SECURITIZATION AND FOREIGN POLICY: JUSTIFYING THE SECURITIZATION OF EU DEVELOPMENT AID

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Abstract

In recent years, with the emergence of failed and fragile states, and new wars, lines between development and security have become blurred and a security-development nexus emerged in global political discourse. While there is evidence of the security-development nexus becoming an influencing aspect of EU policy-making, arguments around why the nexus has been incorporated by the EU have varied. Moreover, there is a clear lack of research relating to these arguments. This thesis is aiming to reduce this gap in the existing literature by answering the research question "How does the EU justify the securitization of its foreign development aid?". In answering this research question, this thesis is closely guided by the theory of securitization of the Copenhagen School, as well as by the framework for Critical Discourse Analysis by Fairclough (2001). Overall, 24 official policy documents published by the European Commission under DG INTPA and the EUTF are analysed. By conducting CDA on the selected texts, the aim is to retrieve observations that help understand securitization moves by the EU within a specific, most-likely case study, Nigeria.

Prior to the analysis, the expectations that existential threats to referent objects will be identifiable within EU development aid policy, as well as that strategies by securitizing actors for achieving acceptance of their securitizing moves from target audiences will be observable were set. The analysis highlights three different referent objects and two existential threats, with referent objects being directly linked to existential threats. Moreover, two main strategies interpretable as strategies by the securitizing actor to achieve acceptance of securitizing moves by the audience were identified. Mainly actions being described as in line with the actions of other donor organisations and the government of Nigeria. As well as the availability of all documents analysed to the broad public.

Keywords: securitization; development aid; European Union; Nigeria; critical discourse analysis

Word Count: 15107

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List of Abbreviations

ACT	Agents for Citizen-driven Transformation
AfIF	African Investment Facility
CAMM	Common Agenda for Migration and Mobility
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy
DG DEVCO	Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development
DG INTPA	Directorate-General for International Partnerships
EEAS	European External Actions Services
ESS	European Security Strategy
EU	European Union
EU-SDGN	EU Support to Democratic Governance in Nigeria
EUTF	European Union Emergency Trust Fund
HRVP	High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice-President of the Commission
I-SING	Investing in the Safety and Integrity of Nigerian Girls
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TFEU	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
UN	United Nations
US	United States

1. Introduction

Development cooperation has been around for centuries. However, modern-day development aid is thought to have originated in the context of the Cold War or more specifically with the creation of the Marshall Plan in 1948 (Kilby, 2018). Despite a rhetoric of neutrality, foreign aid is often politicised and used as a tool for diplomatic relations (Petrik, 2008). While at the end of the 20th century development assistance was dominated by a postcolonial and neo-colonial standpoint, in the 21st century this standpoint has stepped closer to security (Kilby, 2012). The link between security and development became widely referred to as the "security-development nexus" (Barnardo, 2020). Consequently, in recent years, there has been an increasing academic debate on the securitization of foreign aid policies, as a means to foster security within recipient societies and also as a means for the proliferation of national interests of donor countries (Brown et al., 2016). "Securitization" is broadly defined by Buzan and Hansen (2010) as "the process of presenting an issue in security terms", a more concise definition will be given later in this thesis (p.214).

With the emergence of this link between security and development and the debate surrounding it, concerns have been expressed by scholars studying foreign aid about the effects securitization could have on the achievement of development aid goals (Brown et al, 2016). Experts have argued that development goals might be undermined by security interests, in terms of conflicting objectives, differing timelines, or by money being diverted from poverty reduction goals (Peter and LoWilla, 2008; Grimm, 2009; Vegro, 2010). Accordingly, questions have emerged relating to whether the security-development nexus should be legitimised (Bernardo, 2020).

The securitization of foreign aid has evolved as security threats have changed over time, and the evolution of aid policies has raised the question of how security objectives are incorporated into development policies. While there are a few existing publications relating to how the United States (US) securitized and militarised its development aid programs, it appears that there is a lack of research relating to the European Union (EU). The EU holds a unique status among the donor community, it is one of the most prominent donors while its foreign aid donations are historically seen as apolitical. However, although this image of being apolitical with relation to its foreign aid is something still often emphasised by the EU, as a donor the EU has taken various steps which point toward the idea that it has not kept itself away from the "security-development nexus" trends. Simply in terms of narratives, the nexus

has increasingly become present in the EU's development narratives since the launch of its first security strategy, The European Security Strategy (ESS), in 2003 (Brown and Grävingholt, 2016). The ESS states that: "the challenge now is to bring together the different instruments and capabilities: European assistance programmes and the European Development Fund, military and civilian capabilities from Member States and other instruments. All of these can have an impact on our security and on that of third countries. Security is the first condition for development" (European Council, 2003, p.13).

While there is evidence of the security-development nexus becoming an influencing aspect of EU policy-making, arguments around why the nexus has been incorporated by the EU have varied. Furness and Gänzle (2016) have for example argued that new developments which follow the existence of this nexus are part of an overall effort to create more coherent and unified external policies for the EU rather than purposefully making foreign aid securitized (Furness and Gänzle, 2016). Additionally, there is a lack of academic research focusing on analysing these arguments.

This thesis will aim to contribute to the existing literature by looking at whether in a selected case study, securitization of foreign development aid provided is apparent, and if it is indeed apparent, how is it justified by the institutions of the EU. Accordingly, the main research question that this thesis will follow is: *"How does the EU justify the securitization of its foreign development aid?"*.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Role of EU Development Aid

Official Development Assistance (ODA) is the most common type of foreign aid (Williams, 2021). ODA is defined by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) as being a form of "government aid designed to promote the economic development and welfare of developing countries" (2021, p.1). ODA can be allocated in the forms of grants or loans at favourable rates and can be implemented by a wide range of actors as long as these actors follow the ultimate aim which is "to help local people" (Agence Francaise de Developppment, 2022, p.1).

Sengupta (2002) argues that ideas around what constitutes development and accordingly what fields should be tackled by the allocation of foreign aid have varied significantly since the emergence of the practice. In the 1950s and 1960s, development meant the accelerated growth of per-capita GDP (Sengupta, 2002). To achieve this, aid was targeted mainly toward funding projects and programs related to industrialisation, agricultural productivity. Removing poverty, improving education, health, promoting social development and welfare, were similarly to today already considered the ultimate goals of development policy at that time (Sengupta, 2002). But at that time, rapid growth of GDP was expected to be the principal instrument needed for achieving those goals. Later on, it was discovered that GDP growth alone would not be sufficient in most targeted countries to realise the ultimate goals related to the idea of development. Today, the allocation of ODA follows the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), set by the United Nations (UN) for the period form 2015 through 2030 in the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Agence Francaise de Developpment, 2022).

The EU and its member states together are currently funding nearly half, or more specifically around 46 percent, of ODA globally (Donor Tracker, 2022). This makes the EU and its member states the world's leading donor of development assistance (European Commission, 2022a). Which gives them a unique status on the international stage and among the donor community. The European Commission defines the broad aims of its development policy as being to "fosters sustainable development and stability in developing countries, with the ultimate goal of eradicating extreme poverty" (European Commission, 2022a, p.1). Development assistance is embedded as one of the pillars of EU external action, alongside the pillars of foreign policy, security policy, and trade policy (European Commission, 2022a).

On one hand, the EU's development policy is funded on fundamental principles which are laid down in European treaties, agreements, and strategies. On the other hand, it is also based on international objectives which were developed by the EU together with other actors. The main document which is currently in action and contains these international objectives is the above-mentioned UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which defines 17 SDGs as focus points (DG DEVCO, 2018). It is in response to and based on these 17 SDGs that in 2017 the EU developed the European Consensus on Development (United Nations, 2022). According to the European Commission, it is this consensus that defines its "shared vision and action framework for development cooperation" (DG DEVCO, 2018, p.6). It is structured

around 5Ps: People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace, and Partnership (DG DEVCO, 2018, p.6). Moreover, it highlights poverty eradication as being the primary goal of the EU's development policy. Other objectives mentioned in the consensus are mainly the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

2.2 The Emergence of the Security-Development Nexus

""Security" is the move that takes politics beyond the established rules of the game and frames the issue either as a special kind of politics or as above politics. Securitization can thus be seen as a more extreme version of politicization." (Buzan et al., 1993)*

As mentioned in the introduction, international development aid in its modern-day form is thought to have emerged as a by-product of the Cold War. During the Cold War, there was a general agreement that development aid was mainly established due to the wish of the superpowers who were in rivalry to further their interests (Cassady, 2018). With the end of the Cold War, liberal democracy appeared as being acknowledged as a superior system which, with the help of free markets, led to aid policy being freed from the constraints of the global political rivalries present during the Cold War era (Brown et al., 2016). Hopes were present that foreign aid would become less dependent on the national interests of donor countries and more focused on the fighting against poverty and inequality it advocated (Brown et al., 2016). These hopes became somewhat a reality and until the late 1980s, development aid workers were in general terms seen as international idealists who took a very neutral standpoint towards the receiving country. Emphasis also shifted from humanitarian intervention in the new wars to conflict resolution and post-war reconstruction. This involved the strengthening of the rule of law, building representative institutions, and improving state capacity (Duffield, 2007).

It is often proposed that the security-development nexus is highly correlated to trends within security policy (Hettne, 2010). In recent years, with the emergence of failed and fragile states, and new wars, lines between development promotion, national interest, and security have become blurred (Brown et al., 2016). For example, in the case of failing states, as minimal authority was hard to preserve, new forms of international violence emerged (Brown et al, 2016). Failing states became security risks for their neighbouring countries and often also to countries beyond their immediate borders (Brown et al., 2016). In this context, Duffield (2007) argued that "there is no security without development and no development without security" (p.1). In other words, he was referring to the fact that there seems to be a spill-over between

the two fields and that the two policy areas of development and security that were previously distinct have increasingly become overlapping. An argument backed by statements made by high-level official such as former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan who stated that "development and security are inextricably linked" (UN Larger Freedom, 2005). With this standpoint in mind, policies relating to the allocation of international aid became more and more resembling to security policies (Brown et al., 2016). This resemblance became firstly apparent through the engagement of Western countries in the Balkans and then by the increase in the number of military interventions by the UN in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East.

Additionally, the emergence of the "Global War on Terror" has been a particularly important event within security policy positively affecting the concretisation and intensification of the nexus (Brunton, 2013). From 9/11 onwards, the idea that merging the two policy fields would create a more coherent response to complex issues at hand became more and more mainstreamed (Hobden, 2008). However, although agreeing on the fact that the field of foreign aid is securitised, scholars studying the field seem to have quite different perspectives on the level of securitization that has been achieved. Duffield (2007) appears to think that aid is fully securitized while others such as Brown et al. (2016) contend that it is in the process of being securitized.

2.3 The Security-Development Nexus in EU Development Policy

One of the claims made in academic literature and by the EU itself is that the EU is "unique among international organizations in its capacity to contribute to all three aspects of post-conflict stabilization: security (military and policing), economic and humanitarian, and political and institutional". While the strength of and necessity for an EU military capable of projecting force outside of Europe is debatable, the strength of the EU as a civilian, or "soft", power is reflected through its experience with development policies and its role in the world as one of the top providers of foreign aid. Prior to the 1992 Maastricht Treaty, aid by the EU was programmed in accordance with "political neutrality" criteria. This legitimized country aid programs for Cold War geopolitics reasons. The EU did not openly discuss political and security issues with "Third World" partners until after the end of the Cold War, when "issues which had up to then been taboo were gradually introduced into development cooperation" (Frisch, 2008, p.23). As mentioned in the previous part of this thesis, there are strong parallels that can be traced between the "Global War on Terrorism" following the events of 9/11 and between securitization. This parallel can also be found in EU policy (Banim, 2008).

The argument that EU development aid is potentially securitized became more widely discussed from 2003 onwards. In 2003, the EU began to articulate a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and deployed military missions to Africa from 2003 onwards as part of its evolving Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) (Hout, 2010; Olsen, 2009; Orbie, 2008). During the same year, the European Council adopted the European Security Strategy (ESS). Notably, the EES openly acknowledges that securitization and development are linked by stating that security is a precondition of development and that "in many cases, economic failure is linked to political problems and violent conflict" (European Council, 2003, p.2). In addition to recognising that there is a link between security and development, the ESS identified various security and environmental challenges the EU should work towards overcoming. According to Banim (2008), the publication of the ESS meant a shift from humanitarian concerns toward the protection of the EU and its citizens as well as towards a securitized response to "state failure". Today, the ESS is the only European security strategy that has been implemented. According to Tocci (2017), the emergence of this sole security strategy can be explained by the fact that it took place right at the moment when the EU was at its strongest ever. Indeed, the rollout of the euro and the accession of Eastern European nations projected the picture of a strong European project (Tocci, 2017).

In terms of official documents issued by the European Commission, another important one to mention is the European Consensus on Development, issued by the Council, the European Parliament, and governments of member states, in 2006. It is a strategic text linked to development which emphasizes through its content that development policy is central to the EU's diplomatic relations. It also links security to development by stating that combating global poverty is a step toward building a more stable, peaceful, prosperous, and equitable world (2006, p.1). The Consensus committed to developing a common vision for EU member states to carry out bilateral policy and aid through a comprehensive approach to state fragility, conflict, and other crises (Furness and Gänzle, 2016, p. 142).

Additionally, Keukeleire et al. (2013) argue that the link between security and development can also be found in EU agreements in the field of development cooperation with long-standing partners such as the African, Pacific, and Caribbean countries (p.4). An example of these agreements is the Cotonou agreement which went into effect in 2000. In this agreement "parties acknowledge that without development and poverty reduction there will be

no sustainable peace and security, and that without peace and security there can be no sustainable development" (Cassady, 2018, p.27). The agreement further stresses that in order to address situations of fragility in a strategic and effective manner, parties need to commit themselves to facilitating preventive responses by combining diplomatic, security, and development cooperation tools (Cassady, 2018, p.27). These sections of the text and the fact that the agreement also includes clauses directly related to anti-terrorism and weapons of mass destruction non-proliferation, show clearly that there is a break from de-securitized poverty reduction in this case.

Finally, the creation of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) or the Lisbon Treaty in 2009 was also an important step towards the inclusion of securitization into EU development policy. One of the main outcomes of this treaty was the dismantling of the former pillar structure of the EU. Enabling the formulation of an integrated foreign policy across former pillars and policy domains, including security and development (Keukeleire et al., 2013). Two institutional updates reflected this evolvolution. Firstly, the establishment of the European External Actions Services (EEAS) which entrenched that development cooperation ought to be carried out within the framework of external action (European Union 2007). The second update which reflects the dissembling of the former pillars was the creation of the function of the high representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. The high representative is in addition to being at the head of the EEAS, the vice president of the European Commission. The high representative is in broad terms responsible for the external relations of the Commission as well as for the coordination of various (but not all) aspects of the EU's external action (Keukeleire et al., 2013, p.10). Overall, the TFEU also brought about institutional reforms that prioritized development policy in external affairs and addressed "long-standing weaknesses in the coherence and coordination of European development policy making" (Furness, 2012, p.74). The fact that the development policy of the EU became intertwined with its external affairs points toward the idea that the importance of foreign aid attribution was highlighted and at the same time became further linked to security policy.

3. Analytical Framework

3.1 The Copenhagen School

Along with the emergence of security studies as a separate discipline, two different branches of theories of securitization emerged. On the one hand, traditionalist scholars who put the state at the core of security studies (Diskaya, 2013). On the other hand, advocates of a critical theory of securitization who reject the state as being the primary agent of security and believe that there is a deeper or broader concept of security (Diskaya, 2013). One of the main schools within the critical theory is the Copenhagen School. The main scholars associated with the school are Barry Buzan, Ole Waever, and Jaap de Wilde. Together, they co-authored the primary book of the Copenhagen School: *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, which although written more than two decades ago still stands as the most elaborated work on the concept of securitization to date (Stritzel, 2014).

The Copenhagen School sought to broaden the conception of security by not only focusing on strictly military threats but also on non-military ones. One of the most prominent contributions of the Copenhagen School is the theory of "securitization". ""Security" is the move that takes politics beyond the established rules of the game and frames the issue either as a special kind of politics or as above politics (Buzan et al., 1998). Securitization can thus be seen as a more extreme version of politicization" (Buzan et al., 1998, p.23). Security is about survival. By defining something as a threat to a referent object's survival, a securitizing actor argues that something is above the usual political logic and claims the right to handle the issue through extraordinary means in order to ensure the survival of a referent object (Buzan et al., 1998). "Referent objects" are defined by Buzan et al. (1998) as "things that are seen to be existentially threatened and that have a legitimate claim to survival" while "securitizing actors" as "actors who securitize issues by declaring something, a referent object, existentially threatened" (p.36). Security is a self-referential practice; an issue becomes a security issue because it is labeled as one, not necessarily because a real existential threat exists (Buzan et al., 1998).

However, the fact that security is a social and intersubjective construct does not mean that everything can become easily securitized. According to Buzan et al. (1998), a discourse that presents something as an existential threat to a referent object does not by itself create securitization, it is only a securitizing move. An issue only becomes securitized when and if a targeted audience accepts it as being securitized (Buzan et al., 1998). Only by gaining acceptance from the audience can the issue be moved above the sphere of normal politics, allowing elites to break normal procedures and rules and implement emergency measures.

The research in this thesis will be guided by the theory of securitization of the Copenhagen School. Moreover, the above-mentioned work *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* by Buzan et al. (1998), will be especially important in terms of forming observations in the last section of the analysis. For the Copenhagen School, "security should be seen as a negative, as a failure to deal with issues of normal politics" (Buzan et al, 1998, p.29). In accordance with this belief, the Copenhagen School prefers de-securitization, whereby issues are moved out of the sphere of exceptionality and into the ordinary public sphere. Although the ideas of the Copenhagen School will be applied in the thesis as points for guidance, the aim of the paper will not be to condemn the securitization of EU development aid policies. While different opinions can be formulated in regards to securitization, the content of the paper will be collected with the background belief that security can in some forms and in some cases have a notable positive effect. Therefore, the aim of the thesis will rather be to take a look at the debate on securitization from the point of view of an observer.

3.2 Hypotheses

The hypotheses that this paper is going to be following are very closely based on the theory of securitization elaborated above. The theory of securitization does not only provide trends that can be followed but also hypotheses that can be confirmed or disconfirmed through the research in this thesis.

Linking the securitization theory to the literature review, it is expected that:

H1: Existential threats to referent objects will be identifiable within EU development aid policy.

H2: Strategies for achieving acceptance of securitizing moves from target audiences will be observable.

3.3 Methodology

3.3.1 Discourse Analysis

"The way to study securitization is to study discourse and political constellations"

(Buzan et al., 1998)

To gather and analyse data, the research undertaken in this thesis will make use of a qualitative research methodology. Vennix (2009) defines qualitative research as a method that employs

continuous interaction between reflection, observation, and analysis. More specifically, the qualitative research methodology used will be Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA).

According to Jørgensen and Phillips (2002), behind the word "discourse" lies the idea that language is structured according to different patterns that people's utterances follow when they take part in different domains of social life. Deriving from this, "discourse analysis" can be defined as the analysis of these patterns (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002). More specifically, discourse analysis can also be seen as the analysis of semiosis or how meaning is created and then communicated via channels of written, vocal or sign language" (Cummings et al., 2020). Discourse analysis can be found in different types and can take the form of various different methodologies as well as can be based on numerous assumptions depending on which discipline in the family of social sciences one is researching (Cummings et al., 2020). One of these types is CDA.

The primary interest and motivation of CDA is to better understand pressing social issues through the use of discourse analysis. In accordance with this aim, in CDA theories, descriptions, methods, and empirical work are selected as a function of their relevance for the realization of such a socio-political goal (Cummings, et al., 2020). An analysis conducted through CDA is ultimately a political one which is based on a hope to achieve potential change through the critical understanding of a specific situation (Cummings et al., 2020). The perspective through which one is embarking on a path towards CDA should, if possible, be the perspective of the party who in the specific situation might be suffering from dominance or inequality (Cummings et al, 2020). In other words, to be in solidarity with those who need it the most. Accordingly, the target who is critically analysed should be the entity which benefits from higher power in the specific situation; "power elites that enact, sustain, legitimate, condone or ignore social inequality and injustice" (Fairclough, 1985). Additionally, CDA also needs to focus on the discursive strategies that legitimise this control, or otherwise naturalize the social order, and especially relations of inequality (Fairclough, 1985). Generally, what should be achieved through CDA is to by the end of the analysis "understand, expose, and ultimately resist social inequality" (van Dijk, 2005, p.352). Ultimately, the success of critical discourse analysis is measured by its effectiveness and relevance or in broader terms its contribution to potential change in the selected field.

CDA has been widely used for policy document analysis by academics, some examples of such studies are the ones conducted by Hornidge (2011), Langan (2011), and Fairclough (2012). Accordingly, CDA has become acknowledged as a method that can effectively be employed by one in order to identify dominant, marginal, oppositional, or alternative discourses within policy texts, such as policy documents and speeches (Cummings et al., 2020). To further illustrate the relevance of this methodology for the present research at hand, it can be highlighted that among other, CDA has been increasingly used in publications focusing on the analysis of SDGs and the UN's Agenda 2030. A few examples would be the work of Briant and Carant (2016), Spangenberg (2017), and Cummings et al. (2018). The fact that similar research to the one which is undertaken in this thesis have made use of CDA arguably legitimises the use of this methodology as well as also legitimises the anticipation that the methodology will support the overall path towards identifying valuable findings.

3.3.2 Operationalization

The most widely recognised model for CDA is the one by Fairclough who was the first scholar to introduce a theoretical framework for CDA (The Lingwist, 2020). Fairclough (1992) introduced a three-dimensional model as an analytical framework which guides research through CDA. This three-dimension model contains three main elements: text, discursive practice, and social practice. The three dimensions are illustrated in figure 1. Fairclough (1992) notes that the elements of his model do not have to follow a defined order. It is not necessary either to give all the elements the same amount of weight in terms of focus when conducting research (Fairclough, 1992). Deriving from this, the implementation of the model can be adjusted according to the specificities of the research at hand.
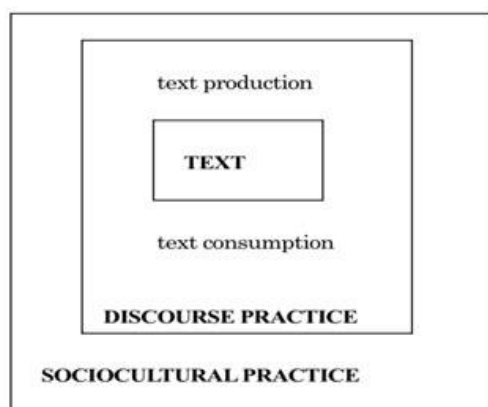

Figure 1: Critical Discourse Analysis Framework by Fairclough

For the purpose of this thesis, it is necessary to elaborate on what each of these three specific elements identified by Fairclough actually entail.

The first dimension of the framework is discourse as "text". This dimension refers to linguistic features such as for example the vocabulary used (expression, metaphors), the grammar (transitivity, modality), the cohesion (conjunctions), and structure of the text (Dremel, 2014). For Fairclough (1995), texts "may be written or oral" (p.57). When a text is analysed, the focus should be directed toward "large-scale organizational properties of interactions, upon which the orderly functioning and control of interactions depend" (Fairclough, 1992, p.234). Furthermore, interest should lay in looking at agents who control interactions (Fairclough, 1995).

The second dimension of the framework is discourse as "discursive practice". This dimension refers to an analysis of how texts are produced, distributed, and consumed (Dremel, 2014). When analysing the grammar, vocabulary, or structure of texts, the attention of the researcher should focus on speech acts, coherence, and intertextuality. In other words, aspects of a text which connect it to the context (Blommaert and Bulcaen, 2000).

Finally, the third dimension of the framework is discourse as "social practice". Social practice for Fairclough (1995) entails "the social and cultural goings-on which the communicative event is a part of" (p. 57). In other words, the ideological trends and hegemonic processes in which discourse participates (Dremel, 2014). Fairclough (1992) argues that the objective of social practice analysis is to explore how the discursive practice affects the social practice and vice versa.

Policy documents, as discussed by Fairclough, are "... formed, disseminated and legitimised within complex chains and networks of events (committee meetings, reports, parliamentary debates, press statements and press conferences, etc.)" (Fairclough, 2013, p. 244-245). Based on the steps which are elaborated above, as well as based on the chosen theory; the securitization by the Copenhagen School, questions will be identified and posed to the selected material to be analysed. It is expected that these questions will provide adequate guidance for the analysis. Moreover, the analytical questions should be seen as empirical indicators of the research (Esaiasson et al., 2012). The selected questions can be found in the

following table. It is expected that Phase 1 and Phase 2 will be interlinked in the analysis section due to the nature and aim of this thesis.

Copenhagen School Securitization Theory		Referent object	Existential threat
Critical Discourse Analysis	Phase 1 - Text	**What is the referent object?** How are referent objects framed in the text?	**What is the threat?** How are threats framed in the text?
	Phase 2 - Discursive Practice	How are texts produced, distributed, and consumed?	
	Phase 3 - Social Practice	How does the discourse on referent objects relate to broader social practices?	How does the discourse on threats relate to broader social practices?

Table 1: Analytical Strategy

3.3.3 Data Collection

The study is going to focus on data available in documents relating to a single case study, making it a single case study analysis (Willis, 2014). There are various existing definitions of case studies. Gerring (2007) for example defines the case study approach as an "intensive study of a single unit or a small number of units (the cases), for the purpose of understanding a larger class of similar units (a population of cases)" (p.37). A case study has been chosen as research design since case-study analysis is recognised as being the most typical research design when looking at studies on securitization (Balzacq, 2011). Additionaly, the choice of a single case study analysis also rests on the idea that it will allow an in-depth analysis of a phenomenon. An in-depth analysis can according to Stake (1995) reveal nuances which otherwise would not be observable.

The single case study that will be used is the case of Nigeria or more specifically aid flows from the European Commission to Nigeria. The choice of Nigeria as a case study rests on two main aspects. The first reason being that Nigeria is a most-likely case study. Most-likely case studies are those where a theory is considered as being likely to provide a good explanation of the phenomenon that is studied (Bennett and Elman, 2010). The specificities as to why Nigeria is indeed a most-likely case study will be elaborated on in the first section of the analysis. The second reason being that up to date, most research on securitization of foreign policy, in general, focuses on the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. Accordingly, the choice of a country located outside of the MENA region will add to the existing literature in the broader field of securitization.

Waever (1989) argues that when studying the phenomenon of securitization, the analysis should focus on texts which "*are central in the sense that if a security discourse is operative in this community, it should be expected to materialize in this text because this occasion is sufficiently important*" (p.190). Buzan et al. (1998) mention that securitizing moves are likely to be observable in documents representing the official statements of a securitizing actor. Therefore, data will be collected from primary sources. More specifically, the materials that will be analysed are official policy documents relating to development aid, published by the European Commission. The documents analysed are all available for the broader public on the website of the European Commission. The number of documents analysed, rests on the fact that studies of the same length which utilise similar types of documents for the analysis appear to in average use around 20 to 25 documents.

Documents relating to two different threads of aid allocation will be analysed. Firstly, policy documents related to aid allocated by the European Commission's Directorate-General for International Partnerships (DG INTPA) formerly known as Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO). DG INTPA is the central department of the EU "responsible for formulating the EU's international partnership and development policy, with the ultimate goal to reduce poverty, ensure sustainable development, and promote democracy, human rights, and the rule of law across the world" (European Commission, 2020, p.1). The documents which will be analysed in this research issued by DG INTPA are mainly the Multi-Annual Indicative Programme for 2014-2020 as well as for 2021-2027, the Annual Action Plans for the years 2017, 2018, 2021, and all Action Documents

available in the online library of DG INTPA. Secondly, in addition to the policy documents issued by DG INTPA, the Strategic Orientation Documents, as well as the Action Fiches of the European Union Emergency Trust Fund (EUTF) programs in Nigeria will also be analysed. What makes EUTF documents relevant for this study is the fact that it is a source of foreign aid which has been established by the Commission in 2015, at the peak of the migration crisis, and the European Commission clearly stated on its website that the aim of the EUTF is to achieve "stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa".

The Multi-Annual Indicative Programme of DG INTPA and the Strategic Orientation Document of the EUTF defines the overall strategy and the principles the aid allocated aims to follow as well as achieve. They also provide information on the broader context and corresponding needs for the implementation of aid in relation to other existing larger-scale strategies. The Annual Action Plans, Action Documents, and Action Fiches on the other hand provide a more specific view into what projects in Nigeria were or are specifically focused on. These documents also often include more specific information on the theme, objectives, implementers, and budget of the projects.

Donor	Type	Year	Title
DG INTPA (referenced as European Commission)	Commission Implementing Decision	2014	National Indicative Programme 2014-2020
	Commission Implementing Decision	2017a	Annual Action Plan 2017
	Commission Implementing Decision	2018a	Annual Action Plan 2018
	Commission Implementing Decision	2021a	Multi-Annual Indicative Programme 2021-2027

	Commission Implementing Decision	2021b	Annual Action Plan 2021
	Action Document	2015a	Action Document for "Technical Cooperation Facility IV-Nigeria"
	Action Document	2015b	Action Document for "Support to the Office of the National Authority Officer IV-Nigeria"
	Action Document	2016a	Action Document for "EU Support to the Health Sector in Nigeria Phase I"
	Action Document	2016b	Action Document: EU Support to Strengthening Resilience in Northern Nigeria
	Action Document	2016c	Action Document for "Contribution to the African Investment Facility (AfIF) in Support of the Energy Sector in Nigeria"
	Action Document	2017b	Action Document for "EU Support to Democratic Governance in Nigeria (EU-SDGN)"
	Action Document	2017c	Action Document for "Second Contribution to the African Investment Facility (AfIF) in Support of the Energy Sector in Nigeria"
	Action Document	2017d	Action Document for "Support for Criminal Justice Response to Terrorism and Violent Extremism"
	Action Document	2017e	Action Document for "Agents for Citizen-driven Transformation (ACT)"
	Action Document	2018b	Action Document for "11th EDF Support Measures: Public Outreach on the Implementation of Key National Strategies & EU-Nigeria Relations"
	Action Document	2019	Action Document for "Support for Reintegration and Reconciliation of Former Armed Non-State Combatants and Boko Haram Associates"
EUTF	Strategic Orientation Document	2015	The European Union Emergency Trust Fund for Stability and Addressing Root Causes of Irregular Migration and Displaced Persons in Africa.

	Action Fiche	2017a	Multi-sector support to the displaced in Adamawa and Borno States.
	Action Fiche	2017b	Investing in the Safety and Integrity of Nigerian Girls (I-SING).
	Action Fiche	2017c	Enhancing state and community level conflict management capability in North Eastern Nigeria
	Action Fiche	2017d	Strengthening Migration Governance in Nigeria and Sustainable Reintegration of Returning Migrants.
	Action Fiche	2017e	Strengthening Psychosocial Support, Mental Health, Reintegration and Protection Services for children in Borno, including children associated with Boko Haram.
	Action Fiche	2017f	EU Support to Response, Recovery and Resilience in Borno State.
	Action Fiche	2020	EU Support to the United Nations 'One UN Response Plan to COVID-19 in Nigeria'.

Table 2: List of Documents used in the Analysis

3.4 Limitations

It is important for transparency towards the reader to identify the main potential shortcoming of this thesis.

In terms of methodology, although discourse analysis appears to be the best fit for the research in this thesis, and as previously mentioned is one if not the most acknowledged methodologies for research in the field of securitization studies, as every possible method of analysis, discourse analysis is expected to have limitations. Among other, critics tend to question the extent of the knowledge that can be produced through a discourse analysis as well as what the results could be used for, which is part of a wider debate on the nature of social scientific knowledge (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002). Moreover, Boréus and Bergström (2019) mention that critiques also tend to contend for the non-objective approach of discourse analysis

to be an important limitation of the method. Furthermore, there is also the question of the neutrality of the researcher which is often mentioned as an obstacle of discourse analysis. Jørgensen and Phillips (2002) highlight "that the researcher can never just be a fly on the wall" (p.144). In other words, they argue that the research will inevitably be influenced by a "mental model" which consists of different factors influencing the person conducting the research such as for example knowledge, experience, identity, and relations (Van Dijk, 2011). Along the same line of potential biases, discourse analysis is said to often failing to approach texts systematically and accordingly potentially leading to the researcher's subjective interpretation rather than capturing the "actual" social phenomena (Breeze, 2011).

In terms of limitations specific to CDA, it has been argued that one of the main limitations derives from a lack of existing structured techniques or guidelines for researchers to follow (Mogashoa, 2014). Although Fairclough himself addressed this issue, he does not appear to see it as a disadvantage that would delegitimise a research. Rather, as mentioned previously, Fairclough (2006) argues that there is no explicit rule in ordering the three elements of his structure (discursive practices, texts, and social practices), and it is up to each researcher to decide based on the purposes and emphases of the study.

Although these limitations regarding the chosen methodology need to be recognised both by the writer and the reader as potentially affecting the outcome of the research, it is expected that since this thesis is following a concrete theory, the above-mentioned limitations will be to some extent remedied.

It is also important to highlight potential limitations of the data that will be analysed. All of the documents analysed in this research were produced by the EU, the agent which is expected to act as a securitizing actor. The drafting and publication of these documents was fully, or almost fully, in the hands of the EU. Therefore, statements reflected in the selected documents could potentially be representing only the surface of the standpoint of the EU, or the parts of its standpoint it wants the public to see. Although this can be a limitation, it is an aspect that is not necessarily negative for the purpose of the research at hand.

4. Analysis

4.1 Case Study

4.1.1 EU Influence in the Sahel

According to Eurostat, the population of sub-Saharan migrants making their way to Europe has reached a number of around 1 million asylum applicants between the years 2010 and 2017. In addition to asylum seekers, an additional number of Sub-Saharan Africans moved to European countries as international students or resettled refugees through family connections, a number of individuals not counted in the around 1 million officially registered asylum seekers. The factors behind why people decide to leave their home country and migrate to Europe vary from country to country as well as from individual to individual. The main factors stemming from the situation in the specific situation of the Nigerian case will be elaborated on in the next section of this thesis.

Within the Sub-Saharan region of Africa, stretching from Senegal to Chad, is the Sahel. The Sahel received intensified attention from the EU after a series of destabilising events emerged in the region. Although it is believed that European concerns for the area have existed since around 2008, if not since earlier years, the year 2012 saw one of the main highly destabilising events with the Tuareg rebellion in northern Mali (Lebovich, 2018). This was followed by the jihadist occupation of the area (Lebovich, 2018). The year 2015 is today seen as the year when the European migration crisis as a defined phenomenon started. The influx of refugees and migrants to Europe reached staggering new levels during 2015 (Spindler, 2015). The phenomenon dominated headlines and started intense political debates, not only within the EU but globally. In December 2015, since the beginning of the same year, over 911,000 refugees and migrants made it to Europe, while around 3,550 more people passed away during the journey (Spindler, 2015). This number was the highest the continent has experienced since World War II (Dumon et al., 2015). Over 75 percent of this number was classified as individuals who fled conflict and persecution (Spindler, 2015). Although the largest number of migrants in 2015 came from Syria, an important number of migrants came also from countries in the Sahel. Deriving from this, the Sahel has been seen by some of the EU member states as an area of the world where they believe they must fight a key battle for the future of the European project, viewing the stabilisation of the region as key to heading off populist nationalism at home (Lebovich, 2018).

Migration from Africa to Europe has increasingly been framed as a security threat to Europe since 2015 (Venturi, 2017). Along the same lines, arguments started arising about the EU's integrated strategy for the Sahel being centered on the idea that the distinct fields of

security, development, and governance are inherently intertwined. Migration is overall acknowledged as an important component of the European Union's external action, as set out in the EU Global Strategy for Foreign and Security Policy. Developing more effective migration policies for Europe and its partners is a priority. In November 2015, Heads of States of the European Union and of the Africa Union gathered together at the Valletta Summit on migration. The aim of the summit was to strengthen cooperation between the two Unions and address challenges of migration with common solutions (European Council, 2019). The Valletta Summit recognised migration as a shared responsibility for countries of origin, transit, and destination (European Council, 2019).

Additionally, in June 2016, the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice-President of the Commission (HRVP) and the Commission proposed, under the European Agenda on Migration, a new Partnership Framework with third countries. This was endorsed by the European Council as well during the same month. The Council called for the swift implementation of the framework, starting with a limited number of five priority countries. The countries identified as the first priorities for action were, as discussed in the Valletta Summit, important countries of origin or transit of irregular migration. Some of the selected countries are also hosting a large number of refugees and are confronted with situations of internal displacement. Moreover, most of them face particular development and security challenges.

The five priority countries selected were Ethiopia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, and Senegal. As this thesis focuses on countries in the Sahel. Out of these five priority countries, Nigeria has been chosen as a case study for this thesis. The following section will elaborate on the reasons why the EU selected Nigeria as one of its priorities, as highlighted in the first Progress Report on the Partnership Framework with third countries under the European Agenda on Migration by the European Commission.

4.1.2 Nigeria

Nigeria is the most populous country and largest economy in Africa with a continuously rapidly growing population. Politically, Nigeria is a country which is multi-ethnic and has a culturally diverse federation of 36 autonomous states as well as a Federal Capital Territory (The World Bank, 2021). The political landscape is dominated by the ruling All Progressives Congress party (APC). The current president, Muhammadu Buhari secured a second term in 2019. The

APC controls the executive arm of government and holds the majority of the seats both within the Senate and within the House of Representatives in parliament (The World Bank, 2021). In addition, 23 out of 36 State Governors are part of the APC (The World Bank, 2021).

Nigeria is facing various challenges in terms of security. Figure 2 provides an overview of the main security challenges registered in the previous years and their geographic location. Boko Haram and the Islamic State in West Africa which originally developed from Boko Haram are recognised as being Nigeria's most serious security threats (Duerksen, 2021). In 2015, the Nigerian government launched large-scale offensives with the aim of gaining back territories occupied by insurgency groups. This led to violent events increasing to at least the double than prior to 2015 (Duerksen, 2021). In September 2020, the Nigerian air force admitted that it had carried out an airstrike on civilian population in Yobe (Roth, 2021). Instances such as this one have led to the International Criminal Court (ICC) to conduct an investigation for war crimes conducted by the Nigerian security forces in the Boko-Haram related conflict situation (Roth, 2021).

Nigeria is perceived as an important origin of migration flows to the EU (European Commission, 2022). At the peak of the global migration crisis, around 23,000 cases of irregular border crossings from Nigeria took place in 2015 and nearly the same number with 22,800 cases in the first eight months of 2016. In addition to the military conflict related to insurgency, according to Adhikari et al. (2021), this surge in irregular migration from the country is also a direct consequence of worsening employment options at home as well as a lack of regular migration channels to find work overseas. The EU and Nigeria signed a Common Agenda for Migration and Mobility (CAMM) in March 2015. The aim of this common agenda was to enhance cooperation between the two parties by providing a solid framework for this cooperation. The issues covered were mainly: legal migration pathways to the EU, notably through the recognition of qualifications and circular migration, facilitation of intra-African mobility, investment in critical infrastructure and creating economic opportunities, and employment in key sectors such as agriculture (Castillejo, 2017). Overall, the CAMM created a direction for a migration dialogue between the EU and Nigeria (Castillejo, 2017). One of the main priorities of the CAMM was the initiation of negotiations for an EU-Nigeria Readmission Agreement (Castillejo, 2017).
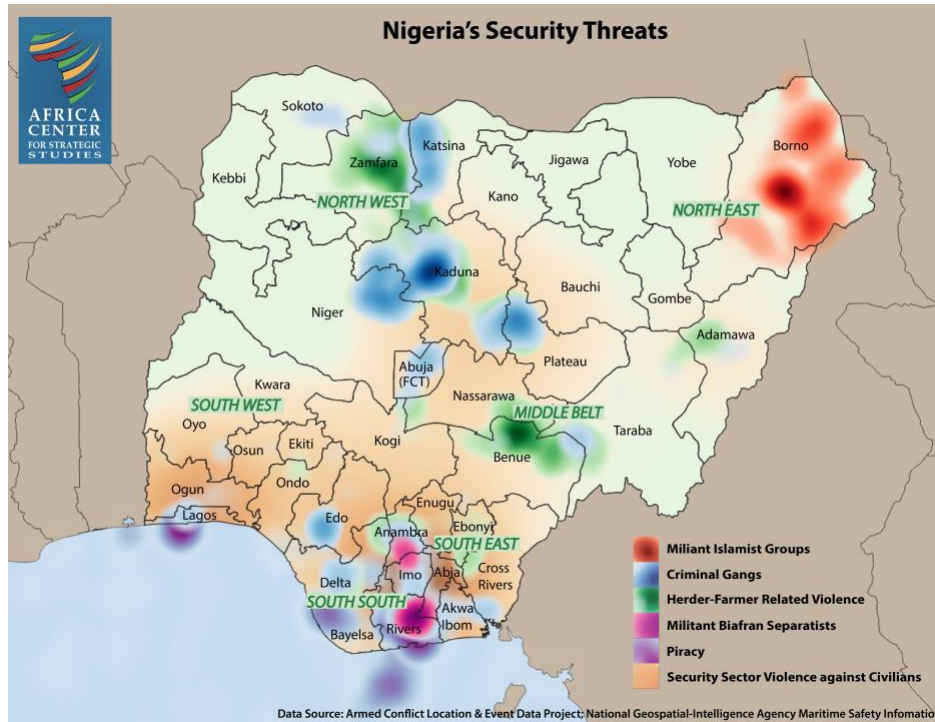
Figure 2: Geographic Concentration of Threats in Nigeria. Composite data from 2018-2021.

4.2 Referent Objects

According to Buzan et al. (1998), referent objects are "things that are seen to be existentially threatened and that have a legitimate claim to survival" (p.36). Moreover, Buzan et al. (1998) argue that in principle, anything could be constructed as being a referent object. What becomes portrayed as a referent object only depends on what the securitizing actor wants to portray as being so (Buzan et al, 1998). In the documents analysed for this study, the EU appeared to be using various objects which are framed as facing a risk or being under threat and therefore needing protection. These objects appear to be classifiable under a few broader terms which will be elaborated on in this part of the thesis. These broader themes can then be seen as representing the overarching entities that appear to be needing protection against a threat persisting in Nigeria according to the EU.

The main observable umbrellas of referent objects present in the analysed documents are the following:

4.2.1 Referent Object I: North East Region of Nigeria

(1) "The **security situation** in the country is **of concern especially in the north-east**." (European Commission, 2014)

(2) "…a large **segment of the Borno** population suffers with little or **no access to clean water, sanitation, primary health care, shelter, education, and is food insecure**. (European Commission, 2017a)

(3) "An estimated 14.8 million people are affected by the conflict in the three **north-eastern states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa**." (EUTF, 2017a)

(4) "the situation in **areas of return** is described as disastrous: families have **lost all of their agricultural tools, seeds and livestock or other livelihood supplies and have limited opportunities for economic development**. **Host communities** are also under strain as **food prices increase** and **accessibility to markers and commodities is restricted**." (EUTF, 2017a)

(5) "…North Eastern Nigeria currently has the **highest number of violent deaths** in Africa and the **highest number of Internally Displaced People** in the Sahel and Lake Chad region." (EUTF, 2017c)

(6) "…sustainable **peace and security and development** to the north-east and the need for a phased approach emphasising a stabilisation phase **before the start of full recovery action leading on to development investment**." (European Commission, 2016b)

(7) "The EU has committed to apply the **humanitarian-development nexus approach** to EU support to Yobe, to ensure **coherence between all political, security, development and humanitarian instruments** at our disposal." (European Commission, 2018a)

(8) "…this project is in **full conformity with** the recently completed joint **Government of Nigeria/EU/World Bank/UN** Recovery and Peace Building Assessment of needs in north-east Nigeria…" (European Commission, 2016b)

The north-east region of Nigeria being under threat and therefore a referent object appears as a straight forward observation to be made as reference is made to it in all of the 25 documents

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analysed. The examples given above are descriptive and clearly illustrate the fact that the north-east of Nigeria is indeed portrayed as a referent object in the documents. Most of the texts use the wording "north-east" while some of the texts are more specific as to what smaller regions within the broader north-east region they will put their focus on. Quote number 2 for example refers to "Borno" while quote number 3 refers to "Borno, Yobe and Adamawa" instead of "north-east".

As we can see on the map of geographic concentration of threats in Nigeria, figure 2, the north-east and especially the region of Borno is indeed a region facing an important security threat. However, the same map shows that there are various other security threats in several other regions of Nigeria as well. The EU does not appear to deny the fact that there is an issue of security in other regions as well in addition to the region it chose to focus on. In quote number 1 the discourse used refers to a "security situation in the country" as being "of concern" followed by a broad justification of the choice of the focus region with a discourse stating the security situation is of concern "especially in the north-east". Additionally, quote number 5 provides a more specific and arguably more legitimate justification of the choice of the north-east region by highlighting that among all the regions, the north-east is the one with the "highest number of violent deaths" and the "highest number of Internally Displaced People".

The European Commission is rather clear regarding the threats or danger the north-east region of Nigeria is facing. Among others, in the above-mentioned quotes we can see a reference to the "security", "clean water", "sanitation", "health care", "shelter", "education", "food insecure", "displacement", "livelihoods", "livestock", and "economic development" of the population in the region (quote 2 and 4).

Quote number 6 gives a picture of the intervention logic behind the action by the EU in the north-east. Mainly the reasoning that "sustainable peace and security and development" are a prerequisite for "recovery" followed by further "development investment" in the region. By arguing that there is a need to achieve "peace and security" with EU projects, the EU is undergoing the move of securitizing the aim of its projects. This securitization move is also apparent through the discourse of quote number 7 where a clear link is made between the fields of "political, security, development and humanitarian instruments" as well as the need to use all of these instruments is highlighted.

An interesting observation to be made in relation to the legitimacy of EU actions if the north-east is the fact that in several of the documents analysed, reference is made to EU actions following or being complementary to both the aims and actions of the Government of Nigeria as well as the one of other major donor organisations operating in the region. This point can be illustrated by quote number 8 where the discourse touches on a project in question being in "full conformity with the recently completed joint Government of Nigeria/EU/World Bank/UN Recovery and Peace Building Assessment". Plausibly, the fact that EU intervention in the north-east is in line with other actors, especially the Government of Nigeria is a strong aspect for the legitimisation of actions. However, it should be mentioned that no reference is made to the needs of local communities in the north-east as portrayed by the local population and not by large national or international organisations.

4.2.2   Referent Object II: Women and Youth

(9) "…55,000 **children are in famine-like conditions** in Borno State and 300,000 will **suffer from severe acute malnutrition** worsened by **reduced immunity to illnesses**" (EUTF, 2020)

(10) "For some women, **Boko Haram provided an alternative to a traditionally patriarchal, honour-bound and conservative society**. However, **Boko Haram has its own gendered social hierarchies** and, for some, the perceptions of empowerment within the group were in **stark contrast to the violence and restrictions they experienced**." (European Commission, 2019)

(11) "…**youth are vulnerable to the drivers of violent extremism (VE) and insurgency recruitment as well as youth being victims of VE**." (European Commission, 2019)

(12) "…if these activities can help **strengthen the capacity of community based conflict management institutions and address the particular needs of women and youth** most affected by the violence, it will **contribute to strengthening the resilience** of such communities and **prevent their relapse into violence**." (EUTF, 2017c)

(13) "…**aligned with the priority actions outlined in the 2015 Valetta Action Plan** which include: boosting socio-economic development particularly among youth…" (EUTF, 2017c)

(14) "…with the **Ford Foundation, Mercy Corps** is also participating in a study on youth in North East Nigeria and what makes them join extremist groups or makes them vulnerable to forced recruitment, which should provide **valuable insights**…" (EUTF, 2017b)

Women and Youth being under threat and therefore being a referent object also appears as a straight forward observation to be made. Out of the 25 documents analysed, only one does not contain "women" as referent object while one different document does not contain "youth" as referent object. The decision to tackle women and youth as one referent object rather than two separate ones rests on the fact that the "needs of women and youth" (quote 12) often appear as similar or interconnected in the discourse.

Although they are strongly linked together in the discourse, the threats they face can differ or one of the two concepts can be portrayed as being affected by a threat to a larger extent than the other. In quote number 9 for example reference is made to "famine like conditions" and the negative impacts it has on youth. While in quote number two reference is made to "traditionally patriarchal, honour-bound and conservative society" which is portrayed as especially threatening for women. However, it appears that the two groups are facing the same threat in terms of security, a threat which although referred to in different terms such as "violence", "violent extremism", "insurgency", "conflict", "extremist groups", "Boko Haram" is present in all of the documents and portrayed as the biggest threat to the wellbeing and existence of the two groups (quotes 10, 11, 12, 14).

Quote number 12 visualises the intervention logic of the EU by stating that if its "activities can help strengthen the capacity of community based conflict management institutions and address the particular needs of women and youth most affected by the violence" with the ultimate aim of "strengthening the resilience of such communities and prevent their relapse into violence". This intervention logic is rather interesting to reflect on as it not only portrays women and youth as victims of threats but as threats themselves. By doing so the EU is not only making a securitizing move towards the threats faced by the referent objects but also towards the referent objects themselves. Quote number 11 "youth are vulnerable to the drivers of violent extremism (VE) and insurgency recruitment as well as youth being victims

of VE" as well as part of quote number 10 "For some women, Boko Haram provided an alternative to a traditionally patriarchal, honour-bound and conservative society" provide further discourse which backs up this observation.

Similarly, to the case of referent object I, the EU also links its intervention related to referent object II to projects or actions undertaken by other major donor organisations. Quote number 14 illustrates this by touching upon a study by "Ford Foundation, Mercy Corps". Moreover, the projects or actions related to referent Object II are also linked to the National Government of Nigeria. Although this link is not made directly by referring to projects fully initiated by the Government as it was done in the case of referent object I, quote number 13 for example states that actions are "aligned with the priority actions outlined in the 2015 Valetta Action Plan". The Government of Nigeria has been involved in the drafting of the Valetta Action Plan, therefore there is a link but arguably an indirect one. Here, similarly as done for referent object I, it can also be contended that the fact that EU intervention in the north-east is in line with other actors, especially the Government of Nigeria is a strong aspect for legitimisation. However, again no reference is made to the needs of local communities as described by the local population and not large national or international organisations.

4.2.3   Referent Object III: European Interest

(15) "As a major oil producing nation and the largest economy in Africa, **Nigeria is of strategic importance to the European Union**." (European Commission, 2014)

(16) "…tackle some of the **critical issues for both Nigeria and the EU**, such as **irregular migration**, **criminality** and **violent extremism** and **armed conflict**." (National Indicative Programme 2021-2027)

(17) "**Nigeria is a major hub and entry point for European trade to the region**… **insecurity has profound effects on European companies**…it is therefore in the **EU's interest to actively address the root causes**..." (European Commission, 2021)

(18) "West Africa remains a hotbed for **irregular migration** and **trafficking** facilitated by **Nigerian crime syndicates, which are increasingly gaining territory in Europe**" (European Commission, 2021)

In addition to the two referent objects mentioned previously, a third referent object is worth touching upon following the purpose of this thesis. Although European interests are only portrayed as being under threat and therefore being a referent object in two of the texts analysed, the fact that the EU refers to itself as being threatened can be seen as somewhat controversial in the case of aid allocated for the development of a foreign country.

Nigeria is portrayed by the discourse as having a high importance for the EU. This importance can be illustrated by quote number 15 which points to Nigeria having a "strategic importance" for the EU as well as by quote number 17 pointing to the idea that "Nigeria is a major hub and entry point for European trade". Threats faced by EU interest appear to be closely linked to this concept of importance Nigeria is portrayed as having for the EU. "Insecurity", "irregular migration", "criminality", "violent extremism", "armed conflict", "crime syndicates", and "trafficking" are mentioned as posing a threat to EU interest (quotes 16, 17, 18). It can be contended that all of these threats are closely linked to issues of security and accordingly the observation of a securitization of EU actions can be made for actions related to referent object III as well.

It is interesting to highlight as an observation that the EU portrays its actions relating to referent object III as being of importance not only for the EU itself but also for Nigeria. This can be visualised by the discourse in quote number 16: "critical issues for both Nigeria and the EU". However, while it was the case for referent object I and referent object II, no direct reference is made in the discourse to the actions of other donor organisations or the Nigerian government as being in line with the actions of the EU for referent object III.

4.3 Threats

Existential threats are perceived as being harmful to the existence of a referent object defined by the securitizing actors in question (Buzan et al., 1998). In other words, in the context of the Copenhagen school's theory of securitization, threats do not necessarily have to be entities that exist objectively, but they are rather entities that are subjective to the securitizing actors, who, through a securitizing move, would try to make them intersubjective (Sjöstedt, 2017). This entails that existential threats can be subject to shaping by securitizing actors in order to make these threats convincing claims for securitization to the audience of a specific document. Deriving from this logic, by defining an entity as a threat to a referent object, the use of

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emergency or larger scale response to these threats than previously observed as being the norm is legitimised for a securitizing actor by discourse (Buzan et al., 1998).

The main observable umbrellas of threats present in the analysed documents are the following:

4.3.1 Threat I: Boko Haram

(19) "In 2015, **Boko Haram** was named the **most deadly global terrorist organisation**." (European Commission, 2018b)

(20) "**Insecurity** in northern states due to **Boko Haram terrorism** and the current massive **security response**" (European Commission, 2014)

(21) "Since the terrorist group, **Boko Haram**, came to prominence in 2009, it has **evolved** from a threat which affected primarily Nigeria to a **transnational terrorist challenge threatening the security** of civilian populations" (European Commission, 2017d)

(22) "**Tackling the root causes of conflict**, the effects of displacement and forced migration from **North Eastern Nigeria** is **critical for the stability of the whole region**." (EUTF, 2017c)

(23) "…the **EU has a role to play in responding to security crises**, in **providing lifesaving assistance** to the population affected conflict and natural disasters, as well as in the democratic and economic development of Nigeria." (European Commission, 2021)

(24) "A new **government has been elected with a change agenda and the commitment to tackle the the issues of corruption, insurgency** from the Islamist Militant Group, Boko Haram..." (European Commission, 2015a)

(25) "…Boko Haram was added to the **Security Council's Al-Qaida Sanctions list**…Recent **UN reports and Security Council resolutions** have highlighted **sexual violence as a terrorist tactic** and the **recruitment and exploitation of children** as major aspects of the terrorist threat." (European Commission, 2017d)

Out of the 25 documents analysed, only two do not refer to the Boko Haram insurgency as being a threat. Even in documents where the project at hand is not directly related to issues caused by this threat, reference is still made to it in more general sections of the papers such as the "National, sector context" illustrating the broader situation in a receiving country. Accordingly, the Boko Haram insurgency can be identified as being one of the main threats portrayed in the discourse by the EU. The agent of the texts, the European Commission links "Boko Haram" directly to "insecurity" (quote number 20) as well as uses wording such as for example "most deadly" (quote number 19) to stress the intensity of the threat.

The discourse used in the documents stresses not only the idea that a threat is existing but also that this threat has been increasing. Quote number 21 illustrates this finding with a reference to the Boko Haram insurgency having "evolved from a threat which affected primarily Nigeria to a transnational terrorist challenge". Moreover, looking at the same quote, specifically the "transnational terrorist challenge" part, it becomes apparent that the EU finds it not only important to portray the threat as increasing but also as a threat that has a potential to go beyond the borders of Nigeria and pose a challenge to other nations as well. Arguably, the wording "transnational" is able to alarm those not directly affected by the situation within Nigerian borders to a greater degree.

Through the texts, an extensive list of areas affected by the Boko Haram insurgency is given including for example the areas: "access to clean water, sanitation, primary health care, shelter, education, and is food insecure" (quote number 2), "security" (quote number 21), and "stability" (quote number 22). The two latest areas make a convincing case to contend that since there is a direct link to security present in the discourse, there is a securitization move from the securitizing actor in the case of actions towards Boko Haram. Furthermore, the EU also makes a clear link between the threat caused by Boko Haram and the referent objects previously identified in this thesis, especially referent object I and referent object II. Quote number 22 gives an example of a reference to the "North Eastern" region of Nigeria being affected by the conflict while quote number 25 refers to women and youth being under threat by stating the issue of "sexual violence" and "exploitation of children" as an effect of the Boko Haram insurgency. Accordingly, the EU justifies, in part, its actions against Boko Haram by stressing that doing so would have a positive effect on the referent objects.

In terms of justification of actions, in addition to the previously mentioned points, it is interesting to also mention the tone the EU is using in the discourse. Quote number 23, with the use of the wording "the EU has a role to play…in providing lifesaving assistance" portrays a necessity of actions from the part of the EU. Additionally, the wording "the EU has a role to play in responding to security crises" from the same quote appears to point to the idea that no matter what type of security crisis a population or region is facing, the EU has a duty to act against a threat. The wording seems to portray a confidence from the part of the EU that its actions of intervention in case of a security crisis are in fact legitimate.

Throughout the texts, the EU makes reference to the importance other actors also put on tackling the threat caused by Boko Haram. In quote number 24, the discourse highlights the fact that among other reasons, one of the main reasons why citizens elected the government in office was because of their "change agenda and the commitment to tackle the issues of corruption, insurgency". This discourse appears to show that the actions of the EU are legitimate both in terms of being in accordance with the wishes of the local government and in terms of what local people wish for. Additionally, the EU also highlights the legitimacy of its actions in terms of what is seen as appropriate actions by the donor community. In quote 25 for example reference to the UN Security Council is made and the fact that Boko Haram is sanctioned by the Security Council. As mentioned in the case of the referent objects, linking its actions to national and international actors and their actions to some extent gives a sense of legitimacy to the actions of the EU aiming to tackle threat I.

4.3.2 Threat II: Weak Democratic Institutions

(26) "…a still **fragile democratic system poses *risks* to stability and reform** outcomes." (European Commission, 2014)

(27) "Nigeria's ability **to be a positive regional and continental player on governance**, security and stability **is contingent upon the unity, representativeness and the health of its democracy**..." (European Commission, 2021b)

(28) "…the **lack of accountability and respect for the rule of law and human rights** have created a **conducive environment** in the **Northeast** for the **emergence of Boko Haram**." (European Commission, 2017e)

(29) "**Boko Haram has exploited the loss of hope** amongst communities **failed by the Government**" (European Commission, 2018a)

(30) "it is **urgent to strengthen democratic institutions** and the electoral process, ensuring the conditions for fair and credible elections with meaningful participation of all sectors of society, including **women and youth** and marginalised groups." (European Commission, 2014-2020)

(31) "A Donor Coordination Committee, comprising international development partners…will meet quarterly or as required to ensure **coordination and complementarity within and among development partners** to improve effectiveness of democratic support..." (European Commission, 2017a)

(32) "The European Union - African, Caribbean and Pacific (EU/ACP) Partnership ("Cotonou") Agreement…constitute the **legal basis for the partnership between EU and Nigeria**. Article 6 of the treaty defines **electoral assistance as a key action for promoting the core values of promotion of human rights, democratic principles and rule of law**." (European Commission, 2017b)

In addition to the threat by the Boko Haram insurgency, the European Commission also refers to weak democratic institutions as being a threat that is of concern and needs to be tackled through the projects described in the documents analysed. While the Boko Haram insurgency is presented in almost all of the documents as being a threat to consider, weak democratic institutions appear in fewer of the documents. However, the number of documents is still significant enough to mention it as a prominent threat in the discourse of the securitizing actor.

The EU also discusses this threat in a direct way in the discourse, by for example using the wording "a still fragile democratic system poses risks" (quote 26). Additionally, the documents portray the need to tackle the issue of weak democratic institutions as "urgent" (quote 30). This sense of urgency of the matter is linked to the argument that "security and stability" in a country depend on the "representativeness and the health of its democracy" (quote 27). By making a link between democracy and security, the EU is here again making a

securitizing move of its actions in terms of actions toward the creation of a stronger democratic system in Nigeria.

With regards to weak democratic institutions being a threat to "security and stability", the EU appears to specifically put a strong emphasis on the link between the presence of a weak democratic system in Nigeria and the emergence of the Boko Haram insurgency. Arguing that the atmosphere created due to the governmental system in place in Nigeria was a "conducive environment in the Northeast for the emergence of Boko Haram" (quote 28). According to the discourse in the text, Boko Haram was able to take advantage of a "loss of hope amongst communities failed by the Government" (quote 29). Conceivably, a wording such as the "loss of hope" points to the fact that in the eyes of the EU, the situation created by weak democracy was alarming to such an extent that individuals chose to trust a movement opposing this government, Boko Haram.

As with the first threat identified in this thesis, threat I, for the threat of weak democratic institutions, a link to the negative effect this threat has on the referent objects can be identified in the discourse as well. Especially, the threat that threat II objects on referent object I and referent object II can be seen as prominent in the discourse. Quotes number 28 and 30 give examples of how this link is present in the arguments of the EU.

Interestingly, not only is there a link made between the threat of weak democratic institutions and the stability, security as well as reform within Nigeria, but reference is also made to the potential ability of Nigeria to be "a positive regional and continental player" if the threat is tackled effectively (quote 27). Contestably, by making such an argument, the EU is bringing the issue and the importance of its actions to tackle this specific issue to a higher level or a level of greater good, not only for Nigeria but also for the countries in the surroundings.

Finally, for its actions aiming at improving democracy in Nigeria, the European Commission is once more associating these to actions of the national government of Nigeria and the actions of other donors. In terms of actions of other donors, quote number 31 shows that there is actually an action of organisation of pro-democratic actions by the donor community with the aim of achieving "coordination and complementarity" among the actions. While for the link between EU and national governmental actions, quote number 32 shows that

there is a "legal basis for partnership" relating to the promotion of democratic principles in place between the two actors.

4.4 Social Practice

The following step is the analysis of social practices or issues which zooms out from the language and the discursive practices to focus more on a broader picture (Fairclough, 2006). In other words, this step will focus on explaining and understanding one or several social phenomena to which the discourses belong and how they potentially affect each other (Fairclough, 2006).

This section will follow the structure of the previous sections on referent objects and threats and relate the observations made for each of the referent objects and threats to broader social practices. While the aim is to provide an analysis as specific as possible and link the observations made from the discourse described previously to as many social phenomena as possible, doing so is limited by the word count of this thesis. Accordingly, focus will be put on linking observations to the phenomenon discussed in the work *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* by Buzan et al. (1998) as a phenomenon which should be observable in a case of securitization. Moreover, to complement this, in some cases, observations will also be linked to the phenomenon which are described by other important literature as having a high probability of being observed in a case of securitization.

4.4.1   Referent Object

4.4.1.1 Referent Object I: North East Region of Nigeria

In terms used by Buzan et al. (1998), the North East Region of Nigeria would be classified as a "micro-region". Micro-region refers to the sub-unit level within the boundaries of a state (Buzan et al., 1998). When talking about micro-regions, Buzan et al. (1998) argue that discourse focusing on micro-regions as levels for securitization or securitization moves mainly happens when the micro-region is located within a weak or failed state. Looking at the main threats faced by the referent objects, the Boko Haram insurgency and weak democratic institutions, the discourse surrounding these two threats appear indeed to point towards the EU perceiving Nigeria as a weak or failed state, even if Nigeria is not being referred to by direct wording as being a weak or failed state. Accordingly, it can be argued that the discourse and strategy surrounding the use of the North-East Region of Nigeria as a referent object by the EU appears to be in line with the broader social practice described by Buzan et al. (1998).

Additionally, Buzan et al. (1998) argue that the use of a smaller region within a larger country or a smaller power within a larger one, even if not necessarily having a large scale effect on the securitizing actor, can still be seen as a threat to a political principle or principles. This threat can appear in terms of a situation setting precedents, precedents that can define future behaviour not only locally but also more widely.

Furthermore, the use of the North-East region of Nigeria as a referent object can be linked to another social practice. Carpenter (2005) mentions the existence of a civilian protection network. This network can be seen as a transnational community of international and non-governmental bureaucrats, citizens, journalists, and statespersons. A community which believes that norms protecting war-affected civilians should be respected. The civilian protection network works towards achieving a widespread implementation of a set of norms they believe in through persuasion as well as through purposeful action. The norms including ideas such as a need to spare civilians and civilian objects from armed attack, a need to facilitate humanitarian access to provide for basic needs, a need to avoid means of warfare that disproportionately affect civilians, and a need to take measures to protect civilians where others have failed to uphold their obligations to do so. The aim of protection of civilians, tends to engage all actors which are promoting the broader aim of implementation of human rights and norms related to these rights. Additionally, it also engages with actors promoting development goals, humanitarian action, as well as human security, as these fields are usually interconnected. Actors taking part in the promotion of these norms and actions can take various different forms ranging from international organisations, governments, civil society actors, individual citizens, etc., accordingly coming from all levels of society.

4.4.1.2 Referent Object II: Women and Youth

Buzan et al. (1998) argue that collective groups conducting violence against another collective group such as men conducting violence against women has increasingly been seen as a collective issue. In one of his articles, Carpenter (2005) gives a detailed overview of why this could be the case. According to Carpenter (2005), an important take away from social movements literature which can be applied to various different topics within social sciences is that in order for an agenda setting to be successful, there is a need to establish a frame or several frames which resonate with pre-existing norms. Moreover, a frame must also resonate with symbolic technologies used by other actors who have overlapping interests and identities to the ones of the actor setting a specific agenda (Carpenter, 2005).

Within the broader category of civilian population mentioned in the previous section, women and youth tend to be classified as one singly sub-category when it comes to protection and security discourse, while men tend to be forgotten and classified as all potential combatants (Carpenter, 2005). According to Carpenter (2005), this phenomenon can be traced back to deeply embedded older gendered imageries within international humanitarian law and action. These imageries portray women and youth as innocent, dependent and vulnerable. Hence, an immunity norm is seen as more robust for women and youth in comparison to males who are in the average draft-age.

The discourse used by the European Commission in the documents analysed appears to characterise women and youth in accordance with these traditional imageries. However, while doing so, the discourse also links their vulnerability to threats to themselves potentially becoming threats. This is a phenomenon that is not unique to the EU. One of the most discussed texts which appears to similarly link vulnerability and transformation to threat is the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250. This resolution frames vulnerable populations, especially youth as being important contributors to global peace and security. Accordingly, it could be argued that there has been an important move towards associating vulnerability with threat within the donor community which is not specific to the discourse used by the EU.

4.4.1.3 Referent Object III: European Interest

Buzan et al. (1998) describe the state and the nation as being the traditional referent object when it comes to security practices. Usually, reference was made to the sovereignty of states and this sovereignty being under threat as a main reason for securitization. Today, security moves have become more and more linked to international referent objects such as international law, international order, or international society (Buzan et al., 1998). The European Union or in this case more specifically the European Interest being under threat and accordingly a referent object fits in this category of international referent objects. Buzan et al. (1998) argue that for international referent objects, threats are not seen in terms of threats to sovereignty but rather in terms of non-acceptance, violation, or challenge. Moreover, the threats to international referent objects have been linked to the term of revolutionary states. Revolutionary states being states that challenge the international order while being a power whose cooperation is a necessary aspect of a stable international order (Buzan et al., 1998). The discourse used by the EU appears to be in line with the observations of Buzan et al. (1998).

As we have seen previously, the EU refers to the strategic importance of Nigeria for the EU and the fact that the security issues within Nigeria are causing a challenge for EU trade in the geographic region.

Moreover, a link is being made between internal and external security by using European interest as a referent object in the discourse. This link between internal and external security became mainstreamed after 9/11 when a fear of failed states, the criminalisation of politics, war lords, transnational organised crimes supported by governments or guerrillas created an image of third world countries being unsafe (Bigo, 2006). This fear was also associated with a potential spill over from the third world to the first world (Bigo, 2006). The idea of security without borders and accordingly a fading of lines between internal and external security came hand in hand. Once a security threat is portrayed as being global, legitimacy is given for both internal and external response to a threat. In the discourse analysed, it is apparent that the EU is blurring these lines between internal and external security. More specifically this is done by referring to itself as being under threat; by reference to illegal migration, crime syndicates and trafficking; or by claiming that the same issues are faced by itself and Nigeria.

4.4.2 Threats

"In some cases, the international society is able to legitimize intervention by referring to genocide, aggression, or, increasingly, simply the lack of "good governance.""

(Buzan et al., 1998)

4.4.2.1 Threat I: Boko Haram, Inter-Community and Inter-Ethnic Conflicts and Tensions

Buzan et al. (1998) argue that there are certain phenomena which are easier seen as threat than others and therefore their securitization can also be achieved easier. One example is if one frames the phenomenon of heavily armed groups or highly violent groups as a threat, there is a higher chance for it to become accepted by the public as in fact a threat than if one is to frame a non-heavily armed group or not highly violent group as a threat (Buzan et al., 1998). Indeed, the perception of military type threats against a vulnerable population has been seen as an issue of security and accepted by society as one for centuries.

As we have seen in the Literature Review section of this paper, 9/11 was a shifting point for modern day foreign securitization practices by national and international actors. The 9/11 attacks gave rise to a global securitization wave of terrorism. Many new extraordinary

measures against groups classified as terrorist groups and for their eradication or containing were legitimised by the international community. Among other, the United Nations Security Council began imposing sanctions on terrorist groups as well as called all member states to criminalise terrorism in their nation laws and policies as well as cooperate with each other to fight against terrorism (Rychnoska, 2014). Additionally, Rychnovska (2014) argues that the audience did not dispute or oppose the framing of terrorism as a threat. Therefore, doing so became a publicly accepted practice. According to Buzan et al. (1998), for a securitizing move to become successful, there is a need for a wider audience to approve this move, which in the case of terrorism has been achieved.

For an actor like the EU, choosing a good strategy for the securitization of its actions towards a foreign country is arguably very important. Since Boko Haram has been classified as a terrorist threat and in parallel is also a type of threat which is military and highly violent towards a specific population, the probabilities of a strong opposition against the EU intervening on this ground are low.

4.4.2.2 Threat II: Weak Democratic Institutions

As we have seen in the section above, military instances are seen traditionally as motivations for securitization and accordingly easily securitized. Additionally, the post-Cold War era has seen the emergence of a "democracy-peace" rhetoric. The idea behind this rhetoric being that if there is a working democratic system within a country, there will be less probabilities for this country to pose a military threat to the international society (Buzan et al., 1998). According to Buzan et al. (1998), political factors can affect the emergence of a military threat in two different ways. Firstly, in accordance with the degree of recognition which is present between the different actors, and secondly in accordance with the level of harmony that exists between their political ideologies (Buzan et al., 1998). Galbreath (2012) argues that the democracy-peace rhetoric has had such an important impact on decision makers that it has become a supporting pillar of Western foreign policy.

The response to the attacks of 9/11 and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq which followed had the principle of democratization at the core of the rhetoric surrounding them (Galbreath, 2012). According to Galbreath (2012), behind the new wave of war against terrorism that followed 9/11 was the same idea of democracy-peace. Which meant that Western powers believed that if Iraq was shaped into a democracy, it could become a stable, predictable, and

friendly part of the international community (Galbraeth, 2012). Consequently, the democracy-peace rhetoric made good governance and democracy promotion an explicit part of the structure for aid distribution from the Western world (Brunton, 2013). The rhetoric used in the documents analysed point to the fact that similarly to the case of Iraq, the EU stresses the idea that democracy is a pre-requisite for security and stability in the case of Nigeria as well. Accordingly, it can be argued that the EU is following ideologies set as accepted ideas by the international community, or at least the Western donor community. Moreover, following the 2004 enlargement, the EU became perceived as one of the most prominent international promoters of democratization (Galbreath, 2012). Arguably the discourse used in the documents analysed also show that the EU has kept this role throughout the years.

4.4.3 Additional General Observations

Finally, a general observation which cannot be classified in the sections above but is still as important to mention as the previously described practices should be added to the analysis. All of the documents analysed are available for the public without the need to specifically request these. While all policy documents issued by the European Commission have to be made public, most are only made available upon request. According to Buzan et al. (1998), for a securitizing move to become successful, there is a need for a wider audience to approve this move, securitization is not done automatically. By making these documents public, the EU is reaching out to a wider audience and undergoing an important step in the securitization of its actions. The audience pool is whomever is interested in the content of the documents, be it individuals, institutions, civil society, governments, etc. Keeping a referent object or a threat at a broader scale level makes a project related to it more relevant for the audiences which are targeted. This is especially important when projects are available to a wide public and at high risk of criticism, which is the case here.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

In answering the research question "How does the EU justify the securitization of its foreign development aid?", this thesis was closely guided by the theory of securitization of the Copenhagen School, especially the work by Buzan et al. (1998), as well as by the framework for CDA drawn by Fairclough (2001). Overall, 24 official policy documents published by the European Commission were analysed, 16 of these published under DG INTPA while 8 under the EUTF. By conducting CDA on the selected texts, the aim was to retrieve observations that would help understand securitization moves by the EU within a specific, most-likely case

study. As the documents which were selected for the analysis were directly drafted and published by the EU, it was expected that they would give a good representation of justifications given by the securitizing actor itself, and accordingly an answer to the research question.

Guided by the securitization theory and the literature review, it was expected that existential threats to referent objects will be identifiable within EU development aid policy. Furthermore, it was also expected that strategies for achieving acceptance of securitizing moves from target audiences will be observable. In terms of the first expectation, the analysis highlighted three different referent objects and two existential threats. The referent objects were directly linked to the existential threats. Accordingly, it can be argued that the first expectation has proven to be a reality in the case of EU development aid allocated to Nigeria. In terms of the second expectation, two main strategies which could be interpreted as being strategies by the securitizing actor for achieving acceptance of securitizing moves by the audience can be identified. Mainly, the fact that the EU often highlights in the discourse that its actions are complementary or along the lines of the aims and actions of other donor organisations and the government of Nigeria. As well as the fact that all documents analysed are available to the broad public without restrictions.

Furthermore, another interesting observation in addition to the ones related to the hypotheses which is worth reflecting on was the fact that all of the referent objects and threats and the discourse related to these could be associated with one or multiple social practices. These social practices were identified from existing literature and portrayed observations seen as mainstream or having a high expectation of observability in a case where an actor is aiming to securitize something. These observations not only strengthen the general belief which guided this thesis, that EU development aid is securitized, but also show a certain conformity of the justifications given by the EU for its securitizing moves to current trends in the field.

Although this thesis provides a relevant contribution to the field of research on securitization as it fills a clear gap in the existing literature, it is necessary to acknowledge that further complementary research could be conducted. Based on the findings, an observation that could be classified by some as somewhat controversial was that the EU portraying itself or its own interest as a referent object and accordingly as being under threat. Deriving from this observation, it could be suggested that further research could aim to focus on providing a

deeper analysis of the reasons the EU gives for portrayed itself as being under threat. Such research could be conducted for example by interviewing EU officials in order to complement written statements. Additionally, another direction further research on the topic could take would be complementing and comparing the findings from the single case study analysis with another case study. Adding further cases to the research would improve the generalisability of the findings.

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