1993, to prevent incoming migratory flows from Morocco. Then, with the increasingly securitizing discourse on migration, several countries have built external walls – Greece and Bulgaria against Turkey, Hungary against Serbia and Croatia, Macedonia against Greece, Austria against Slovenia, Slovenia against Croatia. Moreover, in 2015, the Balkan route (Greece, Bulgaria, Hungary, Macedonia, Austria, Slovakia, Slovenia and Serbia) was closed with walls and the massive deployment of border controls and agents.

 "The European Union is also reformulating the concept of border space through its border externalisation policies. The border is no longer just a delimitation of territory and state sovereignty. The geographical space expands to third countries through different types of agreements, some of which are carried out through the European Union, by Member States, in the form of bilateral agreements, or development aid funds" (Benedicto and Brunet, 2018, p. 13). Building walls to keep the migrants out has not proven to be useful: "the walls and measures to control migratory movements have not closed the routes, but have redefined them" (Benedicto and Brunet, 2018, p. 29). The migratory flows have not ceased to exist because of the border walls, as the migrants have been undertaking different and more dangerous routes to cross the border of the European Union. Therefore, the external dimension of security has become so important that states started building walls to protect their own external borders with neighbouring countries.

4. The EU-Turkey Statement

On 18th March 2016, the EU and Turkey approved the so-known EU-Turkey Statement. The statement was aimed at regulating the flow of illegal immigrants entering the EU, as well as to improve the relations between the two actors. The EU-Turkey Statement has introduced some important statements in order to "break the business model of the smugglers and to offer migrants an alternative to putting their lives at risk" (Council of the European Union, 2016, p. 1). To end the irregular flows of migration travelling from Turkey to the EU, the two actors have agreed that "all new irregular migrants crossing from Turkey into Greek islands as from 20 March 2016 will be returned to Turkey" (Council of the European Union, 2016, p. 1). The Statement affirms that this will be conducted "in full accordance with EU and international law" as well as "in respect of the principle of non-refoulement" (Council of the European Union, 2016, p. 1). The Statement also made clear that "migrants not applying for asylum or whose application has been found unfounded or inadmissible in accordance with the said directive will be returned to Turkey" (Council of the European Union, 2016, p. 1). The second statement implemented to deal with illegal immigration affirms that "for every Syrian being returned to Turkey from the Greek islands, another Syrian will be resettled from Turkey to the EU" (Council of the European Union, 2016, p. 1). However, "priority will be given to migrants who have not previously entered or tried to enter the EU irregularly" (Council of the European Union, 2016, p. 1).

Before the EU-Turkey Statement, asylum-seekers could apply for asylum in the mainland. With the new statement, however, asylum-seekers have to apply for asylum in separate border procedures known as hotspots (Alpes et al., 2017, p. 2). At the core of the EU-Turkey Statement lies the possibility to return to Turkey the flow of smuggled migrants and asylum seekers travelling from Turkey to the Greek islands. Turkey promised to tighten its border controls towards Europe and to improve the living conditions for the immigrants who live there, whereas the EU promised to increase resettlement of Syrian refugees residing in Turkey as well as to increase to six billion euros its financial support to Turkey. Furthermore, the EU promised to accelerate its accession negotiations with Turkey as well as to debate the question of

visa liberalization (Ataç et al., 2017, p. 45). As Turkey has repeatedly threatened to break the deal, however, the role of the EU has been put into question because Turkey seems to have "the upper hand in the Statement" (Ceccorulli, 2018, p. 9), "pushing the EU to set aside the thorny issue of the effective protection of human rights in the country, an utmost priority in EU relations with third states, at least on rhetoric" (Collett, 2016, quoted in Ceccorulli, 2018, p. 9).

The efficiency of the EU-Turkey Statement has been criticised. At the end of April 2017, "only 5,035 Syrian refugees had been resettled from Turkey to the EU, since many EU countries refuse to admit them" (Ataç et al., 2017, p. 46). Moreover, "only 1,094 migrants who had arrived on the islands via Turkey had been returned as part of the EU-Turkey statement" (Danish Refugee Council, 2017). Furthermore, a Greek appeals committee stopped returning Syrian refugees to Turkey because they do not think of Turkey as a safe third-country (Ataç et al., 2017, p. 46).

The legality of the EU-Turkey Statement has been put into question as well. The focus of the EU-Turkey Statement on returns has led to violations of human rights owing to the possibility of discrimination and detention based on nationality. This means that people belonging to ethnic groups with less recognition than others will find it more difficult to be granted asylum. Secondly, asylum seekers are discouraged to apply for asylum owing to the delays in the bureaucratic procedures and the poor living conditions of the hotspots – some asylum seekers felt forced to be returned to Turkey or to their home countries, which is a violation of the principle of *non-refoulement*.

Conclusion

Proving that the meaning of the word *security* is interpreted differently according to the various actors involved is one important aim of this article. Not only do the different interpretations of security affect the perceptions of the single individuals, but they also have important consequences on how the states decide to respond to the security threats. One of the most common consequences of having contrasting interpretations is that different, sometimes even opposite actions are taken in order to exacerbate the security threats. In the realm of security and migration, the situation is particularly polarised – the focus of *security* is, indeed, put both on the security of the migrants, who flee from their home countries, as well as on the security of the people living in the countries reached by the migrants.

When it comes to security, a lot of measures can be implemented to protect the state and the citizens who live within its borders. *Security* can refer to the safety of the people, to the capability of the states to defend their borders, or to economic welfare. Security can, thus, be related to any layers of society. States usually respond to the security threats with different means. Following one of the most well-known Constructivist principles of the Copenhagen School, "anarchy is what states make of it" (Wendt, 1992), it could be said that security is what states make of it as well. States have different perceptions of security, and the same security threats may be interpreted differently according to different states. Therefore, the way states decide to respond to security threats varies according to the perceptions that the states themselves have of the security threats.

Welcoming the asylum-seekers and guaranteeing their security should have been the most important goal for the Member States of the EU. However, several EU Member States have decided to tackle the "migration crisis" following different criteria from the official principles listed in the UN Geneva Convention related to the Status of Refugees. An increasingly number of countries have started to build border walls in order to keep the migrants out, probably as a consequence of the fact that the EU did not have a unified response on how to deal with the migratory flows. Moreover, several EU

Member States disagree with the policies adopted by the EU, complicating even more the delicate issue of the migration crisis.

The EU has proven to be far from united as far as the "migration crisis" is concerned. The lack of a shared, common policy among the EU Member States has affected not only the integrity of the Union as a whole, but also the relations between the Member States. Moreover, their different perceptions of *security* has led the EU Member States to behave differently – the Visegrad Group (that comprises Poland, Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Hungary) has refused to take any migrants, whereas Germany has proven to be more welcoming; Italy and Greece have criticised the EU for the lack of help in terms of how to welcome the huge inflow of immigrants reaching their shores.

Finally, the EU-Turkey Statement has not put an end to the migration flows. It does not guarantee the security of the third-country nationals, and it does not solve the problem of the migratory flows, as the focus is shifted merely from the internal to the external dimension of the EU. The routes that the migrants undertake have been shifted and have become even more dangerous than before. If the aim of the EU-Turkey agreement was to decrease the inflow of third-country nationals entering the EU, then the agreement might be considered successful. However, it is not successful as far as human rights are concerned. The EU-Turkey agreement has proven to be extremely controversial in terms of human rights owing to the fact that Turkey is not considered a safe third-country, and that the principle of resettlement is not consistent with the principle of *non-refoulement*, according to which migrants cannot be resettled against their will.

Therefore, when it comes to security and the "migration crisis", one of the possible interpretations is that the EU has chosen to prioritise its security and the security of its external borders. Since the 1980s, the policies implemented by the EC first and the EU afterwards have witnessed a focus which has been put increasingly on the security of the EU internal and external dimension – the less borders and controls within the EU, the more security checks along the borders with its neighbouring countries. So, the security of the EU Member States as well as the safety of the EU citizens have been prioritised over the security of the asylum-seekers.

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