Fear voting: Securitization of migration in the context of European parliament election 2019 in the Czech Republic

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Fear Voting

Securitization of Migration in the Context of European Parliament Election 2019 in the Czech Republic

Master Thesis

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Introduction

In early June 2017 at 8 a.m. a train hit a tree that was chopped down over the tracks in a central region of the Czech Republic. Police investigators found fliers at the scene with messages related to Islam. Nobody was hurt during the incident (Němcová and Heroldová 2017). In February 2019 a 71-year-old Czech man was sentenced on charges of terrorism. During the court hearing, he stated that he had nightmares about trains overcrowded with Muslim migrants coming to the Czech Republic in order to rape women (ČT24 2019). His action was motivated by an attempt to mobilise the public against Islam. This 71-year-old sympathiser of a Czech anti-immigration and anti-Islamic political party SPD became the first convicted terrorist in the Czech Republic (Aktualne.cz 2019).

On March 15, 2019, almost 50 worshippers were killed in an attack on two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand. Social networks and comment sections on news websites began to fill with comments that can be defined as hate speech or approval of terrorism. Czech Police started investigating some of the comments, the Minister of Interior issued a statement saying that this kind of behaviour will not be tolerated (ČTK 2019; Karlík and Kubištová 2019). The comments on both social networks and news websites were widespread. Among them, one could have read statements such as “I would give [the attacker] a medal, more of those who don’t just speak but act. He’s badass; say whatever you want.”; “No Muslims, no mosques, no problem”; “Finally someone started and gave an example not to be afraid to use the same means, he who sows the wind reaps the whirlwind.”; “When Muslims are allowed to murder, I don’t see a single reason why we shouldn’t pay back!!!! I don’t see what’s all this fuzz about.” (Romea.cz 2019; Brodcová and Golis 2019).

The Muslim population in the Czech Republic is about 0.2 % of the total population (Pew Research Center 2017). The number of immigrants per inhabitant is meagre in the Czech Republic, about 4.9 immigrants per 1000 natives. The Czech Republic is the country with 5\textsuperscript{th} lowest concentration of immigrants per native in Europe (Eurostat 2019). Similarly, the number of asylum seekers is marginal compared to previous decades (see Graph 1).
Graph 1 – Development of the number of asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection in the Czech Republic

Even though both Muslims and migrants from Muslim countries are few in total numbers, the public seems to treat migration as one of the vital social topics. According to a survey, in Czech presidential elections in 2018, immigration was seen as the second most crucial issue. In a public survey, over 45 % of respondents said it is one of the two most important issues the country is currently facing, while the European average was slightly over 35 % (Dražanová 2018).

Given the fact that there are no substantial numbers of immigrants or asylum seekers either living or entering the Czech Republic, it has been proved in the abovementioned studies and surveys that anti-migrant and anti-Islamic stance has been one of the critical factors shaping the public interest. This thesis aims to look into the phenomenon that could be labelled as a *migration crisis without migrants*. The research is focused on securitization, which means classifying a specific issue (in this case, migration) as a threat (Buzan, Wæver, and Wilde 1998).

When asked about how people feel about immigration from outside the EU, Czechs have seen the migration from outside of EU, in general, more negatively, than the EU average, as the following graphs show:

Graph 2: The Czech Republic
These data clearly show that the negative approach to outside-EU migration is significantly higher in the Czech Republic when compared to the EU average. The negative approach to migration is apparent already in late 2014 before the so-called migration crisis\textsuperscript{1} even begun. The Eurobarometer does not offer the option of selecting a specific region of origin. Thus, it can be argued that the graphs above do not necessarily express the public opinion on migrants.

\textsuperscript{1} The term migration crisis refers to the events of mainly the year 2015 when large number of people migrated to Europe. These people, mainly from Africa and the Middle East used several migration routes, both via Balkan countries and the Mediterranean Sea. Many of the mainstream media as well as international institutions started calling this event \textit{migration crisis}, supporting the notion of migrant-related threat (see The Economist 2019; BBC 2015).
from the Middle East and North Africa. The Eurobarometer was used in order to illustrate the results of surveys in the Czech Republic and compare these with the EU average levels. This comparison is naturally possible only when using surveys done by the same methods; in another case, the comparison would be questionable.

In the Czech Republic, there are reports published by the Public Opinion Research Centre which are asking specifically about migrants from the Middle East and North Africa. According to their surveys conducted since September 2015, the refusal towards accepting migrants from the Middle East and North Africa corresponds with the data from Eurobarometer. The participants were asked if they agree with the following statement: the Czech Republic should accept some of the migrants coming from the Middle East and North Africa.

Graph 4: The Czech Republic should admit some of the migrants coming from the Middle East and North Africa. (in %)

![Graph 4](image)

Source: (Hanzlová 2019b, 6)

This graph itself does not, however, show the securitization of migration. Disagreeing with admitting migrants from the Middle East and North Africa might be from various reasons and only disagreeing with the admittance based on security-related issues would show that migration is securitized among the population. For that reason, I will present another graph. In this case, the respondents were asked: “Is or is not the current situation regarding refugees a threat to the safety of a) the Czech Republic b) Europe c) world peace? Possible answers: definitely yes, rather yes, rather no, definitely no.

Graph 5: Refugees as a security threat, May 2019
Based on this graph, it is evident that a large percentage of the Czech population sees refugees as a security risk, mainly to European security. It is, however, difficult to establish a causality relationship between graphs 4 and 5 as it is not clear if people refuse migration because they feel it is a security threat, or from a different reason. The report made by Public Opinion Research Centre does, however, mentions the following: “(...) against admitting refugees are in general much more frequently and strongly those, who deem refugees to be a security threat.” (Hanzlová 2019b, 6). In other words, the refusal of admitting refugees is caused by seeing them as a security threat – this is the consequence of securitization of migration.

Given the fact that the number of migrants arriving in Europe keeps decreasing since it peaked in 2015 at 1,032,400 arrivals to Europe to 141,500 in 2018 (UNHCR 2018), we do not observe a decrease in negative feelings about accepting migrants from outside Europe. On the contrary, as this thesis aims to point out, there is an increased securitization of migration – seeing migration and migrants as a threat to security – a speech act conducted (not only) by political parties.

This relation between decreasing numbers of migrants coming from outside the EU, especially from the Middle East and North Africa, does not correlate with the level of anti-migrant rhetoric in many European countries. As shown in the graphs above, countries with almost no migration from the Middle East and North Africa are significantly above the European average of refusing migration. This thesis aims to offer an explanation of the phenomenon of securitization of migration, shown on a specific example of the election to the European Parliament in the Czech Republic in May 2019. Even when focusing on a specific and relatively small country, there is potential for generalization of the results, given the similar attitudes towards migration of other East-European countries, mainly the Visegrad Group countries.
The research puzzle of this thesis is the issue of securitization of migration – how is it effective and what means are used in order to securitize migration. Given the fact that the number of migrants coming to the Czech Republic from the Middle East and North Africa is close to zero, migration from these countries is a rather important topic in the election. This thesis focuses on the process of labelling this migration as a threat by political actors. It aims to explain how is the migration securitized, what means are used, and what are the specific aspects of the securitization process. The hypothesis claims that migration was in no small extent securitized by political parties in their election manifestos, by using means of negative framing of migration, exaggerating the threats associated with migration and creating the notion of threat stemming from migration.

The introduction, which also serves as a chapter on the general context of the researched phenomenon, is followed by a literature review and methodology. The goal of these two chapters is to briefly recapitulate the current state of research of the subject as well as to explain the methods used to conduct the research in this thesis. The methodology chapter is partially devoted to the theory of securitization, which is the main element of the research. The next chapter, Objectives and research questions state the goals of this thesis. After this, the following chapters look at the objects of this research – the atmosphere in the society, with an accent on the roots of Islamophobia and its current presence among the Czech public, followed by a chapter on the securitizing actors – the political parties selected for this research. Both the chapter on parties and fear aim to illustrate the relation between the context and the actors because as explained further on, these two parts of the process are interconnected.

Next chapter focuses on the referent object, another essential factor of the securitization theory. This chapter examines what is actually threatened and needs protection. This chapter is followed by chapters on Speaking security and Hearing security. The first one focuses on the content analysis on several levels, whereas the second chapter looks into the audience and its perception of the securitization process.

The results of content analysis, as well as their interpretation and summary, is reviewed in chapter called Migration crisis without migrants. This chapter offers answers to research questions and objectives. The thesis ends with a conclusion, which offers a brief summary of the topic in general and identifies the main trends and outcomes.
1 Literature review

This literature review focuses on the current state of the literature regarding the topic of this thesis. It reviews the main studies conducted in the recent period, which are relevant due to the geographic area, theoretical framework or chosen approach. This chapter is not a complete list of all relevant publications. It aims at providing a clear overview of current trends in political science and migration studies, regarding the securitization of migration. The below-mentioned articles could be divided into two categories – theories and case studies. This literature review serves as a chronological guide through the development of the theory of securitization and its application. This chapter, however, does not explore the theory of securitization into depth, as this is the aim of the next chapter on theories.

The key theory of securitization, which is the central theory of this thesis, was firstly developed by the representatives of Copenhagen School (CS) in the 1990s. In their book Security: A New Framework for Analysis, Ole Waever, Barry Buzan and Jaap de Wilde explain the changes in the concept of security as well as in the process of securitization (see Buzan, Wæver, and Wilde 1998). This has later become a starting point for many researchers and scholars who based on the theory of securitization further developed and modified theoretical frameworks (Huysmans 2011; Balzacq 2005); or used the theory in their case studies (see Zvada 2018; Miholjcic 2017).

The CS developed a multi-dimensional understanding of security. In the Cold War period, security was mainly seen as a military threat caused by the clearly identified perpetrator – usually another state. With the conceptual framework developed by CS, the term security shifted from its original military hard security towards understanding security from various points of view – such as societal, environmental, political or economic security. The “enemy” was no longer a state, but anything that was labelled as such a threat, regardless of the actual existence of risk (see Buzan, Wæver, and Wilde 1998).

The literature that followed up on the CS theories and concept is rather large, yet two authors specifically are worth pointing out, both of them focusing on a different interpretation of securitization.

Firstly, Jef Huysmans (2011, 375–76) focuses on securitization as an act of speech – with emphasis on the act. According to Huysmans, the audience’s acceptance of the speech act of security is not an issue. The issue is creating the scene, regardless of the institutionalization or acceptance. The key concept here is the authority and what the author calls little security
nothings – practices, devices, sites that by themselves have no significant value, but the way they serve as symbols of threat, these nothings are more potent than speech acts in starting the securitization process. Huysmans gives many examples of these nothings, such as the CCTV, credit cards or even fertilizers (due to their potential use in bomb-making).

Secondly, Thierry Balzacq puts the audience into the centre of securitization. Unlike Huysmans, Balzacq sees the success of securitization in the fact that it needs to be audience-centred, used under specific conditions (context) and oriented on gaining political mandate (agency) (see Balzacq 2005). The theory of Balzacq, which incorporates three conditions for the success of securitization offers more insight into the communication element of securitization, seeing it as a two-way process between the actor and the audience. The three-dimensional approach also allows for systematic analysis of the researched phenomena.

The main difference between Balzacq and Huysmans is the level of audience engagement. Whereas according to Huysmans, the speech act does not need to be accepted; it merely creates a scene which may start the process of securitization. Balzacq, on the other hand, focuses on context, the audience and the message. These two approaches clearly represent the current divide in academia, the number of interpretations of CS theories as well as the rapid development in security studies since the end of the Cold War.

Regardless of the confusion in the interpretation of the theories, there are many case studies using the theory of securitization, either in its original form, or slightly modified. Below are reviewed a few of these case studies which are relevant to the research due to their topic and geographical focus on the region of Central and Eastern Europe, mainly the Visegrad Group Countries.

Firstly, there is at the moment no research available on securitization on migration in any Czech elections. From this point of view is this thesis unique. There are, however, studies on the securitization of migration in Slovakia and Hungary (see Zvada 2018; Goździak and Márton 2018; Miholjčic 2017; Štampach 2017). There are of course studies on the securitization of migration in many other countries and historical periods, but the cases of Slovakia and Hungary are very relevant due to cultural, historical and in Slovakian case language similarities. These countries are also members of the Visegrad group, which, as a platform, has a unified approach to migration policies of the EU.

The Slovakian case is researched in Ľubomír Zvada’s article “Securitization of the Migration Crisis and Islamophobic Rhetoric: The 2016 Slovak Parliamentary Elections as a Case Study”.  

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In this study, the author applies the theory of securitization on the case of Slovakian Parliamentary Elections in 2016, which is very interesting from the contextual point of view, since in 2015 the so-called migration crisis peaked in Europe. The author concludes that the securitization of migration took place in some of the parties, and it was used as a central theme of their campaigns. The author also noticed increased levels of xenophobia and Islamophobia (Zvada 2018). Zvada bases his research on the original, unmodified CS theory of securitization, and while he discusses the questionable Slovak identity, he ignores the audience. Zvada’s focus was thus put on the content of the message, rather than on the interaction between the actors and their audience.

The second study on Hungary, by Nina Miholjcic, has more solid theoretical fundaments. She bases her case study on the extended theory of securitization by one of the founders of CS, Ole Waever. In her case, there are clear conditions for the success of securitization – (1) presenting the issue as an existential threat, (2) authority to persuade the audience and (3) historical background (Miholjcic 2017, 60–61). The author focuses on the speech acts conducted by mainly Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and concludes that securitization of migration in Hungary was successful, migrants are seen as an existential threat and the success of securitization allowed for extraordinary measures – building the wall on the border with Serbia.

The selected case studies focus on the content of the message, and whether it is the Prime Minister’s speech or political parties’ campaigns; securitization is measured in words. While this is an integral part of the analysis and will be part of this thesis, too, there are other relevant dimensions that need to be analysed – the context and the audience.

This literature review provided a brief overview of the development of the theory of securitization and outlined two of the significant following scholar approaches. By reviewing the geographically relevant case studies, it has been shown that securitization of migration has been researched in the region of Central and Eastern Europe, however not in the Czech Republic. The case studies also used the CS theory of securitization as their framework for analysis, but both the case of Slovakia and Hungary did not use its full potential which is represented by exploring the two-way communication between the securitizing actor and the audience.
2 Methodology

This chapter explains the way in which I intend to address the questions raised by the above-defined research problems. It aims to describe the way how using two different methods will help to answer the research questions. Furthermore, this chapter introduces the theory and conceptual frameworks used in the master thesis. First, the qualitative deductive content analysis is explained, followed by a sub-chapter dealing with the disciplined interpretive case study, concluding with a brief overview of the theories and conceptual frameworks used in the proposed thesis.

Before proceeding to the specific methods, it is necessary to clarify the sample selection. It is necessary to reduce the number of parties analysed in this research. There are 39 candidate parties in the Czech Republic (Programy do Voleb 2019). Whereas some of them are single-issue parties or even parody parties, the others are long-established parties with parliament representation and previous experience with the European parliament. The parties take into account will be those which are either currently represented in the Czech parliament and/or those represented in the European Parliament during the 2014-2019 term. According to the currently proposed key, out of the total 39 candidate parties, 10 parties are represented in the national parliament and/or the European Parliament, while two of them form a coalition, so in total 9 political subjects will be analysed.

2.1 Qualitative Content Analysis

Whereas content analysis is used often in order to analyse party manifestos, the more frequently used content analysis is quantitative, which focuses merely on the frequency of certain words or phrases used in a written or spoken document and based on this frequency it establishes the importance of the various topic for the given actor (Hsieh and Shannon 2005, 1283).

This thesis is concerned only with a limited set of expressions – those connected to migration. While classical content analysis will be included, it is not sufficient to research the phenomenon of securitization. Firstly, the content analysis will focus on the context – such as in what chapters is migration issue mentioned. Further, alongside which other issues is migration

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2 In Czech Republic, the parliament is bicameral and only the lower chamber is taken into consideration. The upper chamber – the Senate – is elected by majoritarian voting system and is more personality than party based.
mentioned – for example, if migration is part of a chapter devoted to employment, it is not securitizing, while migration mentioned in chapters on security is.

The second level of analysis is looking at the attributes. If the term migration is used with attributes such as overwhelming, dangerous, illegal, or wave of migrants, invasion of migrants etc. it can be established that these attributes contribute to the securitization narrative on migration.

The third level is looking at the individual securitizing statements. These will be quoted individually, party by party. Among these, the standard features and reoccurring expressions will be identified.

It is not, however, only the securitization itself which is researched by content analysis. The referent object – an expression used in the securitization theory – can also be identified using the content analysis. Referent object is an entity that needs to be protected and is threatened (or is claimed to be threatened). Referent object can be state, the EU, borders, culture etc. A separate chapter is devoted to identifying the most common referent object, using the content analysis.

Qualitative content analysis is used in this thesis to discover the various levels of securitization, from the contextual level to the level of statements. The contextual level is crucial because not all securitizing messages are contained directly in the statements (Hsieh and Shannon 2005, 1285; Balzacq 2005, 173). The statements level is also significant because it shows directly what is the message of the securitizing actors (the political parties), what kind of images are used as well as what kind of language and rhetoric is present in securitizing statements (Huysmans 2011, 372).

### 2.2 Disciplined interpretive case study

This method was invented by John S Odell, and it serves to explain or interpret phenomena using an existing theory. It is not primarily seen as a test of said theory, rather than the use of existing theory as a framework. Odell mentions that combination with other methods is useful as one method can point out the specific issues, and the disciplined interpretive case study would look more deeply into the details (Odell 2001). The case study is therefore to a more considerable extent dependent on the theory itself, and while the content analysis described above will prepare the ground, the interpretive case study will go into greater depths using the theory of securitization as an explanatory framework.
2.3 Securitization - theory and conceptual framework

The underlying theory of the proposed research is the theory of securitization by the CS. The basic outline of this theory, formulated in 1998 is: “issue becomes a security issue not necessarily because a real existential threat exists, but because the issue is presented as such a threat.” (…) “issue is securitized only if and when the audience accepts it as such.” (…) ”Successful securitization is not decided by the securitized but by the audience of the security speech act: Does the audience accept that something is an existential threat to a shared value?” (Buzan, Waever, and Wilde 1998, 24–25, 31) Securitization in the context of this thesis does not mean hard security such as border fences, patrols or checkpoints. Securitization is an act of speech.

At this point, given the facts presented in the previous chapter, it would be possible to conclude the research by saying that the securitization was successful, most of the people see migration (especially from the Middle East as a security risk), and there are those who even undertake violent actions against migrants or celebrate those who do. This thesis, however, looks into how did the issue of migration become so widely securitized, especially in a country with meagre migration rates.

In order to explain this, a theory by Thierry Balzacq is used as a framework for analysis. Balzacq follows up on Buzan et al. and the CS theory of securitization. The original theory of the CS establishes three categories objects for analysis – the referent object (what is to be protected/endangered), the securitizing actor (who labels a phenomenon as a threat) and the functional actors (those, who are crucial for ensuring security) (Balzacq 2005, 178). As the author notices, the original CS did not pay any attention to the audience, yet if the process of labelling something as a threat is to succeed, it needs to be received by the targeted public. Also, context plays a rather important role. Balzacq sees the weakness of the CS theory on securitization by leaving the two critical factors – audience and context and suggests a modified theory of securitization (Ibid.).

Securitization, according to Balzacq, is:

- Context-dependent
- Audience centred
- Power laden (agency)
In order to use these three levels of securitization, the following paragraphs conceptualize each of the levels so that they can be analysed on the presented case of the election campaign.

Firstly, the level of contextual dependency is explained by Balzacq in the following way: “to win an audience, security statements must, usually, be related to an external reality. (…) Hence success (…) rests with whether the historical conjuncture renders the audience more sensitive to its vulnerability.” (Balzacq 2005, 182) In the case of migration, important contextual factors are, for example, media narratives and the general consensus on the label “migration crisis”. Migration via the Mediterranean Sea as well as through Balkan countries has been often displayed as an invasion. Specifically, the context in which securitization takes place in the Czech Republic is well illustrated by the statistics in the Introduction chapter of this thesis. It has been shown that a vast majority of the population sees migration as an undesired phenomenon as well as a threat, even though there is almost no immigration from the MENA region to the Czech Republic. The conjuncture, using Balzacq’s terminology, is therefore in favour of securitization of migration and can be labelled as fear of migration. Further, this will be discussed in the chapter on Islamophobia. To sum up the contextual level of securitization analysis, it encompasses the atmosphere in the society, the historical experience and perception of the current security situation – an umbrella term for these factors is Zeitgeist.

The second level of analysis is the assumption that securitization is audience centred. According to Balzacq, “(…) the success of securitization is highly contingent upon the securitizing actor’s ability to identify with the audience’s feelings, needs and interests.” (Balzacq 2005, 184). According to the theory, it is necessary to adopt a suitable language, gestures, images and attitudes in order to connect with the audience (Ibid.). This means that in order for securitization to be successful, the securitizing actor, in this context the political party, needs to know the audience and adopt a language and form which is comprehensible by the audience and creates a feeling of mutual acknowledgement, feeling that the political actor is adherent to the crowd.

According to the research conducted by the Public Opinion Research Centre, in general, those interested in politics, favouring the right-wing parties and with a good livelihood are more open to accepting refugees from the MENA region. Those who are against accepting the MENA refugees frequently view refugees in general as a threat (Hanzlová 2019b, 6). From this statistical data, it can be assumed that those political actors who aim for the securitization of migration attract people who are dissatisfied with their livelihood and not interested in politics.
It can be therefore expected to observe more focus on anti-migration rhetoric in cases of populist, anti-system parties who appeal to those social groups who feel underprivileged.

The third level of analysis is the agency. Agency is “the capacity of the securitizing actor to use words and cogent frames of reference in a given context, in order to win the support of the target audience for political purposes.” (Balzacq 2005, 192). The speech act of securitization needs to be power-laden. In this case, the securitization is successful in case the audience is willing to give the actor a political mandate – a vote.

To briefly summarize the three levels of securitization by Balzacq, as they apply for this thesis:

In order for the securitization of migration to be successful, it needs to be:

- Tailored to the historical context and social atmosphere (Islamophobia)
- Identified with the target audience (dissatisfaction with the current status)
- Leading to gaining support for political purposes (mobilizing the electorate)

Process of securitization, as introduced by the CS and further developed by other authors, including Balzacq, has several important parts. Firstly, the securitizing actor, which is, in this case, the political party. The second element is the referent object, which can be either very specific – such as the border, or very abstract, such as culture or identity. The securitized issue is then migration. It is essential to realize that securitized issue might or might not be an actual threat, as long as it is presented as one.

The securitizing actor starts with an issue which they consider to be important. In their statements, the securitizing actor describes the issue as a threat to the audience. In order for the audience to believe the securitizing actor, the language of the statement needs to be comprehensible by the audience. The circumstances under which this process takes place must also be taken into consideration. By using the right language and making the most of the contextual conditions, the securitizing actor can persuade the audience that an issue is a threat and thus gain political support via election.
3 Objectives and research questions

The following chapter discusses the objectives of the proposed thesis as well as research questions and hypotheses related to the research problem. Given the mix of methods used, it has been mentioned above that different methods are used to achieve different goals.

3.1 Research questions and hypotheses

Numerous scholars and researchers agree that migration is nowadays, especially in the Central and Eastern European region, a securitized issue. Therefore, this thesis does not focus on just securitization. Instead, using Balzacq’s theory, it aims at researching the success of securitization as well as its layers. These layers are identical to Balzacq’s dimensions of securitization analysis – audience, context and agency.

The general question is, therefore:

Q1: In the cases of selected relevant political parties, was securitization of migration in their parties manifestos for the European Parliament Election of May 2019 effective, using what means?

The efficiency of securitization is based on three factors, as mentioned earlier. Therefore, research sub-questions are necessary.

Q1a: To what extent was the securitization process adjusted to a contextual frame?

The contextual frame is what Balzacq defines as “relevant aspects of the Zeitgeist that influence the listener, and the impact of the immediate situation on the way the securitizing author’s sentences are interpreted by the listener.” (Balzacq 2005, 192) It is the current atmosphere in the society concerning migration. The Zeitgeist is created by both the securitizing actors, but also by history, culture, mindset, prejudice etc. It is basically the environment, which in order for securitization to be successful, needs to offer favourable conditions for securitization.

Q1b: To what extent was the securitization of migration audience-centred?

The second condition is identification with the audience, using language that would allow the audience to identify with the securitization statements (Balzacq 2005, 184). Identification might be based on shared values, interests as well as problems and worries. Securitizing agents need to be understood, and for this understanding, they need to use an audience centred approach.
Q1c: Were the securitizing actors able to use their rhetoric in order to win the support of the target audience for political purposes?

The third sub-question deals with the granting of a political mandate. It asks whether the securitization speech act in the manifestos was powerful enough to make people vote for securitizing parties. This question proves to be the most difficult one to provide evidence as there is no way of proving causality between securitization and voter’s behaviour. In order to establish a link, correlation is necessary between securitization and election results. At the time of writing this thesis, there is no research which would prove direct causality. The role of the other two factors of context and audience is, however, to be likely to strengthen the correlation.

The hypotheses regarding previous research questions are:

**H1**: Majority of selected parties managed to securitize migration effectively, using means of negative images and contextual framework, creating a notion of threat and general endangerment.

**H1a**: The contextual frame, shaped by the media image of migration crisis combined with other factors such as history, Islamophobia, lack of knowledge on migration issues and general dislike of Arabs, created conditions favourable for the securitization of migration.

**H1b**: The securitizing actors used language and images which strongly resonated with specific groups of the society. The actors used the feeling of being left behind, vulnerability and general disappointment of the post-communist development to create a sense of need for protection. This increased the securitization potential for the intended target groups of the audience.

**H1c**: Whereas it is impossible to establish a clear link between securitization and voting for the securitizing actor, most of the parties used powerful images of threat from the outside, while portraying themselves as protectors of the *way of life*. For many parties, this was even presented in their mottos. While securitization of migration way probably not the only reason for electing securitizing parties, the image of the party as a protective shield from the external danger played a significant role.

While the previous questions require content analysis on several levels as well as using a securitization theory as a framework, the answers to the questions will say very little about the content of the securitization message. Since the content analysis will be conducted for the purpose of these questions, it is also necessary to look at the message of securitizing statement. Therefore, the additional research question is:
Q2: What was the message contained in the statements which were identified as securitizing migration?

H2: It is expected that securitizing statements contain images of dangerous migrants or portray migration as a deviant phenomenon which needs to be stopped. Migration, in general, is qualified as a negative phenomenon which poses a security risk to both the Czech Republic and Europe. Migration is mentioned often in the context of illegal issues such as transnational crime or terrorism. In extreme cases, migration is directly associated with terrorism, rapes and the images of millions of people trying to get to Europe at any cost.

3.2 Objectives

The main objective is to assess the role of securitization of migration in the EU election in the Czech Republic. The research aims to explain and show on specific cases how does securitization work, how does it resonate with the audience, with the contextual realm and how effective is securitization as a speech act in granting support for political purposes. After these three dimensions are analysed, it can be decided whether the securitization of migration was or was not successful. The added value of this research is not, however, to merely claim that there was or was not a securitization and if it was or was not successful. By incorporating Balzacq’s theory of three dimensions of securitization as an analytical framework, this research goes into depth of the process of securitization. It does not preoccupy itself only with the actor or the referential object, as many classical securitization researchers do, but it puts an accent on the dynamic and connection between the securitizing actor and the audience, seeing it as a two-way street.
4 Immigration as a threat

It is somewhat problematic to generalize and say that migration and migrants are by a large portion of the public in the Czech Republic seen as a threat. Like any other country, the Czech Republic is not placed in a vacuum, and there were significant migration waves prior to the 2015 situation. This chapter focuses on differences of perceiving different groups of migrants at different stages of Czech history, with an evident focus on immigration from the MENA region. Further on, the chapter introduces the concept of Islamophobia as an essential theoretical tool for understanding the current state of securitization of migration. The goal of this chapter is to attempt to answer the question of why is migration from dominantly Islamic countries seen as a threat. To answer this, it is necessary to look at the possible historical roots of Islamophobia.

4.1 Fear of whom?

As explained in the chapter on the theory of securitization, in order for securitization to take place, the securitizing actor (in this case the political party or its leader) need to successfully use the atmosphere in the society in order to persuade it that a particular phenomenon is a threat. To achieve that, fear plays a significant role. This subchapter elaborates on what exactly is causing this emotion and why fear of foreigners does not apply equally to different national minorities.

4.1.1 Different minorities, different attitudes

Looking at the Public Opinion Research Centre’s data, it is possible to compare relations of Czechs towards different minorities. The table and graph below illustrate both the likeability and its development through time. The respondents were asked to assign a grade 1-5 to each of the group, 1 being the most likeable, 5 being the most unlikeable.

Table 1: Average grade assigned to a group, March 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Czechs</td>
<td>1.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovaks</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poles</td>
<td>2.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greeks</td>
<td>2.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungarians</td>
<td>2.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>2.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationality</td>
<td>Score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jews</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germans</td>
<td>2.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgarians</td>
<td>2.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russians</td>
<td>3.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>3.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbs</td>
<td>3.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukrainians</td>
<td>3.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romanians</td>
<td>3.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albanians</td>
<td>3.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roma</td>
<td>3.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabs</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (Tuček 2019, 2), colour scale by author

Graph 6: Development of likeability of selected national groups

![Graph showing development of likeability of selected national groups]

Source: (Tuček 2019, 2), graph by author

The research does not differentiate between various countries of origins in case of the category Arabs, which might be an indication that Arabs are viewed as a monolithic ethnic group, and very little attention is paid to whether a person is from e.g. Iraq or Egypt. The author of the research, Milan Tuček (2019), notices, that in most categories, the development is minimal, except for the relation towards Arabs and the Vietnamese. Since 2014 the attitude towards Arabs deteriorated by 17%. The attitude towards the Vietnamese was the most positive since 2013 when it was measured for the first time.

From the author’s experience, the Vietnamese community is often seen as hard-working, friendly and ambitious. The history of the Vietnamese minority in the Czech Republic dated its origins to 1956 when the first immigration from Vietnam to Czechoslovakia took place. That
year the Czechoslovakia and Vietnam signed a treaty on scientific and technologic cooperation. In the following decades, many immigrants came to Czechoslovakia to work or study (CZ Government 2013). Currently, there are about 60,000 officially registered Vietnamese (CSO 2019), but the unofficial number is estimated to be more than 100,000.

The Czechoslovak-Vietnamese treaty was not the only inter-governmental treaty focused on offering job and school vacancies to immigrants. The same year (1956), the Czechoslovak government signed a treaty with Egypt. The policy of scholarships for Middle Eastern students became a part of Czechoslovak foreign policy towards the region. Soon afterwards, there were students from Syria (even members of the Assad family), Iraq, Algeria, Yemen, Lebanon, Tunisia, Morocco and Palestine (Hannová 2014, 108). In 1960, there were 760 international students in Czechoslovakia, 400 of those were from Arab countries, and since the 1960s, the Arab students were one of the biggest foreign student group in Czechoslovakia (Hannová 2013, 31, 100). Many Arab nationals came to Czechoslovakia for medical treatment (Ibid.) There are, however, no exact numbers of how many Arabs actually studied in former Czechoslovakia.

From the author’s personal experience, Czechoslovakia was a favourite destination for many Arabs during the previous regime. Many of them share their positive memories on Czech culture, cuisine, architecture and nature.

Given the very similar development of mutual relations between Czechoslovakia and Vietnam, and Czechoslovakia and Arab countries, the difference in current perception of Vietnamese and Arabs in the Czech Republic remains unexplained. This leads us to an essential factor of Islamophobia.

4.1.2 Islamophobia

In the minds of most of Czechs Arab equals Muslim. In June 2018, a public poll was conducted by a MEDIAN agency, called Relation and knowledge of Czechs in relation to the Muslim minority.
When the respondents were asked about their feelings about Muslim and non-Muslim migrants from the Arab countries, the research showed significant differences. Whereas 79% of respondents were afraid of Muslims, only 41% are afraid of Christians and other denominations from Arab countries. The level of fear of Muslims is almost double compared to that of Arab non-Muslims.

Factors contributing to greater fear of Muslims are age, education and political party preferences. Less significant factors are visiting a dominantly Islamic country and knowing a Muslim personally. The factors of age, education, but also unemployment are an important part of this analysis and are further explained in the chapters on the audience.
Closed attitude towards Muslims is more significant among older generations, as well as among those who have lower levels of education. Whereas university graduates are open to Muslims in 53%, only 23% of those with primary education share the same attitude. More prone to fear of Islam are voters of SPD, KSČM and ANO (political parties’ profiles follow in the next chapter). Slightly more open towards Muslims are those who have visited an Islamic country in the past and by 10% more open are people who personally know a Muslim (MEDIAN 2018).

Fear of Muslims is often referred to as Islamophobia. This thesis does not aim to provide an overview of various definitions and associated discussions. The following chapters use the term Islamophobia in the sense of Runnymede Trust, which offers two definitions. The short one is: “Islamophobia is anti-Muslim racism.” The extended definition is based on the more general UN definition of racism: “Islamophobia is any distinction, exclusion or restriction towards, or preference against, Muslims (or those perceived to be Muslims) that has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.” (Elahi and Khan 2017, 10)

Czech scholar of Religious studies Ivan Štampach defines three motivations for Islamophobia in the Czech Republic:

1. Religiously motivated anti-Islamism
2. Racial and ethnic anti-Islamism
3. Anti-Islamism motivated by protection of liberal values

Religiously motivated Islamophobia (the author uses anti-Islamism and Islamophobia as equal terms) stems from the dominant role of Roman Catholic role in the Czech environment. Even though the Catholic church either through Nostra Aetate of the Second Vatican Council established good relations with Islam, followed in more recent days by proclamations of current Pope Francis, the Catholic church in the Czech Republic, represented by the cardinal Dominik Duka often talks about Islam as inherently violent religion and the situation in Europe compared to “civilizational suicide” (Echo24 2016; Štampach 2017, 185)

Racial and ethnic anti-Islamism is implicit in many of the new political parties in the Czech Republic. The public manifestation of this is the notion of endangerment of a white heterosexual male. One of the relatively famous Czech writers, Benjamin Kuras wrote a book called The Dusk of White Men (2012). But the racism is manifested in more everyday situations too. In
2017 an international supermarket chain Lidl printed a commercial flyer featuring a black model. The outcry from some of the customers was in some cases almost hysterical as they commented on the supermarket’s Facebook page, complaining about “multicultural indoctrination” or in general about the ethnic background of the model (iDnes 2017).

Anti-Islamism motivated by protection of liberal values does not stand on either religious grounds or race. It is based on the notion that the level of human rights is deficient in many Islamic countries and therefore, to many, this level of human rights is interpreted to be caused by Islam. This motivation is significantly paradoxical, given the fact that its representatives would, in order to protect liberal values, restrain said values (Štampach 2017, 192).

As shown further on in this thesis, in many cases, these three motivations overlap and are rarely used separately. The notion of Islamophobia has one common ground – a fear of Islamization of the country. Given the statistics on the numbers mentioned in the Introduction, it is obvious how irrational this fear is. Even though it can be fuelled through various motivations, there is probably a root of this phenomena, which requires a more profound knowledge of the history of the Czech Republic.

4.1.3 Historical roots of fear

When Grzegorz Eikert and Daniel Ziblatt wrote a paper on democratization in Central and Eastern Europe, they used a unique approach to the object of their studies – the long run continuity. Their claim is that in order to understand contemporary events, it is necessary to go to deep history and look for factors there. Their study claimed that the events happening after the collapse of communist regimes in the region could be matched with the pre-communist era (Ekiert and Ziblatt 2013). Since the theory on deep history was already applied in the region of Central and Eastern Europe, it could also be applied to different phenomenon than democratization. The theory claims that events that happened in the past shape current situation even when the certain events happened a century ago and the continuity was broken by the decades of non-democratic rule. Accepting the outcome of the theory, it can be argued that the roots of Islamophobia might be written in the deep history of the nation, and they continue to shape the current views of contemporary Czechs.

First significant contact with Muslim population can be dated to the end of the 19th century when first migrants from Bosnia started to settle in the Czech Republic. Before this time, the contacts with Islam was minimal and spontaneous, but since the Ottoman Empire never fought
any battle on Czech territory, the local population practically knew about Islam only from songs and tales\(^3\) (Ostřanský 2017a, 27; Mendel 2006, 16).

In 1918 as the First Czechoslovak Republic was established, it was a multi-national state with Germans living in most of Czech border areas, Polish living in the north and Hungarians in a large portion of today’s Slovakia. The Czechs and Slovaks had not a common history in one state, yet this state was created, based on the “Czechoslovak nationality” which never existed before. The reason for this artificial nationality was said national plurality. Without Slovaks, the German minority would be too powerful, which was seen as a danger to the new state. This is potentially the inherited problem which seems to be carried through the history – the founding idea of national identity which is always endangered by foreign powers – just as the country broke free from centuries-long patronage of the Austria-Hungary empire. This discourse of constant danger from abroad is apparent even today, both in the manifestation of Islamophobia and in the general rhetoric on the need to protect the country, its culture, values and national identity.

The Muslim community tried throughout the First Republic to officially establish their presence and build a mosque, yet the state officials refused their right to found a religious organization. The organization uniting Czech Muslims was officially established during the Nazi Protectorate, and at that time it was associated by anti-Semitism. After the Second World War, the head of the organization Hajji Alois Bohdan Brikcius was arrested for collaboration with the Nazis. Given the fact that the after-war era legislation cancelled all the legal acts of the Protectorate, the Muslim organization lost its legal status and stayed in the legal underground and inactivity until 1989 (Mendel 2006, 18).

The historical status of Islam and the Czech lands can be summed up in the following way: First, there were folk tales about exotic warriors advancing through Europe, then first migrants from Islamic parts of Balkan came and settled, yet the official status was reached in cooperation with the Nazi regime. After the war, the Muslim organization left the public space and stayed in general inactive until the Velvet Revolution of 1989. The negative experience and images of Muslims from the past, according to the theory of long-run continuity might be one of the reasons why Islamophobic views are so prevalent in the contemporary Czech Republic. These images have the potential of being used by contemporary actors in order to create an anti-Islamic atmosphere in today’s society (Ostřanský 2017b, 45, 49).

\(^3\) An example of such work is a 16th century book called *Anti al Koran*
Another argument which applies not only to the Czech Republic is the need for a common enemy. As Czech researcher Daniel Křížek states, there has always been a need of division “us versus them”. “Every human group needs a foreign group in relation to which it defines itself and uses it as a significant tool for maintaining internal integrity.” (Křížek 2017, 109) As shown later in this thesis, the logic of us versus them is very apparent in Czech politics, especially in the context of the EU Parliament pre-election campaign. In many cases, they were not actually Muslim migrants, but the Brussels officials who, as many parties deemed, facilitate said migration. This way of channelling the thoughts allowed many anti-EU parties to connect migration from the MENA region with the EU institutions. The same situation, although more known and intense, has been happening in Hungary recently. This is proof of similar trajectories among the Visegrad group countries.
5 Securitizing actors

This chapter focuses on political parties and political actors active in the studied case – the election campaign before the European Parliament elections of May 2016. As mentioned earlier, there was a total of 39 political parties entering the election in the Czech Republic. The research sample is limited only to relevant political parties. The criteria of relevancy were 1) being a parliamentary political party at the time of elections, 2) being represented in the pre-election EU parliament, 3) receiving a mandate in the May 2019 EU Parliament elections. Any party that fulfils any of the three criteria is relevant for the research.

There are 10 political parties fulfilling the criteria. These 10 parties received in the May 2019 EU elections 89.24 % of votes (ČSÚ 2019). In the most recent Parliamentary election to the Chamber of Deputies in 2017, these ten parties gained 95.27 % votes (ČSÚ 2017).

Table 2: Relevant political parties and the election results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Founded</th>
<th>EU 2014(^4)</th>
<th>EU 2019(^5)</th>
<th>CoD 2017(^6)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ANO</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>16.13 % (4)</td>
<td>21.18% (6)</td>
<td>26.64% (78)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ČSSD</td>
<td>1878</td>
<td>14.17 % (4)</td>
<td>3.95% (0)</td>
<td>7.27% (15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KDU-ČSL</td>
<td>1919</td>
<td>9.95 % (3)</td>
<td>7.24% (2)</td>
<td>5.8% (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KSČM</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>10.98% (3)</td>
<td>6.94% (1)</td>
<td>7.76% (15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ODS</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>7.67 % (2)</td>
<td>14.54% (4)</td>
<td>11.32% (25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pirates</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>4.78 % (0)</td>
<td>13.95% (3)</td>
<td>10.79% (22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPD</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>9.14% (2)</td>
<td>10.64% (22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAN</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOP09</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>15.95 % (4)(^7)</td>
<td>11.65% (3)(^8)</td>
<td>5.18% (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free Party</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>5.24% (1)</td>
<td>0.65% (0)</td>
<td>1.56% (0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (ČSÚ 2014; 2017; 2019)

The relevant political parties can be divided into three groups – the historical parties such as Social Democrats (ČSSD) and Christian Democrats (KDU-ČSL) were established even before independent Czechoslovakia came into existence. These parties, however, were not active during the communist era (even though formally both of them existed to create the illusion of free elections) and therefore the beginning of the Czech party system in the early 1990s. Two major political powers were dominant throughout the last decade of the 20\(^{th}\) century – the Social

\(^4\) Results of the election to the European Parliament in 2014, number of seats in brackets (21 total)
\(^5\) Results of the election to the European Parliament in 2019, number of seats in brackets (21 total)
\(^6\) Results of the election to the Chamber of Deputies in 2017, number of seats in brackets (200 total)
\(^7\) In 2014, TOP09 and STAN shared a list of candidates
\(^8\) In 2019, TOP09 and STAN shared a list of candidates
Democrats (ČSSD) and the right-wing conservative Civic Democratic Party (ODS). Both parties at that time usually got between 25 – 30 % of votes in the Chamber of Deputies elections.

As it is apparent from the table above, most of the traditional parties did not succeed in the European elections in 2019. The Social Democrats, who were one of the two dominant parties in previous decades, lost all their mandates and are not represented in the EU Parliament, for the first time since 2004. On the contrary, parties founded in this century were relatively successful. The leading party ANO won the elections (even though their result was not as good as in the Chamber of Deputies election of 2017). The Freedom and Direct Democracy (SPD), a radical right political party calling for Czexit gained two Members of EU Parliament and Pirates, the only clearly pro-European relevant political party has three representatives in the EU parliament (Havlík 2019b, 116).

The turnout was 28.72 %. This seemingly small number, compared to other EU member states, is actually the highest turnout in the history of EU Elections in the Czech Republic.

Graph 9: Turnout in the EU Elections 2004 - 2019

Source: (ČT 2019a)

5.1 Make Czechia Great Again?

The leitmotiv of the election campaign was the accent on protecting Czech interests. This was manifested, for example, in the campaign motto of ANO – *Strong Czechia and We will protect Czechia. With Strength and Without Compromises*. Prime Minister Andrej Babiš even used a red baseball cap with the motto written on it in the campaign, and he admitted that it was
inspired by Donald Trump. Freedom and Direct Democracy also adopted originally Trump’s motive, and their motto was Czechia First. As Havlík in his analysis called No Country for Old Parties notes, “the notion of the national interests was also common for moderately pro-European political parties.” (Havlík 2019b, 116)

In many cases, the campaign seemed to be an action taken against Brussels, in an apparent mindset of us versus them. The important and reoccurring themes were increasing the role of nation-states in Europe, protection of national interests and values, increasing sovereignty of nation-states at the expense of limiting powers of Brussels officers, anti-integration etc. Fifteen years after the Czech Republic entered the European Union, the majority of the political scene aims for limiting its powers and paradoxically doing so by getting elected into the European Parliament.

5.2 Second Party System and Populism

The way the new political parties re-shaped the political scene in the Czech Republic, but also in many other Central and Eastern European countries needs further elaboration. This sub-chapter aims to explain the role of populism as well as the theory of the second party system. The second party system is a common phenomenon occurring in many (Ágh researched five) new member states, including the Czech Republic. This theory claims that due to disappointment in economic development and quality of livelihood, populist parties are on the rise, replacing the traditional post-1989 party system, which they claim has failed (see Ágh 2018).

The East European social and national populism is, according to Ágh, based on “1) crisis-prone, premature, welfare societies, or pre-welfare societies, that are still very far from achieving well-being characterized by sustainability and life-satisfaction; and on 2) the age-old tensions with local outsiders – autochthon ethnic minorities, such as the Roma, Jewish populations, and local minority groups from neighbouring countries” (Ágh 2018, 30). The new political parties, which Ágh calls by umbrella term second party system are a result of populism from above. The traditional, first party system was too weak, and it was easy for newly appearing populists, extremists and oligarchs to overtake the political scene, especially in the atmosphere of dissatisfaction and Euroscepticism.

The second party system is established during a so-called critical election. For an election to be critical, three reconfigurations need to occur – (1) ideological (new issues, discourses and
patterns of behaviour, (2) social (transformation of parties-base relations) and (3) political (new parties, shifting on left-right scale (Ágh 2018, 34).

In the years 1998 – 2010, there were always five parties represented in the Czech Chamber of Deputies. These were the Communist Party (KSČM), the Social Democrats (ČSSD), the Christian Democrats (KDU-ČSL), the Civic Democratic Party, and a fifth smaller party, usually liberal right-wing party or the Greens. This is what Ágh calls the first party system. Since the 2010 elections until now, the party system underwent radical changes, shifting to the second party system. An obvious way of observing these changes are the numbers of parties in the parliament and the number of seats each of them occupies. In 2006, the four traditional parties that were in the Chamber of Deputies since the dawn of the Czech political party system (KSČM, ČSSD, KDU-ČSL, ODS) occupied 194 seats out of 200. Nowadays, all four parties are still present in the lower chamber, but they occupy 63 seats out of 200. Whereas in 2006 there were five political parties in the Chamber of Deputies, now there are nine.

The three reconfigurations mentioned by Ágh are present – ideology has shifted from traditional cleavages to anti-establishment, the social configuration has abandoned the party-membership model, and political configuration has undergone the most radical change of fragmentation of the political spectrum with both radical left and right present. As a result, the Central and Eastern European region is now characterized by poor governance, low performance and weak competitiveness (Ágh 2018, 39–40).

A typical example of a populist party in the Czech Republic is ANO (Havlík 2019a, 13). According to Havlík’s research, ANO managed by its actions undermine the liberal principles of the country as it rejected the party-politics logic, it does not focus on left-right scale and pursues a technocratic populist discourse (Havlík 2019a, 14).

By abandoning the typical ideological profile, which was characteristic for the traditional parties, ANO opened new possibilities which would be difficult to achieve in the first party system. The current government of ANO and the Social Democrats has a minority of seats but is supported by the Communist party (KSČM) which has now the most influential role in post-communist history. Even without the votes of Social Democrats, ANO has been at various instances able to create ad hoc voting coalitions, most frequently with the right-wing radical Freedom and Direct Democracy, and the Communist Party. Thirty years after the Velvet Revolution, the party system has undergone such radical changes, that extremes from both ends
of the left and right sides of the spectrum are legitimate political actors with actual impact on policy-making.

This, according to political scientist Tomáš Lebeda, leads to worsening the quality of democracy in the Czech Republic. According to him, the Czech Republic is on the trajectory away from developed democracy, heading towards Asian model of democracy, which is characterized by the public’s disengagement with politics in exchange for economic stability and prosperity (ČT 2019b).

The political party system and its development, especially the second party system, bears characteristics of deteriorating quality of democracy. Many of these new parties, as Ágh notices, are fuelled by socio-economic discontent and general fear of ethnic/national minorities. The media discourse of 2015 migration crises helped many of the new parties to successfully adapt the anti-migrant rhetoric, which was, to a certain extent, accepted by some of the traditional parties. In EU elections, many parties used the logic of Brussels being the outside force which stands in opposition to Czech national interests. The question is, what was first? Was the fear of migrants always present, and the new populist parties took it as an opportunity, or did the populist parties created the notion of fear? Given the historical development of relations towards ethnic and national minorities, it can be stated, that certain levels of racism have always been present, some of the parties used this, and in a circle, they feed this racism, which gives them support from certain electoral groups.

It is also important to note the correlation between socioeconomic factors (such as education, quality of livelihood, unemployment) and support for radical parties. For example, in places with an unemployment rate of less than 2 %, the support for radical right anti-migration Freedom and Direct Democracy (SPD) was on average 7,1 %. In places where the unemployment rate is above 6%, the support for SPD was 13,1 %. The same phenomenon can be observed with ANO and the Communist Party (KSČM) (ČT 2019a).

The interpretation of the above-mentioned phenomenon could be the following: People living in the environment of poverty are very vulnerable to external dangers and are very sensitive to the discourse of migration as a threat. These people, even though having no previous contact with the MENA migrants, see them as something that could damage their very fragile status. The notion of dangerous Arab migrants is reinforced by historical archetypes, fear of unknown and also the security situation in the Middle East. This might be an explanation, why anti-migration stance is so strong in a country with almost no migrants. Using the right
circumstances, some of the political parties managed to construct a migration crisis without migrants.
6 Referent object – protection of what?

Accepting the logic of the theory of securitization, there are several elements necessary to fill in the equation. The contextual aspects were discussed in previous chapters as well as the securitizing actors. The following part of the thesis focuses on the referent object.

Referent object is the entity which is threatened and needs to be protected. Most often, but not exclusively, it is the state. The character of the referent object may vary according to the nature of the threat. E.g. in the case of military threats, the referent object is usually the state, in political threat, it may be sovereignty or ideology, in case of environmental threat, the referent object is, for example, an entire ecosystem or survival of particular kind of species (Buzan, Waever, and Wilde 1998, 22–23).

In case of securitization of migration, keeping in mind, that securitization is a speech act which describes the particular phenomenon as a security / existential threat regardless of the factual existence of a said threat. In other words, by saying something is dangerous, it is deemed as dangerous not necessarily because it really is, but rather because the audience is told it is. There are other factors contributing to the amount of acceptance by the audience, such as language, context or the characteristic features of the given audience. All these factors are discussed elsewhere in this thesis. What is, however, overlooked by many of the theories mentioned here are the referent object and its selection.

What exactly is claimed to be endangered by migration? Is it public health, state, democracy, national interests, lives of civilians, culture, “our way of life”, Europe? In order to answer this, a content analysis of election manifestos, TV-debates and YouTube spots was conducted, focusing on the referent object. The analysis looked at specific terms which were connected to terms such as the need to protect, defend, maintain, keep, uphold, save.

The leading term in quantity was “borders”, more specifically external borders of the EU. These are very often seen as something that should be protected and/or fortified against migrants. There were in total of 20 references in 9 program manifestos, all of these references were related to external border protection against migrants. The table below illustrates in what context were external borders mentioned.

Table 3: Selected references to border protection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Internal security starts with the external borders of the Schengen area.

Full and reliable protection of external border is a necessary condition for keeping the internal EU border-free.

The external border has to be absolutely impenetrable; this is one of our priority goals.

The fundament of security has to be the external borders' protection.

It is crucial to protect external European borders.

Fortification of external borders and cooperation of intelligence services and police in the interest of protection against illegal migration and terrorism.

Visa-free movement of EU citizens, with the option to install border controls in order to prevent Islamic terrorists and criminals or illegal immigrants from entering.

We will secure external borders of common Europe.

Sources: (Programy do Voleb 2019a; 2019b; 2019e; 2019g; 2019i)

It is evident that the external border protection is a theme represented across the political spectrum. However, some of the parties have not mentioned border protection at all, such as the Pirates, The Christian Democrats or the Free Party. The Communist party mentions the protection of external borders as a desirable alternative to allocation quotas (Programy do Voleb 2019d). When the Freedom and Direct Democracy Party talks about optional border controls, they mean internal borders between the EU member states, because they argue that Western Europe’s cities are already Islamised, with numerous no-go zones, and it is, therefore, essential to protect Central and Eastern Europe.

The accent on protecting the external borders is similar to the rhetoric of Fortress Europe, which is a paradigm used widely by many European political parties and it resonated significantly at the peak of migration to Europe in 2015. The political parties are well aware of the importance of the Schengen Area and the freedom of movement within the EU. Re-
establishing border controls on the internal EU borders would be a mostly unpopular step, and therefore the notion of border protection has transferred onto the external borders. Given the fact that the Czech Republic has no external borders, this creates an opportunity to pass on the responsibility for border protection onto the southern European states as well as the EU leadership as they are the ones seen responsible for protecting the external borders and thus the security of the EU.

Another referent object, according to the parties’ manifestos is “interests”. They are often referred to as “our interests”, “Czech interests”, “national interests”. All of the analysed parties, except the Free Party (whose party manifesto is rather minimalistic), mentioned the interests. None of the parties defined what are the interests specifically. Interestingly, some of the parties proved to be EU-interests-oriented, while others referred to interests as something to be protected from the EU.

Table 4: Selected references to interests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ANO</td>
<td>There is plenty of what can endanger us. We need to stay vigilant and ready to protect our country and our national interests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ČSSD</td>
<td>ČSSD will protect the Czech interests in the EU.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KDU-ČSL</td>
<td>It is a vital interest of the Czech Republic to make use of the opportunities given to us by the (EU) membership.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KSČM</td>
<td>The membership of the Czech Republic in the EU makes sense only if it helps to realize Czech national interests and commonly beneficial peace cooperation of the European nations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ODS</td>
<td>Let’s learn to protect our interests better.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pirates</td>
<td>Europe needs to be organized in the common interest of all European citizens, as well as in the interest of its member states.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPD</td>
<td>The SPD movement is the only political party which thoroughly protects the Czech national interests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOP09+STAN</td>
<td>We will do everything we can to make the Czech Republic a powerful player in the EU, actively pursuing our interests in cooperation with other EU member states, not at their expense.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: (Programy do Voleb 2019a; 2019b; 2019c; 2019d; 2019e; 2019f; 2019g; 2019i)
The table above shows the references to “interest” across the various relevant political parties. And it is possible to identify at least three positions. The prevailing one is the notion of necessity to protect the national interests in the EU, in a rather uncompromising way. The winner of the election and currently the strongest political party ANO even mobilize the voters to be vigilant, manifesting the notion of danger coming from many directions and the need to be ready to protect the interests. The first position is protectionism – we need to protect our general interests against an implicit danger.

The second position sees the membership in the EU as an opportunity to pursue the interests – this is the position of the Christian Democrats (KDU-ČSL) and TOP09+STAN. These parties see the EU as a forum for cooperation in which national interests can be ensured while maintaining a constructive and cooperative role towards other member states.

The third position is represented by the Pirates, and it is Europeanism. It highlights the interests of all European citizens and does not differentiate between Czech citizens and the others. It also mentions the interests of all the member states, so it is not Czech-centred. Among all the selected parties, the Pirates represent an exceptionally pro-EU stance.

Among other less frequently mentioned referent objects were “values” and “traditions”. The Freedom and Direct Democracy (SPD) calls in its manifesto for “cooperation, which will respect and protect our sovereignty, freedom, culture and traditional societal values” and their manifesto also mentions that “for the EU, patriotism and traditional values of our civilization, are bad words” (Programy do Voleb 2019g). The Christian Democrats names its values: “respect for human dignity, individual freedom, democracy, equality in law, state of law, human rights, protection of minority rights, peacekeeping and struggle for pursuing the common good” (Programy do Voleb 2019c). It is apparent that values and its protection is approached by various parties differently. The contrast in interpreting values as patriotism, traditions and the protection of civilization on the one hand and respect for human dignity and minority rights on the other is characteristic for the atmosphere in the Czech society.

In the manifestos as well as in pre-election TV debates, the parties’ representatives often talked about protection of values and interests while rarely explaining what the values and interests are. Using these rather powerful words as electoral mobilization triggers, while not giving them a specific meaning creates is characteristic for the analysed elections. A possible explanation of logic of this is that by creating the notion of endangerment of the referent objects (borders, state, values, culture, interests etc.) from the unspecified external other enables the voters to
identify with the parties, as the individual voters fill in the blanks with what they feel being endangered by.

The previous chapter established the presence of referent objects in the parties’ manifestos. Among those mentioned above, the most common ones were borders and interests. While the protection of interest is explained rather vaguely, the border protection was directly connected with internal (state) security. This shows the substantial manifestation of protecting the division between us and the other. The framing of external threat is the topic of the following, the core chapter of this thesis – the analysis of securitization of migration.
7 Speaking security – the securitization speech in the electoral campaign

This chapter is devoted to the securitization of migration in the pre-election campaign before the European Parliament elections in May 2019. Firstly, a brief revision of what is securitization will follow.

The thesis uses the theory of securitization as proposed by the authors of Copenhagen School (CS) and further developed by Thiery Balzacq. Securitization, as explained above, is a speech act which turns an issue into a security threat regardless of the actual threat level. In order for securitization to be successful, it needs to be placed in the correct contextual frame, it needs to be audience centred, and the message of the speech act needs to be power-laden, meaning that it calls for specific actions that would allow the political leaders to take extraordinary action (e.g. securing the borders, introducing security measures etc.). An important role is therefore played by the audience, the actors and the context. Further crucial factors are the securitizing actors and the referent object – in other words, who says what should be protected. These factors were researched in the previous chapters, offering both the analysis on referent objects and a brief introduction into the party system and the relevant parties researched.

The analysis of the research material is divided into two groups – the contextual analysis and the content analysis. The contextual analysis looks at the bigger picture – how is the issue of migration framed in the materials, among which other issues. For example, migration might be in the manifesto mentioned among pathological issues such as organized crime, terrorism, or among labour market-related issues. The content analysis looks in greater detail on how do political parties operate with the term migration – what language is used.

7.1 Terrorism, organized crime and…. migration? Contextual analysis

Migration as an issue is present in all the parties’ manifestos, yet in a different context. However, the majority of relevant parties mentioned migration in chapters related to Safety. The manifestos chapters mentioning migration have various names, the following table summarises them, giving an overview of the framing of migration.

Table 5: Migration related chapters
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Chapter name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ANO</td>
<td>We will decide who is going to live and work with us</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ČSSD</td>
<td>Foreigners’ movements should be controlled by nation-states, not Brussels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Terrorism and organized crime, the safe Czech Republic in safe Europe, that’s fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KDU-ČSL</td>
<td>Safe and just Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KSČM</td>
<td>Peace and safety for the EU citizens! EU politics - looking for understanding, not confrontation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ODS</td>
<td>Safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pirates</td>
<td>International Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPD</td>
<td>We will say decisive NO in the EU parliament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOP09+STAN</td>
<td>Europe guarantees safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free Party</td>
<td>Stop centralization of immigration and asylum policy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Programy do Voleb 2019a; 2019b; 2019c; 2019d; 2019e; 2019f; 2019g; 2019i; 2019h)

It is apparent that in most cases, migration is seen as a security issue by default and therefore it is mentioned under security-related chapters or in its own chapters. Migration is often used in the same chapters as human trafficking, terrorism, border protection, weapon proliferation or organized crime. The possibly most different exception is the Pirates. They put migration under International Affairs, and they talk about legal labour migration, asylum seekers and high skilled migration (Programy do Voleb 2019f). This is the only case where the context of migration is positive.

Another important contextual factor is the foreign aid policy. In favour of providing foreign aid in the countries of origin were ANO, Social Democrats (ČSSD), Christian Democrats (KDU-ČSL) and Communists (KSČM). These parties claim that the root causes of migration, such as unemployment, poverty and natural disasters need to be directly addressed in order to prevent further migration from Africa and Asia. The Pirates, on the other hand, state the following: “We strongly do not recommend using development aid as a means to prevent short term goals, such as restriction on economic migration” (Programy do Voleb 2019f).

In many academic studies (see Gamso and Yuldashev 2018; Bakewell 2008; McKeon 2018; Carling and Hernández-Carretero 2011) the effect of foreign aid on migration is largely disputed, some authors have even reached the opposite conclusion – foreign aid might increase
migration, and it causes uncontrollable rural-urban migration. These researches are, however, not taken into consideration by the political parties, and there is a significant possibility that the political parties have never studied the effects of development aid on migration. It is, however, not only the Czech political policymakers who seem to overlook the opposite effect of foreign development aid on migration, as based on the previously mentioned researches, the EU institutions are ignoring their findings too, which leads to commodification of migrants and the exchange of funds for keeping migrants (see Tsourapas 2019).

The idea of preventing migration or as many parties call it “solving migration” by providing funds to the countries of origin show another critical fact – the limited knowledge on basic facts regarding migration as well as, from a moral point of view, somewhat problematic reason to provide international development aid.

Firstly, it is essential to realize that there are many in need of assistance, and they are not in their country of origin and simply cannot return to their country of origin because they are afraid of prosecution.

Secondly, by providing funds to countries that are very often authoritarian or can be labelled as failed states, the EU states only deepen the problems in such countries, or even fund an ongoing civil war, as is the case of Libya and the negotiations with Khalifa Haftar.

Thirdly and most importantly, it creates a notion of two things – (1) the primary goal of foreign aid is to help the EU, not the countries of origin; (2) migration is something that is solvable. This misunderstanding of migration as a problem that needs to be solved is shaping the current politicians’ approach to migration, yet it leads to further problems. The migrant population has been estimated for several decades to be about 3% of the world population (UN 2017; World Bank 2019), yet this does not justify political leaders, and particularly the West, as labelling migration as something deviant.

Labelling migration as a security issue is even more problematic in Eastern Europe. During the communist regimes in Eastern Europe, hundreds of thousands of people left their countries of origin and applied for asylum in the West. Very often, they had to be smuggled through dangerous borders, and many were killed in the process. This exile population returned home after the regime changes of 1989 and in many cases became the authorities which founded the current democratic regimes in the region of Eastern Europe. From this point of view, it is difficult to understand how these countries are the ones who 30 years after the fall of communism see migration as a security issue.
Migration in the view of most relevant political parties is a problem, a security issue that needs to be addressed with the same urgency as terrorism, organized crime or weapon proliferation. It is often connected to foreign development aid which is seen, regardless of the scientific findings, as an efficient way of stopping migration. With one exception, the political parties claim that migration should be solved or stopped. The only political party that approaches positively to migration and refuses the effects of development aid on migration are the Pirates. Framing migration as a security issue and putting it in context of terrorism and other security threats show the misunderstanding (or misinterpreting) of migration, which is mainly in the historical context of Eastern Europe morally problematic and points out that the issue is framed in a way that would mobilize the people. The context of how migration is framed in the parties’ manifestos is already securitizing. The following sub-chapter looks specifically on the issue of migration, the attributes, the language and approaches.

7.2 Content analysis

The simple content analysis does not provide sufficient insight which would show the securitization of migration, yet still, it is useful for illustrating the importance of migration in the parties’ manifestos. The table below shows the frequency of referring to migration in individual manifestos. Since migration in the context of this thesis serves as umbrella term for different kinds of migration as well as for refugees, both migration and refugees were taken into consideration. The migration column shows the number of words with the -migra- stem (such as immigrant, immigration, migrant, migration), the refugee column shows the number of times refugees were mentioned. The frequency was calculated by dividing the sum of migration and refugee references by the number of words. The length of manifestos varies greatly, and by calculating the frequency using the specific word count, it shows a comparable figure.

Table 6: Content analysis, parties sorted by frequency
The frequency referring to migration varies among the researched parties. It would be, however, incorrect to assume that the parties which talk about migration most are at the same time the most significant securitizing actors. Mentioning migration does not necessarily mean securitizing migration. The reference to migration can be in both negative and positive context. This is why more detailed content analysis is needed – what attributes are used in connection to migration?

The frequency, however, points out, that migration is mentioned by all the parties, and as a result, there are in total 83 references which need to be further analysed.

Table 7 records the number of references to specific attributes and associated terms. It clearly shows that among the most frequent attributes are illegal migration (the term irregular migration which is mostly used in academia is not used by Czech politicians), migration quotas, the migration crisis, migration wave and also solving migration. All these terms are often used by East European media too, so it is not a language that is characteristic only for politicians.

The most frequent attributes reflect the public debate on migration which took place after the 2015 events. Illegal migration is primarily used in order to label migrants as criminals. By this projection, it is more justifiable to use extraordinary measures in order to prevent them from entering the country or the EU. Migration quotas, the second most frequent attribute was to a great extent discussed over the last few years in regards to the EU decision to introduce quotas so that the southern EU member states could distribute some of their migrants to other countries and thus share the responsibility. The Visegrad group countries saw this, however not as redistribution of responsibility but rather redistribution of a burden. Migration crisis and wave are both terms used to describe the situation during the peak of migration in 2015. It is interesting to watch how these terms prevailed for four years and regardless of the current numbers of migrants, these images of wave and crisis are still influential.
Table 7: Migration, associated terms and attributes – number of references

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>attribute</th>
<th>ANO</th>
<th>ČSSD</th>
<th>KDU-ČSL</th>
<th>KSČM</th>
<th>ODS</th>
<th>Pirates</th>
<th>SPD</th>
<th>TOP09+STAN</th>
<th>Free Party</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>illegal migration</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>migration quotas</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>migration crisis</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>migration wave</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>solving migration</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>legal migration</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>economic migration</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>asylum policies</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mass migration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dangerous migrants</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>repatriation policies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>migration pressure</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uncontrolled migration</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prejudices on migrants</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dignity of migrants</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inadaptable migrants</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Nevertheless, even the analysis of attributes and associated terms does not provide proof of securitization of migration. There are some attributes such as dangerous migrants which do present migrants as a threat. However, it is necessary to broaden the scope of analysis and look beyond the attributes – analyse the complete statements. If for example, we already know that illegal migration is mentioned most often, it is necessary to analyse in what sense. The following part focuses on the speech acts of securitization in the parties’ manifestos.

Out of the 9 manifestos of a total length of 114 pages, 108 statements were selected. These statements are directly connected to migrants or asylum seekers. Among these statements were selected those that explicitly securitize migration. The explicit securitization of migration is defined by the following criteria:

- Migration is mentioned in the context of terrorism, organized crime and other threats
- Migration is directly labelled as a dangerous phenomenon or security issue
- Migration is described as a factor that could lead to worsening the security situation
- Migrants are described as criminals
- Migration needs to be stopped using restrictive measures (such as border patrols)
- Muslims are described as criminals

The following table presents the statements that fulfil the criteria of securitization speech act.

Table 8: Securitizing statements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ANO</td>
<td>Recent migrant waves from conflict-torn regions undermined security and political unity of the EU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Internal security of the EU begins at the external borders of Schengen. It is necessary to use the European border and shore patrol (…) which will in coordination, ensure the full control [of the border] including prevention of migrant crises.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>External EU border needs to be absolutely impenetrable for illegal migration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>We will strictly insist on combating illegal migration, smuggling and human trafficking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party</td>
<td>Position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ČSSD</td>
<td>The number of illegal migrants decreases thanks to better protection of external borders and the cooperation with countries of origin of illegal migrants. We strictly refuse illegal and uncontrolled economic migration which can have a negative impact on economic, security or social situation in both the Czech Republic and Europe. It is crucial to protect the external borders. Thanks to shared systems, we have an overview of all dangerous people who move across Europe, we can keep records on them and detain them. Fighting climate change is not only ecologic but also economical and security issue. If the catastrophic scenarios are fulfilled, Africa will be uninhabitable in the near future. Where will the Africans look for a new home? Probably not in Arabia or Iraq – they will come to Europe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KSČM</td>
<td>Europe is deeply in severe crisis. It cannot often deal with the inferiority to the USA and the warfare NATO pact, the blast of illegal migrants, transnational crime, increasing climate change, deepening chaos in international relations and many other problems. Asylum and migration policy should help people in need, yet it must not lead to worsening security and social situation in the countries of destination. The problem is not an individual, but dozens of millions of Africans and Asians longing for life in a rich Europe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ODS</td>
<td>We want to increase the security of the external borders and cooperation of intelligence services and police in the interest of protection against illegal migration and terrorism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPD</td>
<td>The European Union let into Europe millions of unadaptable migrants who murder, rape, steal and commit acts of terrorism. Large cities of Western Europe have already been Islamised, and Islamic ghettos and no-go zones are spreading rapidly. Together with European patriots, we will defend ourselves against Islamisation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Western Europe will become more and more Islamised. If there will be no chance to save the West European states, we at least have to protect Central Europe.

We support the visa-free movement of the European citizens, but with the option to implement border controls in order to prevent Islamic terrorists, criminals and illegal migrants from entering [the Czech Republic].

TOP09+STAN

We are aware of the security risks of climate change (possible wars for resources and migrant waves due to a significant worsening of life conditions).

Ensuring the safety of the EU citizens and finding a common solution in the field of migration is the fundamental premise for the future of the Schengen area.

Free Party

The Czech Republic has its own immigration and asylum policies which are set very well, and we want to keep it that way. So that others would not have to suffer because of other states, where due to their own fault, things got out of hand.

Sources: (Programy do Voleb 2019a; 2019b; 2019d; 2019e; 2019g; 2019i; 2019h)

In general, the statements show that in most cases, migration is something that is undesired; it is potentially dangerous and needs to be addressed. The way of facing migration is often described as preventing, stopping, reducing and combating. Very often, migration is appropriated to terrorism. The following table shows the frequency of securitizing statements out of other migration-related statements. The purpose of the table is to offer a comparative overview of how frequent are securitizing statements. The frequency is based on the total number of statements referring to migration and the number of securitizing statements.

Table 9: Frequency of securitizing statements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Statements - total</th>
<th>Securitizing statements</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SPD</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0,357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KSČM</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANO</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0,286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ČSSD</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0,286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ODS</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free Party</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOP09+STAN</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0,154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KDU-ČSL</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pirates</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Most of the parties did use securitizing statements in regards to migration. The most frequent use of securitizing speech act was observed in the case of Freedom and Direct Democracy (SPD). This party also had the highest frequency of referring to migration in general. Given the clear anti-migration stance of the party, these results are not surprising. There are, however, other important content-related factors in the manifestos, which are not securitizing per se, yet are essential for understanding the party-audience communication as well as the atmosphere in the society in general. Although these non-securitizing statements are somewhat difficult to analyse, ignoring them would make the analysis incomplete. In the following part, these statements are recorded and briefly put into context, party by party.

7.2.1 ANO

The ANO movement, the currently strongest political party in the Czech Republic, is also the most significant representative of the so-called second party system. It is a party that was established on criticism of the former political party elites, their clientelism, corruption and alleged inability to produce results which would lead to improving live quality in the Czech Republic. This party entered the campaign with a motto *We will protect Czechia. Strong and without compromises*. The motto clearly appeals to voters who feel endangered by the *unknown other*. When looking closely into the manifesto, it very vaguely describes against whom Czechia needs to be protected. “We will protect our country and our people from both the threats of today and anything that is not fair and what could complicate our lives” (Programy do Voleb 2019a). It can be stated that the manifesto has securitizing appeal without implicitly mentioning the specific threats.

Apart from the securitizing statements mentioned in Table 8, ANO focuses on improving the efficiency of return policies as well as focusing on development aid in Africa. It calls it “Marshall Plan for Africa”. Another way of addressing the challenges of migrations are, according to the party, the establishment of “receiving centres” on the external borders and “supporting solving the refugees’ situation in countries of origin” (Ibid.)

The migration policies should be determined by the individual member states, and national offices should decide on legal, economic migration according to the needs of the current labour market (Ibid.).
7.2.2 ČSSD – Social Democratic Party

The Social Democrats highlight the achievements of their ministers of interior and foreign affairs. The refusal of migrants’ redistribution quotas being the most significant of them, in regards to migration. A strong accent is put on the role of sovereign states in the process of deciding who gets to be accepted. What is rather interesting, is the statement that “despite the false allegations from the political competition, the Social Democratic Party is not pro-migration” (Programy do Voleb 2019b). It is worth noting, that from the point of view of mainstream Czech politics, being pro-migration is a negative label – in fact so negative, that the Social Democrats decided to explicitly put it into their manifesto. The refugee seekers’ status should be determined according to national rules.

Migration from Africa also plays the role of a scarecrow in the chapter on climate change. For ČSSD, facing climate change is essential precisely because of the possible environment-induced migration.

Regarding foreign aid, which is also an important issue for this party, the Czech Republic is already active in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and Lebanon. Cooperation with countries of origin is vital in reducing migration (Ibid.).

7.2.3 KDU-ČSL - Christian Democratic Party

The Christian Democrats did not have an explicitly securitizing statement in their manifest. Their primary focus is on providing foreign development aid and cooperating with Turkey on the issue of migration. Focusing on root causes of migration in mainly African countries is, according to the manifesto, a way of solving the migration crisis in general (Programy do Voleb 2019c).

In the chapter on Security, the Christian Democrats mention the importance of “monitoring the political aspects of Islam and systematic pursuit of those, who spread violence via their preaching” (Ibid.). KDU-ČSL is one of two political parties mentioned in this research which explicitly mentions Islam.

The most interesting statement, however, is the following: “We seek justice and all possible support for all persecuted Christians, including accepting them into the EU, in case they want” (Ibid.). This pro-immigration stance based on adherence to a religious group is in the context of Czech politics unique, yet not new. The relative openness to migration of specific group was manifested already in previous European Parliament term. In September 2018, Member of
European Parliament Michaela Šojdrová (KDU-ČSL) suggested relocating 50 Syrian orphans from refugee camps in Greece to the Czech Republic (iROZHLAS 2018b). She was, however, criticized for this suggestion mainly by Czech prime minister Andrej Babiš (ANO), who stated the following: “We have orphans here as well and we need to prepare them for their future life” (iROZHLAS 2018a).

7.2.4 KSČM – The Communist Party

The Communists connected migration with their geopolitical orientation. They focused on the role of NATO and the USA in current Middle Eastern conflicts and claimed these are responsible for the migration crisis. The Communist party blames individual politicians for what it calls a severe crisis, and it demands these politicians who are allegedly responsible for initiating the migration crisis to step down or be suspended from the office (Programy do Voleb 2019d).

In their manifesto, the Communist Party calls for breaking the stereotypes and prejudices of migration, while in the following statement it calls “dozens of millions of Africans longing for life in rich Europe” a problem (Ibid.). The image of millions of people who might flood the European continent is a very powerful image, as well as a very powerful stereotype.

Together with other parties, the Communists share the view that a proper way of addressing migration is foreign development aid (Ibid.).

7.2.5 ODS – The Civic Democratic Party

ODS is one of the two main political parties of the first party system (the second one being the Social Democrats). This conservative party’s manifesto is rather minimalistic on the issue of migration, with only four statements.

It criticises the redistribution quotas on migrants, calls for financial aid for south European countries who most often host migrants and wants to face migration challenges via police and intelligence services’ cooperation. Illegal migration is mentioned alongside with terrorism.

7.2.6 The Pirate Party

The relatively new Pirate party, which entered the national parliament two years ago, is the only party which has a positive approach to migration. None of the statements was labelled as securitization. It is also the only party which openly talks about respect and human dignity of
migrants and asylum seekers. It differentiates between migrants and asylum seekers and calls for enabling legal ways of migration into the European labour market.

In regards to asylum policy, the Pirate party highlights the importance of proving the country of origin, and “ensuring the freedom of settling in Europe for those, whose refugee status was determined” (Programy do Voleb 2019f). By calling for the freedom of settlement, without specifying where precisely in the EU, the Pirate party basically aims for opening the European asylum policy, leaving the choice of the country of destination up to the refugees themselves.

This open pro-migration stance is unique. Not only the Pirates do not attempt to securitize migration, but they also aim for liberalisation of the current asylum policies, making them more migrant-choice oriented.

7.2.7 SPD – Freedom and Direct Democracy

Given the open anti-immigration and anti-Islamic views of the party representatives, SPD is a party with most references to migration as well as most cases of securitizing speech acts. They do not differentiate between the words migrant and Muslim. They label immigrants as non-adaptable criminals, murderers, thieves and terrorists. The EU is, according to SPD, responsible for letting them in due to its positive approach to migration in its official documents. Western Europe and mainly its large cities are described as Islamised no-go zones and ghettos, and the future of Europe is rather gloomy and dangerous.

It is, however, not only the immigrants and the EU which are seen by the Freedom and Direct Democracy responsible for what they view as Islamic invasion. They blame the “NGOs supporting ideologies of neo-Marxism, gender and multiculturalism” (Programy do Voleb 2019g).

Their main message is that the EU is beyond reform, and it has to cease to exist. The manifesto is very emotional. It contains nine exclamation marks and statements such as “Let’s shake Brussels! If you don’t want to be ruled by people such as Juncker, Macron, Merkel or Soros, please vote SPD! These elections are, in fact, a referendum on the EU” (Ibid.).

The Soros conspiracy, viral in Hungary, also serves another purpose. It enables actors such as SPD to divide society. The SPD, as well as some other actors (the president, Communists), use the term “sluničkáři” (translated sunshine people) in order to describe usually young people studying social sciences and humanities, who are opened to multiculturalism, liberal views, pro-migrant and pro-NGO. There is no exact definition of this term. SPD claims that the sunshine
people and pro-migration NGOs are funded by an American philanthropist George Soros who allegedly aims to destroy the European civilization by facilitating migration (see BBC 2019). This is why, even though Soros is not running in the EU elections, SPD uses his name as an example of bad leadership.

SPD differs from the rest of the parties in many ways. Most significant is its approach to the EU, seeing it as a dysfunctional organization. It openly calls migrants criminals, and it uses conspiracies in order to label certain groups of people as enemies.

7.2.8 Free Party

Free Party is a marginal political party. Their most significant success was gaining one seat in the European parliament in the previous term. Their rather short manifesto mentions migration as an example of the EU intervening in a sovereign state’s interests. It sees the West European states, similarly to SPD, as places where “things got out of hand” (Programy do Voleb 2019h) regarding migration. The Free Party refuses the quotas and claims that the domestic asylum and migration system is sufficient and should be kept that way (Ibid.).

To sum up, most of the parties not only securitize migration in their manifestos, they also criticize the EU for its asylum system, they refuse migrant quotas and, in some cases, they very explicitly create negative images of migrants – both as criminals and as dozens of millions of people trying to get into the EU. A widespread stance is an accent on national sovereignty, often expressed as “nobody will tell us what to do”. Most parties address migration in three ways:

1. Securing the external border by strengthening the border agencies and providing funds to South European states
2. Making the repatriation process more efficient and faster
3. Providing development aid to countries of origin, especially in Africa and Asia. This allegedly leads to eliminations of the root causes of migration, and therefore people would have no push factor.

In conclusion, using the content analysis, it was found that most political parties (with the exception of the Pirates) used the speech act of securitization of migration in their party manifestos. Securitization, understood as labelling something as a threat, was done on several levels. Firstly, migration was in most cases referred to alongside security issues and threats such
as terrorism, human trafficking and organized crime. Secondly, the attributes given to migration or migrants were to a large extent negative – illegal migration, the migration crisis, migration wave, mass migration or dangerous migrants. Thirdly, on the level of individual statements, 7 out of 9 researched relevant political parties made securitizing statements, appropriating migration directly or indirectly to a security threat.

The explicitness of qualifying migration as a threat did vary among the parties, while some saw migration as something that should be reduced, or stopped, other parties used images of millions of migrants or migrants as terrorists and generally dangerous people. There was only one party which had a positive approach to migration.

Based on the previous research, migration is closely connected to state’s sovereignty. Common migration and asylum policies are often seen as wrong, as only the state has the right to decide who is allowed to be admitted. For successful coping with migration are, according to the majority of parties, important three things: Secure external border, fast repatriation process, and addressing the so-called root causes of migration.

Identifying securitization in the parties’ manifestos does not automatically mean that securitization was successful. As mentioned in previous chapters, securitization is seen as a two-way street between the securitizing actor and the audience. Securitization needs to be audience centered in order to be successful. The following chapter explores the audience’s response to securitization.
8 Hearing security – the audience’s response to securitization speech

Audience and context are logically connected. Since Balzacq’s theory sees the context as a Zeitgeist, a sum of conditions, history, culture, atmosphere and current events, these often influence the audience. It can be argued that for example, acts of terrorism in France influence the audience in the Czech Republic. Another factor influencing the audience is media – and not only in its traditional form, but also social media which play a significant role in shaping the audience’s opinions. The following chapter elaborates on the interaction between the audience and the securitizing actor.

Firstly, Balzacq claims that in order to win over the audience, the speaker needs to identify with the audience and adjust their language to the language of the audience (Balzacq 2005, 184). When observing the party leaders who used the act of securitization, it might be challenging to observe how can possibly some of the party leaders identify with the audience. For example, the leader of ANO and current prime minister Andrej Babiš is the fourth wealthiest person in the country (Forbes 2019). The chairman of Freedom and Direct Democracy, which is according to this research, the most anti-migrant relevant political party, Tomio Okamura, was born in Tokyo to a Czech mother and Japan-Korean father. The obvious question is, how do these party leaders identify with the audience? The answer seems to be the language.

The previous chapter on securitization as a speech act explored the language of securitization used in the parties’ manifestos, and it shows that many parties use the language of threat. For example, ANO and its statement “We will protect our country and our people from both the threats of today and anything that is not fair and what could complicate our lives” (Programy do Voleb 2019a) uses the language of protection. As if saying “the world is dangerous and not fair, we know this, and we will protect you – the country and its people.” Similarly, the SPD used the language to illustrate the world of chaos filled with migrants who are murdering and raping, spreading to Europe and occupying West European cities – but then it calls onto public “(…) please vote SPD”, “We won’t let that happen. We will protect the rights and freedoms of our citizens (…)” (Programy do Voleb 2019g).

The language in these two cases, as in many others, is protective. It uses the image of external danger – in case of ANO this danger is unspecified, in case of SPD it is the migrants and the
EU – and as an answer to these threats, it provides assurance of protection. Regardless of the racial features, the paradox of a migrant leading an anti-migrant party, or the wealth, it shows that the language of fear combined with the offering of solution and protection is a potent mix which resonates in the society. In April 2019, one month before the election, the five party leaders with highest approval rates were Babiš (ANO, 38 %), Hamáček (ČSSD, 30 %), Bartoš (Pirates, 29 %), Okamura (SPD, 24 %) and Filip (KSČM, 22 %) (Červenka 2019, 3). After the election, in September 2019, the approval rate increased for Okamura and Filip. Bartoš and Babiš kept the same percentage, and Hamáček lost 5 % (Ibid.). This proves that regardless of wealth or appearance, the language used by the party leaders, who are at the same time the main faces of the pre-election campaign is efficient, and they manage to gain trust.

Another vital audience related factor is the lack of interest in the European Union’s politics. In the most recent poll in February 2019, only 6 % of respondents claimed to be really interested in EU politics, 32 % rather interested (Hanzlová 2019a, 1). This lack of interest among the majority of population signifies the limited knowledge on the EU processes, and therefore many voters are not aware of the EU work. It is, therefore, easier to persuade such voters using strong language on the need for protecting national sovereignty.

This thesis deals with a complex issue of anti-migrant atmosphere and its manifestation in the pre-election campaign. The complexity stems from the unclear connection between the issues of migration and Euroscepticism. Since many parties use in the manifestos the logic of being forced dangerous policies from Brussels, such as the migrant redistribution quotas, it is necessary to establish the role which is played by the EU or in other words, how Czechs view the EU.

According to researcher Ivan Kalmar, the Visegrad group countries’ citizens feel to be left out on the periphery of what is actually happening in Europe. He claims that “many people in East-Central Europe see their region as a whole as left out of the benefits of global neoliberal prosperity enjoyed by the local elite in the pay of denationalized, global elites” (Kalmar 2018, 416). This local elite is what in the previous chapter was labelled as sunshine people. Kalmar describes them as “privileged young people [who] take advantage of EU-sponsored opportunities to get a foreign education and then either stay abroad or come back to get a job with a foreign-owned corporation (…). If these young people take up a post with one of the many NGOs dedicated to freedom and democracy that pay a decent wage, they provoke the jealousy of older and less educated people” (Kalmar 2018, 415–16).
The feeling of being left out is, therefore, solid in Czech society. It was shown in previous chapters that for example, Freedom and Direct Democracy’s electorate is mainly in the regions with higher unemployment rates or among older and less educated people. The peripherality, as Kalman describes it, is seen on individual levels as well as national. People who feel to be left out by the young elite with access to foreign education or job opportunities, or even by those who have language skills, are likely to feel left out on the EU level too – seeing the level of wages in Germany or Austria, while 30 years after the regime change they find their quality of livelihood unsatisfactory. In a recent poll, 38 % of respondents over 40 years of age claim that they had a better life during the previous regime (iROZHLAS 2019).

This feeling of being left out is what seems to be the identification level of the securitizing speech act. The identification, in this case, is offering security and protection against the external dangers. In their research on Social Construction of Target population, Schneider and Ingram note that “(…) a great deal of the political manoeuvring in the establishment of policy agendas and in the design of policy pertains to the specification of the target populations and the type of image that can be created for them.(…) Officials develop maps of target populations based on both the stereotypes they themselves hold and those they believe in prevailing among the segment of the public likely to become important to them” (Schneider and Ingram 1993, 336). This means that the securitizing actors are using the audience’s worries and shape their statements in order to reinforce them. This is why fear and the notion of threat are used as powerful tools for identifying with the audience.

Balzacq talks about the importance of the securitizing actor’s tuning their speech to the audience’s experience (Balzacq 2005, 184). The experience, which is somewhat related to the context, is in the case of the Czech Republic, the feeling of peripherality. A significant percentage of the population is not interested in the EU politics, yet they feel to be left behind, and they are not satisfied with their lives, especially after the reality does not meet their expectations even 30 years after the regime change. While more than a third of people older than 40 years old do not feel to be better off now, the politicians use the feeling of insecurity and fear and promise protection. Then they use the image of external enemies, either the migrants and the EU, or even internal enemies, the sunshine people. The securitization process is audience centred because it is based on the experience of a significant portion of society.
9 Migration crisis without migrants

This chapter is a reflection on what has been found out in the research above. It sums up the findings and answers the research questions posed at the beginning of this thesis. It also suggests further areas for research of the Central and East European societies.

Firstly, in hindsight, it is important to reflect on the election results. The elections to European Parliament in the Czech Republic in May 2019 show several trends. The main one being the continuous increase in popularity of the parties which were labelled as second party system.

Graph 10: Comparison of European Parliament elections in 2014 and 2019, Czech Republic

Source: (ČSÚ 2014; 2019)

Almost all of the traditional first party system parties lost votes in the most recent election, with the exception of ODS. Most significant loss can be observed with ČSSD who did not gain any seat in the European Parliament. On the other hand, the relatively new parties ANO and Pirates gained support. SPD was running in this election for the first time, so there are no data available for comparison. The results can be interpreted as a lack of credibility of the first party system and searching for an alternative.

The research on the securitization of migration in the Czech Republic can be interpreted as pointing out several societal issues. The fear of migration is presented as an outcome of several factors, exactly as Balzacq pointed out. It is mainly a sum of context and audience related factors, which are used by the securitizing actors to gain political mandate via the agency of
elections. Context and audience related factors are, however, much more complicated. Last but not least, the message of securitization statements should not be ignored. Establishing the efficiency of securitization is important, but so is the content of the actual statements, because as it was shown, these statements, regardless of how factual they are, shape public opinion and actions.

9.1 Securitization-friendly circumstances

As explained in previous chapters, the context, or as Balzacq calls it, Zeitgeist is a combination of national history, culture and experience. National history, when viewed from the perspective of deep history theory, brings centuries-old events into life in ways which are not always directly observable in these days. The circumstances under which was the first Czechoslovak Republic established 101 years ago play an essential role, and so do the periods of totalitarian regimes, both during the Second World War and the Cold War. Even the pre-WWI history is filled with oppression under the Habsburg empire. This history of non-freedom is important when assessing the relation of Central and East European nations to anything that is foreign and external.

In the context of modern history, now, 30 years after the fall of the communist regime, there are significant social groups who feel that the previous regime was better than today’s democracy. These people feel left behind, lost, unhappy and unsatisfied with the way their life is developing. Unemployment and social vulnerability, combined with higher age and lower levels of educations are characteristics of social groups which have over the last few years become the primary target group of many of the securitization actors – in case of this research – political parties.

9.2 Securitization-ready audience

Fear is one of the basic human emotions. This is why it is so effective when used to gain support. Political (securitizing) actors use this emotion as a mobilization tool in order to gain attention and eventually support. As mentioned in the previous sub-chapter, there is a significant group of people who feel vulnerable because of their socio-economic situation and because of the generational changes. Especially older people who did not have access to foreign education, do not speak English and had very limited options to travel for most of their life feel endangered (and maybe jealous) as they observe an increasing number of young people who speak foreign
languages, often work for foreign companies and enjoy the freedom to travel. This generation gap is becoming very apparent now, 30 years after the revolution when the generation born after the fall of communism becomes politically active. A very illustrative example was a TV debate in July 2018. A 56-year-old deputy chairman of ANO, Jaroslav Faltýnek was in a heated discussion with a 29-year-old deputy chairman of Pirates Jakub Michálek. These two politicians were arguing over the prosecution of prime minister Babiš when suddenly Faltýnek said the following: “How old are you? (...) It is unacceptable that this boy says things like this” (Lidovky.cz 2018). What might seem like an emotional statement coming from the heat of the moment, is actually a Freudian slip which uncovers the deep generation gap.

The vulnerable group of people who feel lost in today’s world are vulnerable to politicians who use the rhetoric of protection. These politicians create images of external dangers and offer protection. Migrants – being different from the native population, are a very good mean of such threat-creating process – securitization. Another significant factor which was not mentioned in this thesis is the role of media and the internet. According to researches on media literacy, these vulnerable groups of older people with limited education who are unhappy with their life are showing low levels of media literacy (Šimoník and Burianec 2018). This is very often used by alternative media as well as various hoaxes and chain e-mails. These alternative media play a critical role in preparing the audience for securitization. The role of media in creating images of migrants in Central and East European societies would be a topic sufficient for another thesis or maybe even a book. This has even a geopolitical dimension, as according to a report of Czech internal intelligence service, many of these alternative media servers are funded by Russia (BIS 2018). A large part of the media is also owned by the prime minister’s trust fund.

The combination of feeling left out, lack of ability to critically assess information and the general disappointment with the post-1989 development offers demand for protection. And many politicians are happy to provide the supply of protection promises. Migration and Islamophobia supported by some of the media open great potential for those who are willing to use fear in order to gain support.

9.3 Securitization-motivated voting

This part of Balzacq’s three-dimensional analysis is the most difficult one to prove. As shown in the graph below, there is no clear pattern that would prove causality between securitization and election success.
There are additional factors necessary to add to the picture. Mainly the previously mentioned factors of age, education and unemployment. According to research conducted by the Czech TV, the party with most young voters were Pirates. The older generations were more frequently in favour of the Communist party or ANO. People with lower levels of education often voted for ČSSD, KSČM and ANO. In towns and cities with high unemployment rates preferred ANO, SPD and KSČM (ČT 2019a).

When looking at the graph, the parties on the right side (with a higher frequency of securitization statements) were favoured by older people, those living in towns and cities with above-average unemployment rates and with lower education. Precisely the same groups of people are more vulnerable to disinformation, and in previous chapters, these people are less open to Muslims and migrants in general. This is not enough to establish a causality link, but the correlation across this many factors is very unlikely to be coincidental.

The research questions stated at the beginning of the thesis can be, therefore answered in the following way:

Q1a: To what extent was the securitization process adjusted to a contextual frame?

The securitization statements chosen by the securitizing actors were adjusted to the contextual frame mainly by using the sovereignty theme. The frequently repeated statements of assurance of national sovereignty and unwillingness to let others decide on behalf of Czech citizens was
a common feature. This was very often linked to migration and highlighting the rhetoric of “no one will tell us who will live and work here”. The contextual frame is likely to be connected with the historical memory of the nation and the sensitivity towards external threats.

Q1b: To what extent was securitization of migration audience-oriented?

The orientation on the audience is closely related to the context. Many of the researched parties used the rhetoric of external danger and offered protection, in some cases against anything that might be perceived as danger. In order to support their arguments, parties used images of dangerous migrants or dozens of millions of migrants. The language of protection aimed at vulnerable social groups who are more likely to get influenced by misinformation and have limited access to independent information, are less educated and in general not happy with their livelihood. These social groups very often preferred parties who used securitization incentives more often.

Q1c: Were the securitizing actors able to use their rhetoric in order to win the support of the target audience for political purposes?

While there is no proof of direct causality, the groups that are less open to migration and Muslims more often voted for parties with higher securitization frequency.

Q1: In the cases of selected relevant political parties, was securitization of migration in their parties manifestos for the European Parliament Election of May 2019 effective, using what means?

Firstly, it is important to realize that not all relevant political parties used securitization statements in their manifestos. Pirates and the Christian Democrats (KDU-ČSL) did not use any. While Pirates increased their preferences significantly, compared to previous elections, Christian democrats did lose approximately 3 % compared to the 2014 election. On the other hand, the Social Democrats used securitization statements and did not gain a single mandate in the new term of the European Parliament. The election was a success for relatively new parties out of which many used securitization statements.

Generally speaking, parties who used securitization were successful in gaining support from groups who were likely to agree to securitization. On the other hand, the election has been a witness to a rather deepening generation gap divided by the year 1989. Mainly second party system parties were able to gain positive results. In other words, securitization, in general, was effective, yet other factors played an important role – the most important one was which party
is going to successfully address the target population, which is securitization-ready. In this case, the Social Democrats lost.

The most common means of securitization of migration were the context in which was securitization used, such as associating it with terrorism; the statements on migration themselves portrayed migration as a dangerous and undesirable phenomenon, and in many cases, there was an emphasis on stopping and preventing migration using security measures.

Last but not least, the message of securitization was the objective of the second research question.

Q2: What was the message contained in the statements which were identified as securitizing migration?

There were three main levels of message identified in the party manifestos regarding securitization. First one is the context. Regardless of the positivity or negativity of the statements on migration, the issue of migration was very often raised in chapters devoted to security. Migration was often referred to in the context of criminal activities such as terrorism, trafficking or organized crime. This itself could be identified as a securitizing speech act.

On the second level, migration was often used with negative attributes. Main ones being illegal, the migrant crisis, migrant wave. This creates a notion of migration as undesired, threatening and overwhelming.

The third level was the analysis of individual statements. In general, these statements were focused on solving migration by stopping it and preventing it. Some of the statements were explicitly focused on Muslim migrants, portraying them as criminal, others overestimated the numbers of migrants.

The overall message was that it is necessary to deal with illegal, dangerous migration which is often associated with terrorism and violence. The general notion is that migration is negative, needs to be stopped and solved.
Conclusion

Securitization of migration in the Czech Republic is a topic that has not been researched to this extent. The findings of the research above show that securitization of migration is just a part of a much bigger picture. This picture involves peripherality, feeling of uncertainty, vulnerability and lack of knowledge. It shares many common features with other Eastern and Central European countries because the significant factor played in the vulnerability to securitization is the historical development which is to a greater extent shared mainly with the other Visegrad group countries.

The securitization of migration, as shown in this context, paints the image of millions of migrants who are dangerous and willing to get into Europe. The migration movements, which are decreasing in the last years since 2015, never directly influenced the Czech Republic. There was no migration wave, no Africans and Arabs flooded the country as some of the politicians predicted. However, four years after the peak of the migration movements, migration remains a very sensitive issue for particular groups of people.

Regardless of the actual decreasing number of migrants arriving in Europe, migration is still used in the election campaign as a scarecrow for many. It was presented in what ways are migrants portrayed and in what context is migration usually put. And as has been shown, using migration to induce fear works in a country without any migration waves or crises.

Fear of migration, besides becoming one of the main issues of the pre-election campaign, is a symptom of a deeply rooted problem of East and Central Europe which will become more apparent in the years to come. The way in which politicians use the abovementioned vulnerabilities is the most challenging issue. By appealing to insecurity, they reinforce it, creating a vicious cycle. By securitizing migration as an external threat from outside, but also negatively labelling those, who support migration, the politicians artificially deepen the cleavages in today’s society. Using fear and fuelling this fear in exchange for support is both dangerous and short-sighted.

Migration was picked as a widespread securitizing issue by most of the analysed parties. But why is it that migration was a favourite choice? This thesis mentioned that people who are in general less open to migration share several common features, being it the age, education, unemployment etc. Another rather important factor is also the lack of knowledge of foreigners. It can be assumed, based on previous analysis, that migration is rather easy to be securitized in
the Czech context from two fundamental reasons – many people do not know anyone personally from different cultural background, and therefore it is easy to fill in the blanks with negative images of foreigners. Secondly, migration being a trans-national issue, it is also relatively easy to connect migration and the EU. In this case, again, many politicians count on the fact that the general knowledge on how the EU works and interest in the EU is somewhat low. Migration is almost a textbook example of securitizing an issue by using the lack of knowledge.

While this thesis dealt primarily with theories, manifestos and proclamations, there is a growing number of cases where securitization of migration actually has policy-impact. Just a few days before finalizing this thesis it was discovered by Czech journalists that in September 2019 the Greek Minister for Citizens’ Protection wrote a letter to Czech Minister of Interior Jan Hamáček, asking him urgently for accepting a relocation of 40 children from Greek refugee camps (Engelová 2019). Not only did the Czech Ministry of Interior not informed the public about this letter, the Minister of Interior ignored the proposal, but when the journalists informed about it, he Tweeted that he does not “…see any sense in relocating 17-year-old with no right of asylum around Europe.” (Hamáček 2019) This is an example of how securitization of migration can actually produce policies which are not even anti-migrant rather than anti-humanitarian.
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