

**Migration and Security:
Securitization theory and its refinement**

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Abstract

Nation-states around the globe, especially Western ones, are cracking down on migration for security reasons. Notwithstanding this rapid securitization of the movement of people, the migration-security nexus remains under analyzed and unelaborated in security studies. Among the limited number of security theories that provide a satisfactory, albeit partial, framework for tackling the issue of migration, securitization theory stands out clearly. Indeed, securitization theory proves to be useful in examining the migration-security linkage. Yet serious problems arise when securitization theory is analyzed in greater depth. I argue that securitization theory displays internal inconsistency in its treatment of the interaction between actors and audience and presents an inadequate conceptualization of structures. Ultimately, securitization theory needs to be amended. The argument is supported by an analysis of Canada's experience with migration from 1989 to 2005.

Introduction

The movement of people undoubtedly provokes anxiety and apprehension. Increasingly, migration is being securitized. Nation-states around the globe, especially Western ones, are cracking down on migration for security reasons. Indeed, migration is now listed as a security concern by almost all OECD member countries. Technology is one aspect of this securitized migration. Biometric data (facial recognition, retinal scans, and digital fingerprints) are now required for citizens from 27 countries wanting to enter the United States. France, Britain, Spain, Italy, and Germany are all interested in introducing identity cards with biometric information in the near future. A sharp increase in traditional border control is another facet of securitized migration. For example, by the end of the 1990's, i.e. before the attacks on the twin towers, the US Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) had more employees authorized to carry guns than any other federal law enforcement force.

In studying the migration-security nexus many scholars choose to present an alarmist picture of the security consequences of the movement of people—that is, the disorder produced by migration. For some, Western states should fear the “coming anarchy” associated with mass migration (Kaplan, 1994; Huntington, 2004). Others view the world as divided into two camps, the rich and the poor, and predict that the poor will either fight the rich or simply overwhelm them (Connelly and Kennedy, 1994).

Despite these provocative arguments, security studies have, for the most part of the second half of the twentieth century, remained silent on the linkage between migration and security. This does not mean that no effort has been made in the past decades to study their relationship. On one hand, several scholars have endeavoured to broaden the concept

of security. Arguments have indeed been made that security has to be “redefined”, “re-visioned”, and “re-mapped”. Scholars have argued that the referent object of security has to be widened and thus moved away from an exclusionary focus on military. Hence, the concept of security has to encompass, for instance, “humans”, “environment”, and “space”. In the same sense, neorealism has lost its hegemony on the study of security as approaches as varied as constructivism, feminism, critical theory, and post-modernism/political theory have enthusiastically joined the debate.² These efforts to widen security conceptual devices have proven to be quite influential on the link between migration and security, as we will shortly see.

One the other hand, the relationship between international relations and migration has been studied from various perspectives—and with mixed results—over the past two decades. Five predominant arguments have been advanced regarding this linkage: arguing that migration is a significant factor influencing world politics, showing that diasporas have an effect on the foreign policy of the home and/or host countries, illustrating that migration has profoundly transformed the global economic system, tracing and highlighting the predominance of cultural factors in world politics, or pointing to regional consequences of the movement of people.³

To be sure, these contributions serve as a base for the study of the two-way relationship between migration and international relations. They illustrate that while being a newcomer in migration studies, international relations scholarship is increasingly “interested” in such questions. Notwithstanding these initial attempts, the migration-security nexus has been under analyzed and unelaborated. In fleshing out the increasingly

invoked but rarely examined linkage between security and migration, this paper seeks to address that sense of incompleteness.

Among the limited number of security theories that provide a satisfactory, albeit partial, framework for tackling the issue of migration, securitization theory stands out clearly. Indeed, this paper argues that securitization theory proves to be useful in examining the migration-security linkage. Yet serious problems arise when securitization theory is analyzed in greater depth. The theory displays internal inconsistency in its treatment of the interaction between actors and audience. Furthermore, one observes a profound disconnect between what securitization theory postulates and empirical results find in the case of Canada. Ultimately, securitization theory needs to be amended.

This paper is divided in three parts. The first section looks at the evolution of the linkage migration-security in security studies. The second part presents the results of my study of Canada's experience with migration. The relationship between securitizing actors and audience will be examined with a particular focus on two securitizing actors: the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs. In the conclusion, the paper takes some initial steps in refining securitization theory.

Toward the inclusion of migration in security studies

In our search for a theory capable of tackling the increasingly common phenomenon of perceiving migration as a security concern as observed in the vast majority of Western countries, we must travel across several models. For the purpose of this paper, three models will be examined: neorealist, sectorial, and securitization theory.

Neorealist model

Security studies, according to neorealism, should be oriented toward external geopolitical and military threats. There are two basic assumptions behind the neorealist theory: the threat can only come from outside of state borders, and it will be a military threat. The neorealist state-centred approach postulates that states are in a constant quest for power and security. Competition and conflict between states are inherent in the anarchic international structure. Thus, security is defined solely in terms of state survival. Protection and defence of national interests, usually achieved in terms of military capacity, are the principal objectives of states. Self-help, and only self-help, can ensure security. As Waltz (1979:126) argues, “in anarchy, security is the highest end. Only if survival is assured can states seek such other goals as tranquility, profit, and power. The goal of the system encourages them to seek is security”. Consequently, the national security interests of states subsume other concerns of minor importance such as intra- and interstate migratory flows. Migration, considered a “low-politic” issue, is dismissed as a domestic matter.

In the early 1990’s, Walt re-stated the neorealist understanding of security. Criticizing advocates of an enlargement of the nature of security studies, he warns scholars of the danger of too broad a conception of security. Walt not only contends that scholars should keep a thin conception of security, but that “the main focus of security studies is easy to identify [...] it is the phenomenon of war”. Therefore, security can be defined as “the study of the threat, use and control of military force”, and security studies should “explore the conditions that make the use of force more likely [...] and the specific

policies that states adopt in order to prepare for, prevent, or engage in war” (Walt, 1991:212).

Although Walt’s article seeks to address the renaissance of security studies and to act as a guide for future research, it fails considerably to provide a framework that accounts for the changes in the international system of the post-Cold War era. Obviously, Walt’s position displays both his overall conception of the security studies evolution and the intrinsic limit of such an analysis. This attempt to refresh neorealism’s conception of security does not provide any insight into a better understanding of the link between migration and security. The movement of people—whatever its amplitude and magnitude—remains a domestic affair; and not a concern of international security. Hence, a neorealist account of security does not tell us much about the linkage between migration and security that we are currently observing in world politics. By leaving the movement of people unproblematic, neorealism simply does not have much to offer in the present context. Thus, we need to turn to a more encompassing theoretical framework.

Sectorial security

Among the scholars who have provoked a re-thinking of security studies, Buzan undoubtedly holds a prominent place. In his seminal book (1983 [1991]), he broadens the concept of security to five major sectors: military (a matter of offensive and defensive capabilities of states); political (the stability of states, their governments, and their ideologies); economic (resources, finance, and markets); societal (the sustainability of identity, language, and custom); and environmental (planetary biosphere).

Buzan's enlargement of the categories for the analysis of security is noteworthy. However, the central referent of security in his thesis remains the state. Societal elements matter only if the state is threatened by a factor that happens to be a societal one. The five sectors are vectors from which a state's security can be threatened. Overall, Buzan's thesis postulates that the state remains the exclusive referent object; states interact with each other under an anarchic system. In fact, Buzan's contribution could be read as a significant and insightful refinement of neorealism's take on the issue of security. Admitting the primacy of state security, he successfully contests the scope of state security, but fails to go beyond.

In the improved version of the sectorial security approach (Buzan *et al.*, 1998), the focus on the state is considerably reduced. Seeking to offer a middle-ground analytical framework between the traditionalist-realist's position and the critical security studies' position, Buzan *et al.* (1998:8) have "modified [their] statement to move away from its implicit (and sometimes explicit) placement of the state as the central referent object in all sectors."

Nevertheless, concerns have been raised about postulates of sectorial security: the feasibility of exercising a clear distinction between external (the military and political sector) and internal (societal) security (Bigo, 2001), and between state and societal security (Ceyhan, 1998), for example. Some have attacked, with little success, the question of identity (McSweeney, 1996) and the responsibility of the analyst (Eriksson, 1999), while others have tackled, with greater insights, the normative implications of the concept (Huysmans, 1993, 1998). Moreover, migration does not have an impact only on societal security. For instance, Dauvergne (2003) has shown convincingly that the

movement of people is challenging the very foundation of the state—that is, national sovereignty. As well, the approach is not really useful in examining the processes and mechanisms by which migration comes to be seen and perceived as a security issue, which is the fundamental question of the present study. A detachment from the sectorial security approach is required in the present study. Indeed, and notwithstanding the fact that the societal security framework initiates a useful analytical linkage between migration and security, the mechanisms leading to securitized migration have to be found in the logic upon which the sectorial approach ultimately relies—that is, securitization theory.

Securitization theory and its refinement

Undoubtedly, securitization theory has become the benchmark of the securitization process in security studies today. Indeed, securitization theory provides at first sight a creative theoretical foundation for understanding the linkage between security and migration by acknowledging the subjective dimension of a securitized migration. Dealing effectively with the notion that migrants are an artefact produced by territorial boundaries (Faist, 2000), the theory postulates the social construction of threats and referent objects. Doubtful of an enterprise of looking for real threats—objective ones—securitization theory is said to be “radically constructivist regarding security, which ultimately is a specific form of social praxis” (Buzan *et al.*, 1998:204). The theory also highlights the importance of discourse in the processes leading to a securitized migration. Indeed, as one of securitization theory’s friendly critics observes, one of securitization theory’s greatest strengths is that it underscores the importance of labelization as a form of symbolic power

in security studies (Bigo, 1998); thus, shifting the focus of analysis away from merely material factors to include social-cultural ones as well.

Despite its noteworthy insights, securitization theory is not without considerable weaknesses and limits. The theory displays a sense of incompleteness. Elsewhere, I have shown that securitization theory has three important weaknesses: a limiting analytical framework, a flawed view of agency, and an inadequate conceptualization of structures.⁴ In this paper, I will focus on the third.

One of securitization theory's weaknesses is that the conditions it identifies as enabling the process of securitization are ill defined and lack internal consistency. Indeed, securitization theory sends confused messages regarding the conditions making a securitization possible. Securitization theory asserts that

“A discourse that takes the form of presenting something as an existential threat to a referent object does not by itself create securitization—this is a securitizing move, but the issue is securitized only if and when the audience accepts it as such [...] Successful securitization is not decided by the securitizer *but by the audience* of the security speech-act” (Buzan *et al.*, 1998:25-31, emphasis added).

This formulation immediately raises some concerns. Obviously, the first one is its ethno-centrism. The audience in a liberal democracy has probably something to say in regards to national security, but what exactly is the role of the audience in a dictatorship and in a repressive regime? Does talking in terms of acceptance, which ultimately means making a choice, make sense in a North Korean or a Zimbabwean context? Moreover, one could ask who precisely comprises the audience. Securitization theory's response, which is to add an adjective here and there to the word audience, succeeds merely in confusing

things. For instance, in Buzan *et al.* (1998), they refer to the “significant” audience (p.27) and to the “sufficient” audience (p.204), whereas in another contribution, Wæver (2000:251) talks about the “relevant” audience.⁵ In turn, this list of adjectives leads to important and interrelated questions: what is a “sufficient” audience? How do we measure a “significant” audience? What is the “relevant” audience in the case of, for example, environmental security: the audience of a specific country or of the entire planet? Who decides which one it is? If it is the population of the whole world, where exactly can the audience voice their choice?

Furthermore, Buzan *et al.*’s framework is inconclusive when looking at the question of ‘facilitating conditions’—that is, conditions making a successful securitization more likely. The theory postulates that

“conditions for a successful speech act [are]: (1) the demand internal to the speech act of following the grammar of security; (2) the social conditions regarding the position of authority for the securitizing actor—that is, the relationship between speaker and audience and thereby the likelihood of the audience accepting the claims made in a securitizing attempt; and (3) features of the alleged threats” (Buzan *et al.*, 1998:32-33).

I share Buzan and Wæver’s reserves that these conditions should not be held as causal in a traditional sense. I am not calling for a systematic and fixed list of conditions under which a speech act works; thus, I agree with securitization theory that one should keep the field of conditions open. Rather the argument is that the categorization proposed in the theoretical statement cannot encompass, at best awkwardly, what the empirical research has found to be valuable. This is a conclusion that Buzan and Wæver themselves seem to arrive at in their latest contribution. They argue, for example, that length and

ferocity of historical enmity, vulnerability of the referent objects, and geography are facilitating conditions (Buzan and Wæver, 2003). Trying to fit all these *new* conditions into the three categories listed earlier is a daunting challenge. For instance, ‘vulnerability of the referent objects’ enters neither the internal nor the social capital of the securitizing actor categories. It perhaps enters in the ‘features of the threat’ category but only by considerably distorting the initial definition of that category. To be sure, these conditions are not by themselves problematic; rather, the point is that a disconnection between theoretical components and empirical results is present. It is to the empirical research that I now turn

Migration and security in Canada

Firstly, let me set a number of bases for the purpose of the paper. What exactly do I mean by securitized migration? In order to restrict to the maximum the continuum of what is a security issue and to restrict the fish net of the study, I deliberately use a narrow definition of security to measure if migration has been securitized or not. Instead of opting for a rather subjective understanding of the link between migration and security, this study posits that at this point indicators should be based on objective measures as much as possible.

In brief (and I cannot, given space limitation, develop further on this point in this paper), I rely on two indicators. The first indicator is whether immigration/migration is listed as a security concern in the mandates, objectives, and priorities of security related departments. Does, for example, the Canadian White Paper on Defense of 1994 talk about migration in security terms? Or, does the key 1995’s foreign policy document

“Canada in the World” list migration as a national security issue for Canada? The second indicator is the existence of a particular department or a bi/multilateral agreement in charge of border control and national security in which immigration is seen as a key element. To illustrate, in December 2003, the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) was created. Building its mandate from the Canada-United States Smart Border Declaration (signed in December 2001), the CBSA is said to be an “integral component in enhancing Canada’s national security”. Accordingly, the CBSA wants to “identify security threats before they arrive in North America through collaborative approaches to reviewing crew and passenger manifests, managing refugees, and visa policy coordination”.

With these tools, it is possible to track down temporally the phenomenon of securitized migration in Canada. The important date in the case of Canada is 1991. Whereas the previous official document, “Competitiveness and Security: Directions for Canada’s International Relations” published in 1985, was silent on the issue of migration, migration was said to be a security concern for Canada for the first time in the official document “Foreign Policy Themes and Priorities” published in 1991. Documents and statements that came after 1991, such as the White Paper on Defense (1994), Canada in the World (1995), and Canada International Policy Statement (2005), have all reiterated, in a form or another, that migration or some aspect of migration is a question of national security for Canada.

The next step in our research is to identify securitizing actors. Two potential candidates have been studied: the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs. My preliminary analyses yield some valuable, unexpected findings. One finding is that, in the

case of Canada, the Prime Minister has not been the central actor in the process of securitizing migration. A detailed examination of Canada's PM speeches (527 speeches) is in fact quite revealing, as Figure 1 illustrates.

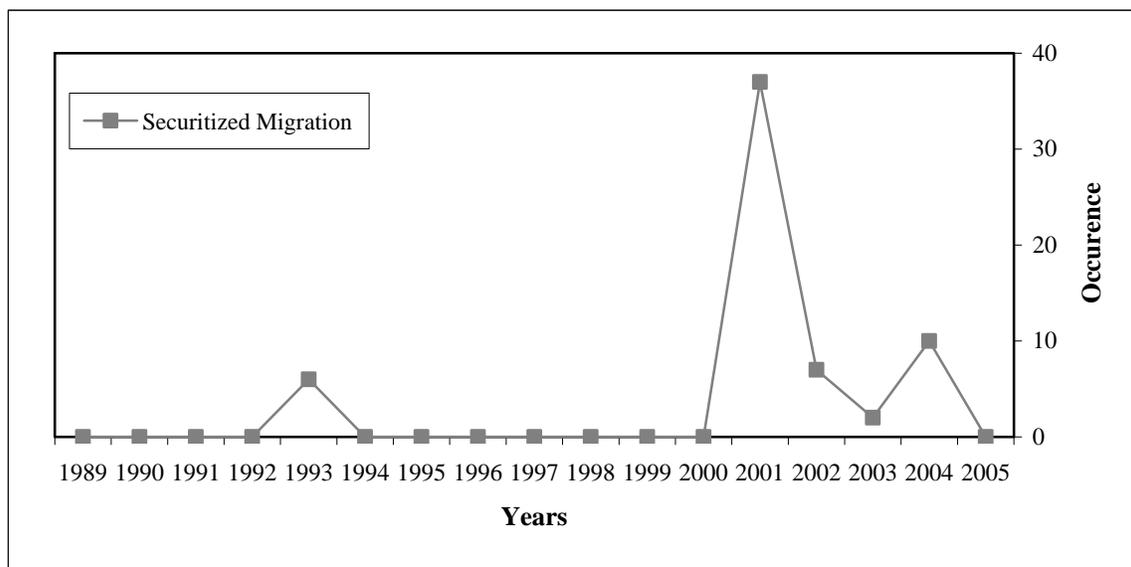
Kim Campbell made the very first speech-act securitizing migration in her swearing-in speech of June 1993. The speech she gave is noteworthy because it was the first time a Prime Minister officially linked migration and security. Prime Minister Campbell told her audience that the newly Public Security portfolio was consolidating the responsibilities for policing, border protection, and the processing of immigrants' applications in order to ensure that Canadian society was not at risk. However, the speech came nearly two years after the publication of the official Canadian document securitizing migration. Thus, a significant time gap exists between the outcome of a securitized migration and the first speech-act made by the PM.

Furthermore, Kim Campbell was the Prime Minister of Canada for a very short period of time (from June 13, 1993 to October 25, 1993). Replacing Brian Mulroney as the leader of the Progressive Conservative Party, who left after two mandates in power, Campbell was in fact an interim Prime Minister. The Progressive Conservative Party suffered their biggest defeat in history in the 1993 federal election, going from a majority government (169 seats) to losing their status of recognized political party by Elections Canada (only two seats). This cast some doubt, as we shall see later, on the fundamental condition for a successful securitization identified by Securitization theory, i.e. that a successful securitization is decided by the audience and not by securitizing actors.

Between 1989 and the terrorist attacks in New York in September 2001, Campbell's speech is the only one that has openly securitized migration. It is not, however, as though

the opportunity did not exist. The arrival of 599 would-be Chinese immigrants near Vancouver during the summer of 1999, for example, has resulted in a groundswell of emotion across Canada, and could have easily justified a bold statement to the effect that the movement of people was disturbing Canada's security. Nevertheless, the Prime Minister made no declaration to that effect.

Figure 1. Prime Ministers' Speeches, Canada, 1989-2005



Obviously, the attacks of 9/11 had a huge impact on the linkage between migration and security. Indeed, in his address during a Special House of Commons Debate in response to the terrorist attacks in the United States, Prime Minister Chrétien did not hesitate to establish the linkage. However, and perhaps in indication of the long-term Canadian position, Chrétien also noted that Canada would not give in to the temptation of creating a security curtain, and declared that his government would not be “stampeded in the hope—vain and ultimately self-defeating—that we can make Canada a fortress against

the world.”⁶ Furthermore, one should also notice the sharp decrease as early as in 2002 in the linkage between migration and security in the Prime Minister’s speeches (Paul Martin included).

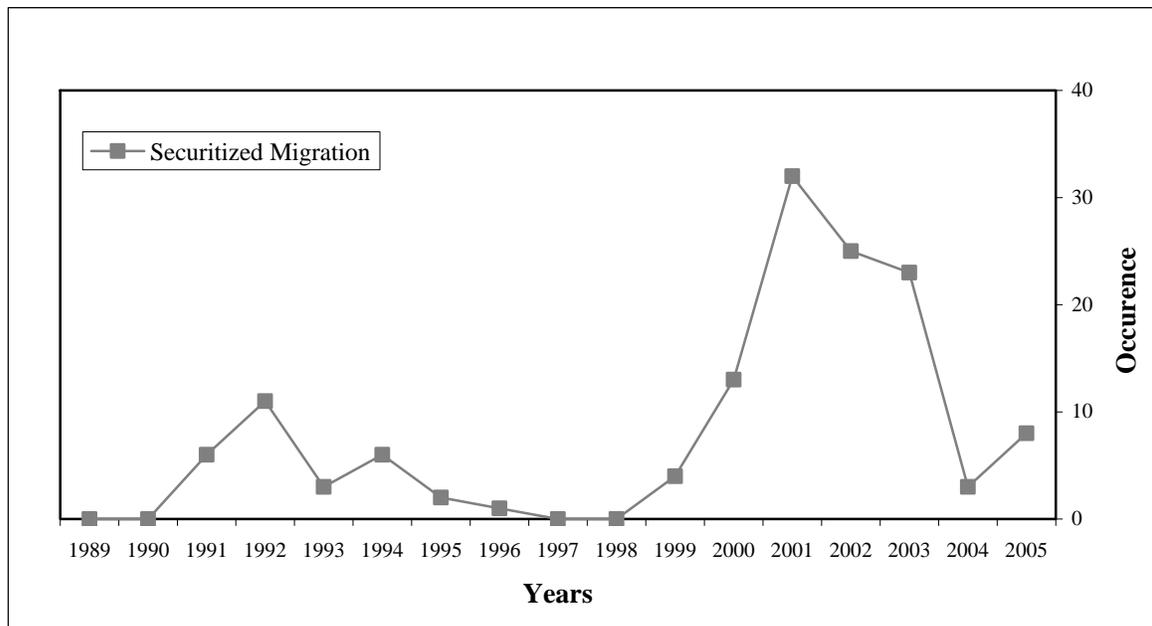
Overall, one finding stands out clearly from the analysis of Prime Ministers’ speeches from 1989 to 2005 in the particular context of this study: the Prime Minister of Canada has not been the key securitizing actor in the process of securitizing migration. This conclusion, established through discourse analysis, is also corroborated by semi-structured interviews conducted in the fall of 2005. Every senior analysts/bureaucrats interviewed (from four departments: Prime Minister Office, Foreign Affairs, Citizenship and Immigration, and Transport) have indicated that the Prime Minister has not been a key player in the process of securitizing migration.

Another finding of my study is that the Minister of Foreign Affairs appears to have been the key player in the process. A thorough examination of Canada’s Foreign Affairs Ministers speeches (384 speeches) is quite enlightening, as Figure 2 shows. Indeed, a temporal connection between a speech-act and the phenomenon of securitized migration is present.

Barbara McDougall, in the second Progressive-Conservative majority government, was the first Foreign Affairs minister⁷ to declare that migration was a national security concern for Canada. In a speech she gave on December 10, 1991 to the conference commemorating the 60th anniversary of the Statute of Westminster, she declared that “in adopting [a] wider concept of security, Canada will be more aggressive and active in tackling transnational threats to security such as weapons proliferation, drug trafficking, terrorism, and irregular migration. These threats need to be managed to avoid the dangers

of escalation to military action.”⁸ At the official opening of the Canadian Foreign Service Institute in Ottawa (1992), the minister told the audience “the challenges of our foreign services are increasingly complex and diverse. Mass movements of populations [...] have changed forever the way our immigration officers works. The work they do is crucial to the well-being and long-term security of all Canadians.”⁹

Figure 2. Ministers of Foreign Affairs’ Speeches, Canada, 1989-2005



While one can observe a relative continuity in the way migration is seen in the first years of the Liberal government, a clear rupture is observed with the arrival of Lloyd Axworthy in the Lester B. Pearson building. Axworthy rarely speaks of the movement of people in terms of security issue *for Canada* and a sharp decrease in the securitization of migration is noticed.

In fact, the angle of analysis preferred by Axworthy was brought onto the scene in the

summer of 1999 with the arrival of four boats of Chinese would-be-immigrants to British Columbia's shores. Instead of mounting a charge to the effect that immigration was bringing all sorts of security problems to Canada, Axworthy cast the whole incident under the human security agenda. That is, the arrival of the boats "brought home to Canadians the ugly reality of another human security threat of global proportions—the smuggling and trafficking in human beings."¹⁰ Or, as this passage illustrates nicely: "millions of vulnerable people have been forced from their homes; been driven to borders which are open one minute and closed the next; forced into hiding; separated from their families; made to act as human shields; stripped of their identities; sexually abused; and callously killed. The need to combat these threats has become the basis of the Canadian approach to foreign policy."¹¹

Undoubtedly, the linkage between migration and security is established under Axworthy; however, the link is constructed with a rather different angle than the one previously made. Securitized migration in this context is about the security of the migrants; migration is not conceived as a 'threat' to Canada. Rather, the linkage is made in terms of security *for the migrants*; an unsurprising finding given Axworthy's track record as one of the most well-known public figures to have put human security in the international arena.

Axworthy's successor, John Manley, had a different understanding of how the movement of people should be interpreted. In his very first speech as Minister of Foreign Affairs and in front of a Canadian audience, Manley made it clear that under his leadership the department would see migration as a salient security issue. "We are facing new and complex security threats: including illegal migration, crime, terrorism, disease,

illegal drug trafficking, and computer-based crime”¹² he argued at a forum on Canada’s foreign policy agenda and priorities in October 2000.

As expected, the linkage between migration and security became especially acute after 9/11. Immigration, security, terrorism, border controls, and security screening are fused into the same conceptual category both in domestic speeches, such as the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade, and in international speeches, such as at the 56th Session of the UN General Assembly. Furthermore, the idea of the Smart Border Declaration, a key document signed by the US and Canada in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, is built around securitized migration. The first pillar of the Declaration’s action plan, entitled “The secure flow of people”, undoubtedly links migration and security in a formal and perhaps enduring way:

“We will implement systems to collaborate in identifying security risks while expediting the flow of low risk travelers;

We will identify security threats before they arrive in North America through collaborative approaches to reviewing crew and passenger manifests, managing refugees, and visa policy coordination.”

A major change is brought, albeit with subtlety, to the general way the movement across borders is perceived. Indeed, the spectrum of security has significantly shrunk: either someone is a security ‘risk’ or a ‘low risk’ migrant. Tellingly, the category ‘not a risk’ is totally absent from the document—as is any conceptualization of the movement of people that is not from a ‘risk’ or a ‘threat’ perspective. From the very beginning, the migrant (and even the frequent traveler) is a security concern. In addition, it is important here to point out that since its signature in 2001, all Foreign Affairs’ Ministers have praised the success, the coherence, and the structure of the Smart Border Declaration.

Actors and audience's relationship in Canada

One should bear in mind at this point that what we have witnessed so far according to securitization theory is only a securitizing move. The audience, not securitizing actors, is the decisive player for securitization theory. Indeed, according to the theory, “a discourse that takes the form of presenting something as an existential threat to a referent object does not by itself create securitization—this is a securitizing move, but the issue is securitized only if and when the audience accepts it as such [...] Successful securitization is not decided by the securitizer *but by the audience* of the security speech-act” (Buzan *et al.*, 1998:25-31, emphasis added).

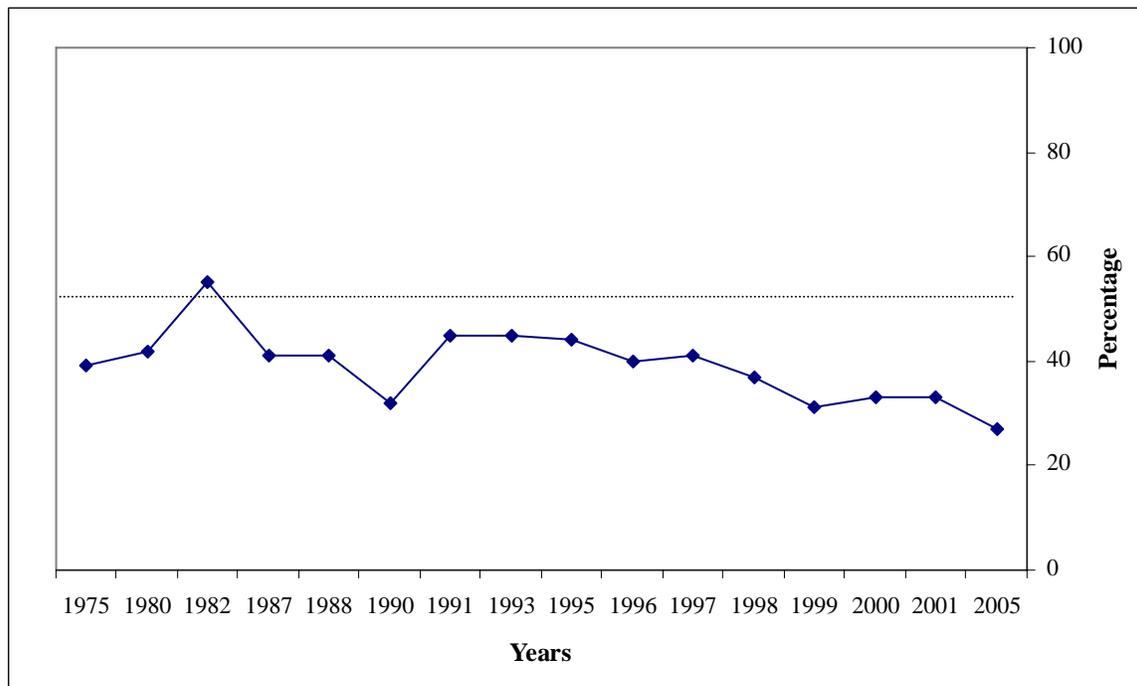
As previously mentioned, it is unclear what securitization theory means when they use ‘audience’. It is even more difficult to measure it. Given that no national referendum has been held on the issue and that security as well as migration issues have not held a prominent place in almost all federal elections in the last thirty years, one of the last resort to measure what the audience ‘think’ of a particular issue is to examine public opinion and national polls/surveys. Sadly, no poll has been conducted in Canada precisely on the question of the process of securitizing migration. The closest we can get is a Gallup poll that has been asking the following question to Canadians since 1975:

“If it were your job to plan an immigration policy for Canada at this time, would you be inclined to increase immigration, decrease immigration, or keep the number of immigrants at about the current level?”

I assume that if you think migration is a security problem, you will want to decrease it. However, as the Figure 3 shows, nothing indicates that the Canadian audience did accept the so-called securitizing move. The only time that those who answered ‘decrease

of immigration' pass the threshold of 50% is in 1982—indicating that the key concern was more about the economy and the job market than about national security. Furthermore, since 1991 there are less and less Canadians who opt for a decrease in the level of immigration. The lowest point in the last 30 years is in 2005 with 27%, i.e. after the terrorists' attacks of 9/11. This robust evidence (as the poll has been conducted since 1975) not only permits to control for the effect of idiosyncratic events on public opinion, such as the arrival of refugee boats in 1999 or the terrorists' attacks of 9/11, but it also gives a clear indication of the evolution of Canadians' opinions on the issue.

Figure 3. Gallup Poll Results: “Decrease of immigration”, Canada, 1975-2005



My analysis of the relationship between actors and audience in the particular context of the process of securitizing migration in Canada has serious consequences for

securitization theory. Indeed, a central component of securitization theory (i.e. that an issue is securitized only *if and when* the audience accepts it as such) is problematic. On one hand, the previous discussion has shown that securitization theory's usage of audience is ill-defined and inconclusive. On the other hand, I have found a disconnection, especially on the question of '*when*' the audience has supposedly accepted the securitizing move, between empirical results and this central premise of securitization theory.

Hence, securitization theory has to be refined. My concluding remarks will briefly initiate some reflections—as this is not the purpose of this paper—on the correctives offered to securitization theory in order to consolidate its theoretical framework and to better integrate its theoretical premises with empirical results.

Conclusion

In our search for a theory capable of tackling the process of perceiving migration as a security concern increasingly observed in the vast majority of Western countries, we travelled across many approaches. The neorealist theory, blind to the phenomenon, has proven inadequate and useless. The sectorial approach to security has appears to pay too much attention to a categorization of the unit of analysis and not enough to the ‘nuts and bolts’ of a securitization. In fact, the processes and mechanisms leading to the securitization of migration had to be found in the logic underlying the sectorial approach, i.e. securitization theory.

Securitization theory provides scholars with useful theoretical tools for understanding and explaining the increasing securitization of migration. Nonetheless, I found securitization theory to be under-articulated and incomplete in the particular context of the securitization of migration in Canada. In offering some correctives, this paper takes a few steps toward modifying and revamping securitization theory.

I contend that a departure from the conceptual devices of ‘conditions’ is necessary.¹³ As we have seen, securitization theory links securitizing actors and conditions enabling a securitization (notably the role of audience) in a unidirectional and sequential way—that is, a securitizing move is firstly made through a speech act, then the audience needs to accept the move in order to have a successful securitization of an issue. I argue that it is more useful to think in terms of structures; moreover in term of a mutual constitution of agent and structure.¹⁴

Constructivists, while acknowledging the considerable constitutive power of structures, argue that structures “do not exist independently of the knowledgeable

practices of social agents” (Price and Reus-Smit, 1998:266-67). Indeed, Risse (2000:5) contends that the essential added value of constructivism is not merely the argument that agents and structures are mutually codetermined in a causal way; rather, the fundamental insight is that “social constructivists insist on the mutual constitutiveness of (social) structures and agents”.

Within the parameters of this paper, the crucial opening of an agent-structure framework applied to securitization theory is that audience, while being included in the framework, is no longer conceptualized as a *sine qua non* element. An issue can be securitized without the knowledge or acceptance of the audience. Security is often dealt with in secrecy or simply away from public awareness. Even if we are observing an openness of security practices, the fact that the audience gets informed does not necessarily mean that it gets to choose or to accept. The audience is *sometimes* passive and apathetic regarding security issues. The refined version of securitization theory, briefly presented in this paper, is indeed open to that possibility.

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² See Ullman (1983); Matthews (1989); Tickner (1995); Klein (1998); Katzenstein (1996); Baldwin (1997); Mutimer (1997); Booth (1991); Mack (2002); Homer Dixon (1991); Dalby (1992); Eisenhower Institute (2004); Tickner (1992); Enloe (1989); Krause and Williams (1997); Campbell (1992); Booth (2005); Dillon (1996).

³ See Sheffer, 1986; Weiner, 1993; Shain, 1995; Shain and Barth, 2003; Kotkin, 1993; Ong and Nonini, 1997; Hall, 1990; Loescher and Monahan, 1989; Newman and van Selm, 2003.

⁴ See Bourbeau, Philippe (forthcoming), Securitizing Migration: A Structurationist Perspective on Chinese Migration to Canada, France, and Japan, Phd dissertation, University of British Columbia.

⁵ Some scholars have indeed argued that the focus should be on the 'relevant' audience. For instance, in his study of transnational crime in Southeast Asia, Emmers (2003: 423) argues that the 'relevant' audience is

“essentially restricted to an elite of policy-makers. The actors who express an issue in security terms are the same as those who need to be persuaded of its existential threat.” Whereas other scholars argue that securitization theory’s framework is not audience-oriented enough, that it “ignores [the] audience” and that it fails to “properly incorporate audience.” An effective securitization should be “audience-centred” and, consequently, securitizing agents should try to win the support of the “target” audience (Balzacq, 2005).

⁶ Chrétien, 17/11/2001.

⁷ Despite the fact that until 1993 the post was known as Secretary of State for External Affairs, I use the title of minister of Foreign Affairs for the sake of simplicity.

⁸ McDougall, 10/12/1991.

⁹ McDougall, 01/10/1992.

¹⁰ Axworthy, 05/11/1999.

¹¹ Axworthy, 30/03/2000.

¹² Manley, 20/10/2000.

¹³ Despite the initial formulation of ‘facilitating conditions’ of a speech-act by Austin.

¹⁴ The argument is further developed in Bourbeau, Philippe (forthcoming), Securitizing Migration: A Structurationist Perspective on Chinese Migration to Canada, France, and Japan, Phd dissertation, University of British Columbia.

