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Politics of Fear or How Securitisation of Non-existing Migrants Shaped Young
Slovaks' Perception

BACHELOR THESIS

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Declaration of Originality

I hereby declare that this bachelor thesis is a work of my own and has not been published in whole or in part elsewhere. All literature sources used in this thesis are attributed and cited in references.

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Abstract

The thesis addresses the impact of securitisation of predominantly Muslim migrants on the perception of young Slovaks aged 18 – 30 towards migrants. The securitisation theory developed by the Copenhagen School is applied to this study. The Muslim migrants, despite the fact that they were not even significantly and representatively present in Slovakia, have been portrayed as threats to the Slovak people by core political actors. The author analyses the impact of artificially created threats on Slovak youth by looking at primary and secondary sources and by conducting semi-structured interviews with experts from the field of migration, representatives of NGOs, and young Slovaks whose perception is the focus of this thesis. This thesis concludes that the securitisation of migrants is not a uniform process that equally affects all parcels of society and is always successful in transforming specific agents into threats. While the participants recognize the anti-immigration rhetoric of politicians, migrants are not perceived by them as a threat. In the case of Muslims, however, a certain level of scepticism was observed, as Slovak and Muslim cultures are perceived as very distant.

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Abstrakt

Táto bakalárska práca sa zaoberá vplyvom sekuritizácie prevažne moslimských migrantov na ich vnímanie mladými Slovákami vo veku 18 – 30 rokov. V tejto štúdii je aplikovaná teória sekuritizácie vyvinutá Kodanskou školou. Moslimskí migranti, napriek tomu, že neboli na Slovensku ani výrazne ani reprezentatívne zastúpení, sú politikmi vykresľovaní ako hrozba pre slovenský ľud. Autorka analyzuje vplyv umelo vytvorených hrozieb na slovenskú mládež skúmaním primárnych a sekundárnych zdrojov a prostredníctvom semi-štruktúrovaných rozhovorov s odborníkmi z oblasti migrácie, zástupcami mimovládnych organizácií a mladými Slovákami, ktorých vnímanie je predmetom bakalárskej práce. V práci sa uvádza, že sekuritizácia migrantov nie je jednotný proces, ktorý rovnako zasahuje všetky časti spoločnosti a vždy úspešne premieňa konkrétnych agentov na hrozby. Zatiaľ čo respondenti tejto práce vnímajú protiimigračnú rétoriku politikov, migrantov za hrozbu nepovažujú. V prípade moslimov však bola pozorovaná istá miera skepticizmu, nakoľko slovenská a moslimská kultúra sú vnímané ako veľmi vzdialené.

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Key Terms

All of the provided definitions are quoted from the Glossary on Migration by the International Organization for Migration (2019).

IMMIGRANT

A person who moves from country A to country B that becomes their “new country of usual residence” (International Organization for Migration, 2019, p. 103).

MIGRANT

A person who moves from point A to point B both within a country or across an international border. This term includes migrants who move for work, studies, or “persons whose particular types of movements are legally defined, such as smuggled migrants” (International Organization for Migration, 2019, p. 132).

REFUGEE

“A person who, owing to a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.” (International Organization for Migration, 2019, p. 171)

Introduction

Without migration, the European population would have shrunk by half a million in 2019, given that 4.2 million children were born and 4.7 million people died in the EU. In 2020, according to provisional data, the EU population shrunk by about 300 thousand people (from 447.3 million on January 1, 2020, to 447.0 million on January 1, 2021) due to a combination of less births, more deaths and less net migration. (European Commission, 2021)

The above-provided quote justly describes the situation of migration in the European Union (EU). As the European Commission (further as Commission) states, many non-EU citizens are essential workers who take the less desired jobs and thus support the country's system (European Commission, 2021). Nevertheless, according to Barometer data (European Commission, 2018, p. 72), most Eastern European states oppose migration, arguing that it has a mostly negative impact on society.

Even though people have been in a constant move for centuries is a given fact, there are specific periods throughout history that mark a massive influx of migrants. However, in order to describe migration, we need to define who are migrants.

According to International Office for Migration (IOM), the term migrant is "reflecting the common lay understanding of a person who moves away from his or her place of usual residence, whether within a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently, and for a variety of reasons" (International Organization for Migration, 2019). These reasons might be migration for a job position, education, reunion with family, finding a spouse, or escaping political and/or armed conflict. Historically, people migrated mainly due to colonialism, which escalated into state formation.

Haas, Castles, & Miller (2019) note that while the sixteenth century onward was marked by colonisations, conquering, settling and transporting enslaved people all around the world, these patterns changed in the mid of twentieth century (p. 117). As a result of decolonisation and massive economic growth, Europe's wealth and lifestyle started to attract more and more people, making it the number one global

destination for migrants (Haas, Castles, & Miller, 2019). After a massive emigration of Europeans to the Americas, Europe was about to experience what it means to be a destination rather than a point of departure. Hence, after World War II in 1945, followed by the beginning of what later will be the European Union, people began to migrate mainly within the European area. While there were significant moves across the region (mainly after the end of the Cold War and the establishment of the EU with nearly 700.000 asylum applicants), the 2015 migration crisis marked the region heavily (Pew Research Center, 2016).

The year 2015 nearly doubled the number of migrants applying for asylum with 1.3 million applications (Pew Research Center, 2016). Fuelled by the wars in Darfur, Somalia, Afghanistan, civil wars in Libya and Syria, and the Iraq War, the masses of refugees were desperately knocking on the European doors. Consequently, the coastal countries such as Greece, Italy, and Spain and border states such as Hungary were overextended by the influx of migrants. Aiming at tackling the issues and managing the high influx of migrants arriving at once, the EU member states came up with a quota system that would relocate migrants from the most exhausted states to officially register them, reunite them with relatives, and provide them with basic needs. Few states, however, were opposing the quota system; Poland, Hungary, and Slovakia, which will serve as a central case study of this thesis.

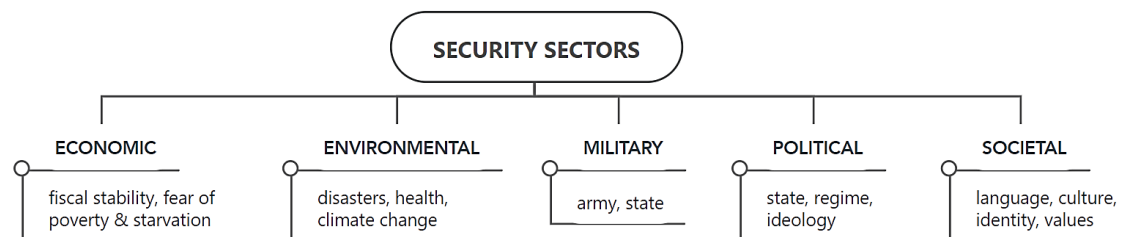
This thesis uses the securitisation theory as its backbone in the literature review. The literature review will unfold the situation in Slovakia before and after the European migration crisis, the securitisation theory of the Copenhagen School of Security Studies (further as the Copenhagen School), and academics who modified the original theory to fit the current world better. Additionally, two separate sectors will be introduced, namely the political and societal sectors introduced by the Copenhagen School's theory. These will be applied directly to the case of Slovakia from the perspective of various academics. In the second part of this thesis, the author will analyse the societal sector and the impact the securitisation of migrants had on Slovak young adults mainly by conducting interviews with people from the field of migration, academia, NGOs, and the general public.

This project was designed to reflect on the 2015 migration crisis, which can be explained by applying the securitisation theory developed by the Copenhagen School. By focusing mainly on the societal sector, the innovation of this project lies in the focus itself, as not many academics analysed the migration crisis in Slovakia from both political and societal sectors. This thesis addresses the question, which states: *What is the effect of the highly securitised discourse of Muslim migrants on the perception of young Slovaks?* The securitisation of migration is not the only factor that might shape public opinion towards migrants. However, it is a very significant aspect that has taken, as shown in the literature review, a substantial place in the Slovak and overall Central European political discourse.

Literature Review

The theoretical background of this thesis will be provided by the Copenhagen School, which changed the traditional approach to the topic of security. The Copenhagen School proposed that while the state is a crucial player in security, there might be other (referent) objects influencing securitisation. Therefore, in addition to the traditional military sector, Buzan et al. (1998) introduced four supplementary sectors: the environmental, economic, political, and societal. The fragmentation of a complex security issue aims to provide a space for a deeper understanding and analysis that identifies a concrete type of interaction between the sectors (Buzan, Wæver, & Wilde, 1998, p. 7). According to the Copenhagen School, security is about survival. While traditionalists would refer to the state or the nation as the one that needs to survive, the survivor would differ in the broader sectoral agenda for each sector.

Figure 1 Security Sectors and its referent objects



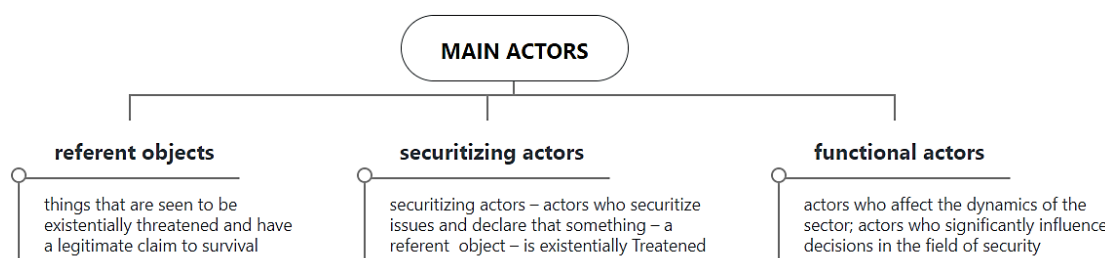
Note: based on Buzan, Wæver, & Wilde, 1998, pp. 22-23

The Copenhagen School theorists believe there is no such thing as a natural threat to national security; threats are constructed and reconstructed in different historical moments. While people would assume that the word security exists only because specific threats need to be tackled on the national level, assessed by security analysts and policymakers, the Copenhagen School believes otherwise. According to them, threats are constructed by the community of people who decide that a particular issue is severe enough to be referred to as a security threat. The mills start working once the consensus is made and the problem is securitised. The threat is classified as something existentially threatening, something abnormal which needs

to be solved by abnormal measures. If the danger is not limited, it will destroy the state or regime, fiscal status or state's economy, health or climate, or survival of laws, culture, identity, and values system (see Figure 2).

According to Buzan et al. (1998), the leading force in the process of securitisation is a speech act and the specific rhetorical structure used to securitise a threat. The structure consists of: "(a) existential threats to the survival of some kind of referent object...that (b) require exceptional measures to protect the threatened referent object, which (c) justify and legitimise the breaking of normal [e.g., democratic] procedures" (van Munster, 2005 as cited in Theiler, 2009, p. 107). Although the Copenhagen School was highly revolutionary in its contribution to security studies, it did not escape criticism either. Academics such as Didier Bigo, Thierry Balzacq, Jef Huysmans, and Matt McDonald are among the most influential scholars criticising certain aspects of Buzan et al.'s theory of securitisation.

Figure 2 Main actors of the securitisation theory



Note: based on Buzan, Wæver, & Wilde, 1998, p. 36

Didier Bigo brings into the security studies a distinction between Buzan et al.'s political actor and what Bigo calls 'the professionals in the management of unease'. According to Bigo (2002), a threat situation is beneficial for the security professionals who can, by using technology, profile any person and define them as a potential threat. Furthermore, Bigo (2008) refuses Buzan et al.'s theory that security is about survival. On the contrary, he believes that existential threat cannot be that easily distinguished from a simple threat or a simple feeling of unease. It is not about defence anymore; it is about future actions: climate change *will* cause migration, and

migrants *will* take over our traditions and restore their values. The security priorities will then change according to the struggle between who are these professionals of security – for religious security actors, the emphasis will be the protection of their religion. In contrast, for economic security actors, the priority will be the currency's stability.

The result of the (in) securitisation process cannot be assessed from the will of an actor, even a dominant one. The actors never know the final results of the move they are doing, as the result depends on the field-effect of many actors engaged in competitions for defining whose security is important, and of different audiences liable to accept or not that definition. (Bigo & Tsoukala, 2008, p. 5)

The importance of the audience is particularly highlighted in Thierry Balzacq's works. According to him, the academics of the Copenhagen School did not put enough volume on the definition of audience in the securitisation theory. In fact, he states it is one of the least developed concepts of the theory even though the School itself made it clear that "the issue is securitised only if and when the audience accepts as such" (Buzan et al. as cited in Balzacq et al., 2015, p. 499). According to Balzacq (2005), the success of securitisation depends not only on the audience's acceptance but also on the securitising actor tuning their tone according to the audience's feelings, needs and emotions (p. 173). Further, McDonald (2008) points out the Copenhagen School's strong emphasis on the significance of the speech act in the process of securitisation omits all other tools such as videos, pictures, and newspapers (pp. 568-569). The importance of these tools could have been seen with the 9/11 attack shown on national television (McDonald, 2008, pp. 568-569).

Additionally, the absence of rival voices is what is not included in the securitisation theory. As Baysal (2020) states, "There are always rivals who reject this truth claim or, in most cases, counter truth claims, and definitions emerge. This a constant conflict between these truth claims, while constructing security issues means that a securitisation analysis should also examine these rival voices" (p. 10).

While all of these arguments and alterations to the Copenhagen School's securitisation theory are legitimate and reasonable, the securitisation theory is still a valuable and crucial theoretical background for this thesis.

The Copenhagen School of Security Studies introduced five sectors that view the international system "through a lens that highlights one particular aspect of the relationship and interaction among all of its constituent units" (Buzan, Jones, & Little, 1993, as cited in Buzan, Wæver, & Wilde, 1998, p. 27). In addition to the traditional military sector, Buzan et al. (1998) introduced four supplementary sectors: environmental, economic, political, and societal. For this thesis, the last two sectors will serve as the base of the essential areas for the theoretical approach.

Political Security

2016 Elections

The political sector was heavily discussed in the Slovak sphere among academics in 2016 when parliamentary elections took place. Various scholars and researchers (Androvičová, 2016; Grančayová & Kazharski, 2020; Kazharski, 2017; Potočarová, 2018) were analysing the role of securitisation in the parliamentary elections and the role the so-called *imaginary migrant* played in it (Grančayová & Kazharski, 2020, p. 260). Unsurprisingly, all of them concluded that the 2016 elections were driven in the spirit of anti-migrant rhetoric, which shaped both the result of the elections and the status of Slovakia in the international community, mainly the European Union.

Kzharski (2017) highlights that countries of Central Europe have evolved into hybrid states where they are cherry-picking certain norms and principles to follow and which to eliminate from their state's agenda (p. 2). Kazharski (2017) refers to such a mood as *partial identification* where only certain Western principles are accepted, and others are modified to fit the state's political stage. According to Kundera (2016) (who is heavily quoted also in Potočarová, 2007; and Tabosa, 2020), the tragedy of Central European countries rests in its diversity: "By virtue of its political system, Central Europe is the East; by virtue of its cultural history, it is the West", and geographically it is in the centre of Europe (p. 208). While being considered part of

the West before 1945, this year dates the shift of Central European countries under the wings of the Eastern bloc controlled by Russia. With the fall of the iron curtain, few countries decided to form the Visegrad Four (V4) countries to facilitate the come-back to the West. Therefore, it can be argued that the previous history and geopolitics had a lasting influence on the Visegrad Four region, which presence could have been registered in response to the migration crisis in 2015.

Regarding the migrant question, Kazharski (2017) states that the biggest clash between the EU and the Visegrad Four states emerged firstly in response to German chancellor Merkel and her acceptance of refugees, which was later followed by a quota scheme in order to help coastal states with the surge of migrants. This particular move sparked V4's reaction to block the EU's refugee quota scheme, ultimately resulting in Hungary and Slovakia bringing the case to the European Court of Justice (Kazharski, 2017; Grančayová & Kazharski, 2020). The situation provided a space for right-wing parties, primarily nationalists, to emerge and gain popularity, as could be seen in the election's results, when extremist parties such as Kotleba – National Party Our Slovakia (K-ĽSNS)¹ and Slovak National Party (SNS)² made it to the parliament. The mentioned SNS incorporated into their election campaign the need to protect Slovak "ethnic, cultural, confessional and social integrity from illegal migrants coming from a different ethnic, cultural, religious and social environment" (Volebný Program Pre Silný Štát 2016–2020, 2015 as cited in Kazharski, 2017, p. 16). The whole migration agenda was heavily politicised and fuelled by the nationalistic narrative calling migrants a threat incompatible with the Christian heritage rooted in the Slovak culture and values (Potočárová, 2018). With a risk of an influx of migrants, the core characteristics of Slovaks can be contorted, which provides a space for a state of panic to emerge. Consequently, nationalistic parties made it their goal to stand up as a peacekeeper who will secure an undistorted future of the Slovak nation.

When Slovakia decided to join other V4 countries in a blockade of the EU's immigrant policies and agenda, the country gained attention from abroad, making

¹ Kotlebovci – Ľudová Strana Naše Slovensko (Kotleba – National Party Our Slovakia)

² Slovenská Národná Strana (Slovak National Party)

the whole situation much more a centre of discussion. The securitisation of migrants turned from a "securitised but relatively marginal topic into a major one, serving as a source of 'moral panic' in the run-up to the 2016 Slovak parliamentary election" (Androvičová, 2016 as cited in Grančayová & Kazharski, 2020, p. 263).

Moral Panic

In her work, Androvičová (2016) analyses the concept of moral panics introduced by sociologists Erich Goode and Nachman Ben-Yehuda by applying it to the Slovak stage. According to Goode and Ben-Yehuda (1994), there are three models within two dimensions (morality vs interest & many vs few actors) which can provide answers to issues within each element: (1) the grassroots model, (2) the elite-engineered model, and (3) the interest group theory (Androvičová, 2016, pp. 59-63). The elite-engineered model is based on a small but influential group of individuals who consciously and artificially generate fear among the target group in order to deter the attention from issues that could undermine the group's power. These actors are shaping the security questions in the nation by defining the threats. Bigo (2002) emphasises an aim to create a 'truth' or a 'myth' that would connect social issues such as crime and unemployment with migration. Therefore, migration is automatically seen as a target for experimentation of surveillance technologies and a group that can fill the missing 'villains' in the issues politicians and police failed to succeed. The inability of police, state, or army to regulate the illegal migration might undermine the trust and loyalty of the citizens towards these institutions (Karyotis, 2012, p. 401).

Consequently, migration becomes what Huysmans calls meta-issue, "a phenomenon that can be referred to as the cause of many problems" (Faist, 1994, p. 52 as cited in Huysmans, 2000, pp. 761-762). Androvičová (2016) thus concludes that the elite-engineered model presented the situation in Slovakia the best as she brought up Mr R. Fico's (ex-prime minister of Slovakia) unsuccessful run for the presidency. Thus, R. Fico welcomed the migration crisis as a space for him to return to the Slovak people by figuring as a protector of the nation³.

³R. Fico's political party SMER-SD based their political campaign on the slogan "Chránime Slovensko" (We protect Slovakia), which refers to the protection of the nation from migrants and refugees.

Winning the elections was consequently considered the main motive behind the anti-migration agenda. Before 2015, however, according to the Eurobarometer survey, migration was not a significant issue for Slovaks, yet migration became the third most frequently used term in Slovakia in 2015 (Tabosa, 2020, p. 13). Grančayová & Kazharski (2020) point to the fact that even though the use of anti-migration rhetoric was not that popular before the 2016 elections, which served as the peak for the topic, the rhetoric did not entirely disappear from the political agenda, even though it has significantly decreased (p. 273). In fact, while in the 2016 election campaigns, political parties such as Direction – Social Democracy (SMER-SD)⁴, K-ĽSNS, We are a Family⁵, and SNS had strong anti-Islam & anti-quota agendas, in 2020 election campaigns, these parties included the Islam/migration topic into their plan. Still, they did not make it the central theme (Grančayová & Kazharski, 2020, p. 269).

The topic of migration is considered one of the subjects that divide society into two camps – those who sympathise with the immigrants and those who do not (Huysmans, 2000; Potočárová, 2018). However, Huysmans (2000) brings up the fact that the choice of which camp to choose is not free because "a choice for migration is represented as a choice against (the survival of) the political community" (p. 758). Consequently, it can be concluded that Androvičová's choice of the model was correct, and the migration theme was indeed used as a political (and securitising) move.

Securitising Move

The securitising move is defined by Buzan et al. (1998) as a "discourse that takes the form of presenting something as an existential threat to a referent object [which] does not by itself create securitisation" (p. 25). The significance of the securitising move is also one of the criteria of Rita Floyd's (2011) work on morality and legitimacy of securitisation.

Floyd (2011) has refined the theory of securitisation by adding a moral aspect to it. While Buzan et al. (1998) described the theory itself, Floyd (2011) decided to provide

⁴ SMER-Sociálna Demokracia (Direction – Social Democracy)

⁵ Sme Rodina (We are a Family)

the thesis with specific criteria that can securitise a given object to be morally just. The first criterion she introduced is that the securitised object must pose "an objective existential threat that endangers the survival of an actor", which must be a threat regardless of anyone realising it (Floyd, 2011, p. 428). Additionally, there is a need to analyse whether the danger has a genuine intention to destroy the referent object and whether it has all the means and capabilities to do so. Only after that, we can talk about a threat that can be existential.

As for the second criterion, Floyd (2011) targets the referent object stating that it is legitimate only if it is "advantageous to the human well-being defined as the satisfaction of human needs" (p. 428). Well-being is supported here by the term basic human needs, which enable us to function as humans, meaning, according to Joseph Raz (1986, as quoted in Floyd, 2011, p. 431), that we can lead an autonomous life. The two systems giving us the most extensive freedoms are liberal democracy and human rights, which provide the most options and autonomy to humans. If the referent object disables us from being autonomous, we can call it a legitimate threat.

Regarding the third criterion, Floyd highlighted the need for a response to be genuinely aiming at addressing the threat sincerely – make sure the securitising move (actor's speech, e.g.) matches the securitising practice (actor's actions) – and according to the capabilities of the threat. According to Floyd, securitisation is complete only when a significant change follows the speech act in the actor's behaviour in relevance to the threat. Therefore, the power is in action and not the words only.

The securitising practice is essential to mention in reference to the Slovak stage. Even though the Constitution of the Slovak Republic guarantees freedom of religion, the right to change or refrain from religious affiliation, and the right to express it publicly, the lawmakers' actions show otherwise (Const. of SR, art. 24). While still a part of Czechoslovakia, a law was passed in 1991 stating the church's position, obligations, rights, and restrictions. Surviving for years without significant adjustments, the law experienced its major change in 2017 as a subject of the (already) Slovak National Council proposal. Prior to this proposal, the official number of 20 000 signatories of permanent adult residences of the Slovak Republic was

needed to submit a proposal for the registration of their church. In 2016, the Slovak National Council proposed to adjust the number from 20 000 to 50 000 (Act no. 39/2017 Coll.)⁶. The law was passed and came into effect in March 2017. While a religious institution cannot register as a legal person without the required number of signatories, it can register as a civic association. Obtaining this status, however, prohibits them from building a house of worship, recognising marriage ceremonies, asking for state funding, excludes them from teaching religion at schools, and a civic association is not excluded from the exemption to pay taxes (Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, 2005).

Another legislation that can be considered a securitising practice is the ratification of Act no. 444/2015 Coll.⁷, which prolonged the detention of persons suspected of terrorism to 96 hours instead of the original 48. Paradoxically, these profound changes of the legislature took place in the period after 2015, even though the Muslim community did not form a representative minority in Slovak society. Tabosa (2020) refers to such phenomena as an *imaginary migrant* – a migrant who is either not present or visible enough in the society yet is considered a threat.

In her study, Tabosa (2020) developed the term *imaginary migrant* to refer to a group of migrants who are heavily securitised or politicised by countries whose strategy stands on the fear they adopted from states where the group poses an issue. In the case of Slovakia, Tabosa (2020) highlighted the neutral stance of both the Slovak government as well as the majority of the society towards migrants who are clearly visible in the Slovak stage – foreigners from Vietnam, Ukraine, and Serbia. All of these nationalities formed their communities in Slovakia, and while Vietnamese are mainly in the clothing and gastro businesses, immigrants from Ukraine and Serbia are filling up job positions in the construction business as cheap labour. Nevertheless, migrants from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, which do not create any significant part of the current society, are portrayed as a threat to the Slovak people.

⁶ The Slovak Republic. (March 01, 2017). Act amending Act no. 308/1991 Coll. on freedom of religion and the status of churches and religious communities, as amended.

⁷ The Slovak Republic. (December 30, 2015). Act amending Act no. 300/2005 Coll. Criminal Code as amended and amending certain acts, 444/2015 Coll.

A significant point brought up by Tabosa (2020) is that the region of Central Europe "has historically been one of the most culturally diverse and multi-ethnic regions in Europe," and therefore, there is no such thing as a homogeneity applicable to this part of Europe (p. 17). As Huysmans (2000) states, "the discourse reproduces the political myth that a homogenous national community or western civilisation existed in the past and can be re-established today through the exclusion of those migrants who are identified as cultural aliens" (p. 758). What society fears then is the new and unknown.

The fear of the other is one of two types of fears Slovakia is driven by, Potočárová (2018) believes. While other states of Western Europe have been facing waves of migration for many years already, Muslim migrants were seen very occasionally⁸. Consequently, driven by the lack of experience and knowledge, the fear of the *otherness* drives people's belief that the new religion, new culture, and new traditions can (and will) distort the traditions and culture they identify with (Tabosa, 2020). Just as it is paradoxical for "Austrian voters to feel more threatened by immigration than their counterparts in Luxembourg, even though Luxembourg has proportionally more foreign residents than does Austria", it is absurd for Slovaks to be afraid of the absent migrants (Theiler, 2009, p. 106). The term migrant is then, according to Bigo (2002), designed to label someone as a "threat to the core values of a country", which results in fear which can be sold to other countries (such as France regards migrants as religious fanatics, which is a rhetoric Slovak politicians used to define migrants) (p. 71).

Societal Security

Among the five sectors, the societal sector is considered the most revolutionary in the department of security studies. Buzan et al. (1998) defined societal security as a sector that "concerns the sustainability, within acceptable conditions for evolution, of traditional patterns of language, culture and religious and national identity and custom; it is about relationships of collective identity" (pp. 7-8). Thus, the threat

⁸ Mainly in Piešťany, the most famous Slovak spa island, which attracts people from the Arab countries.

directly affects the individual, which becomes existential as it directly threatens the survival of one's identity. As an example, we can provide Nazi's Germany and Hitler's plan of the *Herrenrasse*⁹, which hierarchically positioned the Aryan race above all other races. In this case, we can conclude that Jews, Slavs, and Roma people were existentially threatened by Hitler – a situation that eventually resulted in the nearly complete eradication of the Jewish population. Therefore, a legitimate existential threat threatened the survival of their identity, culture, and religion. Hence, Buzan et al. (1998) highlight that when identity is threatened, the issue becomes very personal to everyone who finds themselves within the threatened society. Building on this point, Theiler (2003), in his work "Societal Security and Social Psychology", stated that since the society's identity is so pivotal, the preservation of the community is seen as "an end in itself rather than just as a means to achieve other ends, and hence give it priority over the potential objectives" (p. 251).

The concept of society is defined in Theiler (2003) as a "social, cultural and psychological formation distinct from the political and legal construct that is the state" (p. 250). Therefore, state and society are deeply interconnected as one cannot exist without the other. So, if the state wants to survive under state security, society needs to be secured under societal security. In order to secure it, the process of securitisation must happen so that the threats are labelled as existential and hence can be fought by the usage of extraordinary measures which would not be acceptable under normal circumstances. Panić (2009), explaining the difference between the perception of identity in Western and Eastern Europe, states that many Western people realised the consequences of integration and hence "they began to perceive the integrations as a threat to their national identity, and protection of that identity they now see as the central security issue, as a matter of survival" (p. 33). A helpful example could perhaps be the United Kingdom and BREXIT¹⁰ case. In this particular case, we can claim the English people felt their national identity was fading away because of the influx of foreigners. With this in mind, people called for their

⁹ Master race - a race, nation, or group, such as the Germans or Nazis as viewed by Hitler, believed to be superior to other races as defined by Collins English Dictionary – Complete and Unabridged, 12th Edition, 2014.

¹⁰ British Exit – the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union on February 1, 2020.

state to intervene and eventually withdraw from the EU to protect their English way of living.

The central question of Theiler's (2003) work is why people need societal security and why they want to preserve their identity. As an answer, he provides the following study of Henri Tajfel and John Turner¹¹, who created a social identity theory. Their experiment consisted of numerous volunteers who had never met before and whose quest was to estimate the number of dots on a slide. According to their either over- or underestimation, the individuals were divided into two groups. Further, they were asked to give points to either members of their own group or the counter group. Based on the fact that participants did not know anyone from either of the groups, it would be logical to expect the distribution to be indifferent. However, the researchers found two surprising outcomes of the experiment. First, members of each group gave more points to the group members they belonged to. Second, it was essential to come out of the situation as a winner, to be simply better than the counter group. Therefore, it can be concluded that people tend to favour others in their group and oppose people from the other group solely based on belonging. The need for belonging is also mentioned in Maslow's hierarchy of needs, with love and belonging being the third most essential needs for a person.

Because of the favouritism of the group one belongs to, Theiler (2003) proceeds with the automatic categorisation people tend to make. He explains that people "perceive items placed into the same category as more similar to one another than they are in reality but more different from those in other categories than is objectively the cause" (p. 260). Therefore, humans are categorised just the same way as any item - based on a similar race, religion, language, body image, or hobbies. Based on these similarities, groups representing each category are formed with members acquiring the group's behaviour, way of thinking, and overall identity. The recognition of similarities then naturally leads to a comparison between both ingroup and outgroup. As part of a group, one desires to "maintain a positive self-image" as this factor determines the worth and self-esteem of an individual (Theiler, 2003, p. 260).

¹¹ For more see Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1979). *An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict*. In S. Worchel, & W. G. Austin (Eds.), *The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations* (pp. 33-47). Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole.

In order to be perceived as the best version of self (and the group), one compares themselves to those who do not qualify for the quality, ability, or value they want to excel in. Hence, people tend to compare themselves to ones who are doing poorly. Therefore, people continuously make themselves and the whole group they represent to be perceived as the better while the other, the worse (in any relevant issue). Migrants are therefore seen as the opposite group of what the nation is – the opposite side of a good citizen. They are seen as those who "do not fit the national standard of norms and values" and as a danger to the "homogeneity of the people" (Bigo, 2002, p. 67).

The bond between the self and the group's identity is so intense and almost inherent from the individual that naturally, they have a strong urge to preserve themselves and, therefore, the whole group and its identity. Whatever then threatens the self threatens the group and vice versa. The threat then must be eliminated so that the group can survive. In this case, the group has two options: deal with the threat themselves or bring it to the elites' attention. While the former option might be easier (but also most likely illegal), the latter option will have a bigger chance to eliminate the threat as only at this level the extraordinary measures, which under usual consequences would be unacceptable or illegal, can be employed (such as building fences to protect the national identity from immigrants).

With the understanding of what societal security is and how it is connected to national identity, the author would like to bring up the focus of this thesis. Through literature review was so far shown that the political security academics properly covered the handling of the 2015 migration crisis in Slovakia (Androvičová, 2016; Kazharski, 2017; Potočárová, 2018; Grančayová & Kazharski, 2020; Tabosa, 2020;) who focused mainly on the politicisation of migrants and the elites' rhetoric towards them. Most articles and studies regarding societal security described the sector (Theiler, 2003; Panić, 2009; Theiler, 2009) by providing debates in the field. However, when it comes to Slovakia, the articles analysing the migrant crisis were absent. Hence, the author decided to fill this gap with this thesis, which aims to answer the question stating: *What is the effect of the highly securitised discourse of Muslim migrants on the perception of young Slovaks?*

Research Design and Methodology

In this thesis, the author researches the impact of the securitisation of the nearly non-existent migrants on Slovak society, focusing on young people aged 18-30. Based on the knowledge that young people have more experiences with migrants, the responses might vary more than in the case of older people who are limited by the language mainly. Therefore, the personal experiences with migrants are believed to be lower, and hence the author opted to narrow the focus on young Slovaks.

The securitisation of absent migrants has been researched based on primary sources such as speeches of people in power and changes in the legislature, as well as secondary sources such as media articles. Based on these aspects, the author could then unfold securitisation and its presence on the Slovak stage.

Further, existing data has been examined and implemented into this thesis, building on the societal perspective. Therefore, surveys, barometers, data from think-thanks, organisations (CVEK), and official governmental instruments (such as census) will serve as a source of quantitative data. As for these, the most relevant indicators have been opinions on migrants, the level of integration, and the number of religious adherents. These data provided the author with a perspective on the current state of migrants in Slovakia.

Lastly, qualitative data have been collected by semi-structured interviews as a source of more personal input into the research. The reason why the author opted for interviews is that it “has the central goal of investigating different perspectives and points of view about a fact, through the interviewees’ understanding of reality [by focusing] on symbols, meanings, beliefs, attitudes, values, and motivations” (Rocha, 2021, p. 4). In this method, two people from NGOs (Mareena and Bratislava Policy Institute (BPI)), and twelve young Slovaks from various regions have been interviewed to gather their personal thoughts and beliefs on migration and migrants in Slovakia. Experts from the field of migration (from BPI and Mareena) have provided their expertise and knowledge on the topic of migration in Slovakia.

The author’s first call for action took place on a Facebook page, asking people to sign up for interviews if they are willing to talk about migration. After recruiting the first

people, the author used a snowballing sampling method. Later, the author recruited twelve young people with whom the interviews were conducted.

Background Characteristics of Respondents

Age

As the world is more open for people than it used to be 50 years ago, there is an assumption that young people are more open towards other cultures. With the accessibility of travelling, which is no longer a luxury activity for the rich people but also families with kids and students, the exposure to the *otherness* is more frequent than in the past. Also, more young people, at least in Europe, go abroad to pursue their studies which are generally of better quality than the local higher education institutions. With the support from the EU, programs such as Erasmus exist to broaden the perspective of youth and experience what a life of a migrant feels like from a young age. Because of all these aspects which promote and encourage young people to be more open towards others, we can state that the younger the person, the more accepting it is.

As the CVEK's research shows, from the perspective of age, differences between age groups were visible as people aged 18 – 34 were significantly more open toward the others than age groups of 55 and more (Kriglerová, Kadlečíková, Chudžíková, & Píšová, 2021, p. 32). Furthermore, young people were more often in contact with foreigners whom they had either among their friends (people aged 18 - 24) or among their co-workers (people aged 34 - 44) (Kriglerová, Kadlečíková, Chudžíková, & Píšová, 2021, p. 34).

Similar data were published in International Office for Migration's publication (Vašečka, 2009) - the older the respondent, the more often they stated that people from different cultures differ too much to coexist (p. 20). Regarding age, respondents over 55 were less open to cultural diversity, while respondents aged 44 and under were significantly more open (Vašečka, 2009, p. 24). Younger age groups, especially respondents under the age of 44, have regular contact with foreigners. On the contrary, older respondents (especially those aged 55 and over) were more likely to say they did not encounter foreigners at all (Vašečka, 2009, p. 31).

Furthermore, data from GLOBSEC (2020) show that among the V4 countries, 51 per cent of young Slovaks believe that the values of Slovakia are in line with the values of

the EU, which are human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law, and protection of human rights (European Commission, n.d.). Therefore, we can expect the subjects of this study to be more EU oriented and more open towards migrants as they are people aged 18 – 30 who are more accepting, as all previous studies show.

Regarding the scope of the people interviewed for this thesis, the youngest interviewee was 18 years old while the oldest was 30 years old. Therefore, based on the quantitative data mentioned above, we can assume that people interviewed for this thesis will be more open towards the *otherness* and migration as such.

According to the findings of Bútorová et al. (2017), the average values in both dimensions show a slightly greater openness of the young generation under the age of 34. At the same time, the closest to cultural openness are people with a university degree. However, for all age and educational groups, the values of cultural closure and national sovereignty are closer, while the values of multiculturalism, openness and integration are perceived as more distant (Bútorová, Gyárfášová, Mesežnikov, & Velšic, 2017).

Level of Education

In the same aspect, the level of education also forms an individual's either closeness or openness to new elements. As IOM's data show (Vašečka, 2009), there was a difference between people with primary and secondary education without a diploma and people with university and secondary education with a high school diploma, who were eventually more open toward the *otherness* (p. 32). Furthermore, the study indicates that people with a lower level of education are much less or even not at all in contact with foreigners. In contrast, it is much more common for the higher educated people to have a foreigner as a close friend (Vašečka, 2009, p. 34).

According to CVEK's study (Kriglerová, Kadlečíková, Chudžíková, & Píšová, 2021), higher educated people stated more often that the presence of foreigners did not change (or improve) the state's or society's security situation (p. 48). Concerning adaptation to Slovak traditions, higher educated people stated foreigners should

adapt to a certain degree while the ones with a lower education stated they should adapt unconditionally and fully (Križlerová, Kadlečíková, Chudžíková, & Píšová, 2021, p. 77). Also, the less educated believed more strongly that Slovak culture is better than any other culture and less open toward cultural diversity. Therefore, the more educated person, the more open-minded individual. As 90 per cent of the people interviewed for this thesis are people with university degrees, there is an assumption that the opinions regarding migrants will be relatively positive.

Sojourn Abroad and Contact with Foreigners

As mentioned above, with the possibilities to travel more than in the past, support for student mobility by EU programs and opened borders within the Schengen area, the young generation has more incentives to study abroad or stay there for a more extended period. Consequently, by supporting personal experience with migration, young individuals are expected to be more open towards the *otherness*. Over the period of twelve years, as a response to the question of experience with living abroad for more than three months, the response slightly grew from fourteen per cent (in IOM 2009 study) to seventeen per cent (in CVEK 2021 study) (Križlerová, Kadlečíková, Chudžíková, & Píšová, 2021, p. 35).

According to IOM (Vašečka, 2009), those with experience of sojourn abroad have significantly more positive and more welcoming attitudes towards foreigners in Slovakia (p. 57). Moreover, from those asked about their experience with their stay, 42.4 per cent stated they had definitely a positive experience, followed by 29.7 per cent with a relatively positive experience (Križlerová, Kadlečíková, Chudžíková, & Píšová, 2021, p. 36).

Suppose we compare the experience with foreigners of respondents who have lived abroad for at least three months and respondents who do not have such experience. In that case, it can be said that those respondents who have a personal migration experience are dominated (55.2 per cent) by good or somewhat good experiences with foreigners. Respondents who do not have personal experience most often stated that neither good nor bad experiences with foreigners predominate (55.7 per

cent). Only 32.7 per cent of these respondents reported a good or rather good experience (Križlerová, Kadlečíková, Chudžíková, & Píšová, 2021, p. 37).

Regarding the respondents for this thesis, most of them reported a more extended stay abroad. Consequently, we can expect people who lived abroad to show a more open attitude toward people of other nationalities and cultures and their existence in Slovakia. Moreover, because all of these people had experience with foreigners and other cultures at some level, there is a belief that they are more welcoming even if they are not in constant contact.

Region of Residency

The location of residency is also very crucial when it comes to opinion formation. In Slovakia, the country is divided into municipalities with significant and visible differences between western and eastern Slovakia. While the living standard is higher in the west, with the capital city Bratislava being the business hub, the rest of the country is more agriculture and industry-oriented. Therefore, we could assume that in the west, where many foreign people reside because of their jobs, people are more open towards migrants than in eastern Slovakia.

Data from IOM show that the opinions regarding migration are also significantly different in cities and villages based on the number of residents; in cities with two to five thousand and 50,000 to 100,000 inhabitants, an open attitude prevails regarding the work of foreigners (Vašečka, 2009, p. 69). In Bratislava and Košice, the opinion prevails that anyone who finds a legal job can work in Slovakia under the same conditions as a Slovak citizen (Vašečka, 2009, p. 69). On the contrary, people from municipalities with less than 2,000 inhabitants expressed that migration to Slovakia should be minimised under all conditions (Vašečka, 2009, p. 69). Therefore, regarding the people interviewed for this thesis, we could assume that those who live or study in larger cities will be more open toward migrants than those from smaller villages and eastern Slovakia.

Table 1 (Study) Residency of respondents according to population

LOCATION	REGION	POPULATION*	STATUS***
VEĽKÝ GROB	WESTERN SLOVAKIA	1 425	RESIDENCY
DOBRÁ NIVA	MIDDLE SLOVAKIA	1 862	RESIDENCY
DRIETOMA	WESTERN SLOVAKIA	2 233	RESIDENCY
SPIŠSKÉ VLACHY	EASTERN SLOVAKIA	3 387	RESIDENCY
SEČOVCE	EASTERN SLOVAKIA	8 526	RESIDENCY
SKALICA	WESTERN SLOVAKIA	15 573	RESIDENCY
TREBIŠOV	EASTERN SLOVAKIA	23 213	RESIDENCY
PRIEVIDZA	WESTERN SLOVAKIA	45 017	RESIDENCY
ŽILINA	MIDDLE SLOVAKIA	82 656	STUDY RESIDENCY
BRNO	CZECH REPUBLIC	379 526**	STUDY RESIDENCY
BRATISLAVA	WESTERN SLOVAKIA	475 503	(STUDY) RESIDENCY

*Source: Statistical Office of Slovak Republic, 2021

** Source: Statistical Office of the Czech Republic, 2018

***Residency = permanent residency | Study residency = temporary residency

Religion

According to the Slovak Constitution, Slovakia is portrayed and perceived as a Christian country even though there is no official state religion. Suppose we consider that 55.76 per cent of the Slovak population affiliate themselves with the Christian Catholic Church; we can assume that the acceptance of other religions will be slightly unfavourable (Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, 2022). Data provided by CVEK (Kriglerová, Kadlečíková, Chudžíková, & Píšová, 2021) show that their respondents were scared that Christianity will fade away once new religions are accepted. In fact, less than thirteen per cent of respondents believe that people of other religions should have the right to practice their faith on the same level as Christians (Kriglerová, Kadlečíková, Chudžíková, & Píšová, 2021, p. 107). Moreover, 43 per cent of respondents believe that Islam is dangerous for Slovakia and should not be allowed (Kriglerová, Kadlečíková, Chudžíková, & Píšová, 2021, p. 11). Regarding travelling and personal experience with foreigners, religious people tend to be absent from sojourn abroad as the majority of the ones who have the experience are non-religious individuals (Vašečka, 2009, p. 59).

Political Preferences

According to data from the Inštitút pre verejné otázky (Institute for public affairs) (Bútorová, Gyárfášová, Mesežnikov, & Velšic, 2017), voters of political parties such as Ordinary People and Independent Personalities (OĽANO)¹², Christian Democratic Movement (KDH)¹³, and K-ĽSNS (in that order from the least to the most) are generally culturally closed (p. 24). Therefore, we can expect respondents of this study who voted for these parties to be less open to migration¹⁴.

Similarly, research conducted in June 2020 by Focus Agency for Milan Šimečka Foundation showed that voters of Progressive Slovakia¹⁵ (PS) and Freedom and Solidarity (SaS)¹⁶ favour admission of the majority of non-religious migrants, while voters of Movement Republic (Republika),¹⁷ SMER-SD, KDH, and We are a Family would opt for the other extreme – admitting no migrants. Voters of K-ĽSNS and OĽANO are somewhere in between (Sivý, 2021).

In the scope of the respondents for this project, most people voted¹⁸ for PS (4 votes) and OĽANO (3), while the rest of the political parties gained, respectively, one vote each. While the voters' preference would be the same for PS, OĽANO would have no votes in 2024 parliamentary elections, KDH would gain one vote (2 votes in total) together with Republika (1). Further, respondents who identified as liberals voted exclusively for PS and OĽANO, while those who identified as conservatives voted for the rest.

¹² Obyčajní Ľudia a Nezávislé Osobnosti (Ordinary People and Independent Personalities)

¹³ Kresťanskodemokratické Hnutie (Christian democratic movement)

¹⁴ Voters of political parties PS, K-ĽSNS, and Republic were not included in the IVO (2017) study as they formed after the study was conducted.

¹⁵ Progresívne Slovensko (Progressive Slovakia)

¹⁶ Sloboda a Solidarita (Freedom and Solidarity)

¹⁷ Hnutie Republika (Movement Republic)

¹⁸ In 2020 Parliamentary Elections.

Perception of Migrants and National Identity in Data

Twelve young people were interviewed for this project, with additional two interviews conducted with experts from the field of migration in Slovakia. In this chapter, the author will analyse the gained data in three thematic sections: (i) how young Slovaks view migration in Slovakia, (ii) whether they feel the presence of securitising discourse in this topic, and (iii) the role of identity concerning migration. The author will show that the younger generation of Slovaks is more open to migration as they travel more, speak more languages, and experience different cultures. Because of the information and media era, the generation is very much informed about securitisation and aware of the fact that in the case of Slovakia, migrants and migration were victims of politicians. The interviews show that there is awareness about securitisation, but the impact on the younger generation is minimal. However, while they are generally more open towards foreigners, there is still scepticism about Muslim migrants, as their culture is very distant from the Slovak culture. Therefore, there are certain stereotypes about migrants resulting from securitisation and media coverage, and the national identity still plays its role even among the young Slovaks.

I. Perception of Migrants in Slovakia

IS SLOVAKIA MULTICULTURAL?

The region of Slovakia was historically vastly multicultural since it was a part of the multinational Habsburg monarchy. According to Filadelfiová and Hlinčíková (2010), there is no single "Slovak monolithic culture" that migrants should adapt to (p. 11). With the Slavic ancestors settling here at the turn of the fifth to the sixth century and later by Hungarians, the ethnic diversity was enriched by Germans, Jews, Ruthenians, Celts, and Wallachians (Zalčíková, 2011, p. 173). Each of these ethnic groups left something behind, even if they did not stay in the region for long – some left their vocabulary, others their cuisine or architecture. These groups were later joined by Roma, Serbs, Croats, and Czechs (Zalčíková, 2011, p. 173).

While Slovaks expect migrants to waive their culture and traditions and accept *our* traditions, defining what *ours* really means is complicated. Thanks to the historical geopolitical merging and splitting of the Slovak Republic, the trade routes and transit migrants, the territory of Slovakia experienced many different cultures which formed its people and traditions. Stating so, one of the participants have pointed out the presence of Hungarians: *"I have nothing against them, but they are so stubborn. Since they are in Slovakia, they should follow our rules, they should adapt."*¹⁹ (man, 24, Spišské Vlachy)

According to the last census conducted in 2021, the reported nationalities were Slovak (83.8 per cent), Hungarian (7.8 per cent), Romani (1.2 per cent), Ruthenian (0.6 per cent), Czech (0.5 per cent), and Ukrainian (0.2 per cent) (Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, 2022). However, one of the interviewees feels the presence of Vietnamese and English foreigners who do not form any significant numbers according to the census. The respondent does not feel that Slovakia is closed for other nations but acknowledges that *"Slovakia is not very attractive for different cultures, rather from those neighbouring eastern countries"* (woman, 24, Veľký Grob).

While other nationalities are present, it would be hard to claim that Slovakia is multicultural, which most respondents concluded. A geographical distinction was mentioned by several respondents, with the Southern and Eastern Slovakia being *"more conservative than some other areas, especially Western Slovakia"* (man, 25, Prievidza). In contrast, others pointed out the differences between the (big) cities and towns, claiming that Bratislava and Košice can be considered multicultural cities while the rest of Slovakia cannot. The reasons for it are that

In Bratislava, people are more open-minded, travel more, and meet more people. When I look at the countryside, those people have never stuck their noses out of their region because firstly they have no money for it and secondly, that ambition is missing. (man, 26, Bratislava)

¹⁹ Author's note: *italicized* quotes will refer to answers provided by respondents to distinguish them more clearly from the sections used from academic sources and articles.

This distinction was also supported by an expert opinion, adding that

In Bratislava, the number of foreigners is well above ten per cent and growing, starting to look like other European capitals. Hence, the attitude towards migrants and foreigners is incomparably different than in other parts of Slovakia. (expert from BPI)

Nonetheless, some people claim they believe Slovakia is, in fact, multicultural as they feel the presence in their city in ways of cuisine: *“There are many kebabs her”* and languages: *“you will hear foreign language conversations on the walk”* concluding that *“we accept foreigners more than we do not”* (man, 21, Bratislava).

WHAT DOES SLOVAKIA GAIN FROM MIGRATION?

According to the CVEK study (Kriglerová, Kadlečíková, Chudžíková, & Píšová, 2021), it turns out that contact with foreigners, or certain relations that Slovaks establish with foreigners, allows people to perceive the positive aspects of migration, such as cultural enrichment (p. 27). This was also observed during the interviews.

There is a general consensus in the society that migrants come to Slovakia and then take jobs from the Slovaks. Once someone visits a building site, they will soon realise that majority of the people there are Roma workers, followed by various groups of Ukrainians and Serbs: *“They [Ukrainians] will make the job faster, better, and for less money than Slovaks because they respect the work”* (man, 24, Spišské Vlachy). As this respondent does not feel that migrants are taking Slovaks' jobs, the other recognises that the reason why migrants work in low-qualified positions is that *“many Slovaks do not want to work. What Ukrainians do here would Slovaks not do because they are too proud for that kind of job. I am referring mainly to manual work”* (man, 22, Sečovce).

Among the regular answers for the proposed question such as respect, the opportunity to learn, and cultural variety, this particular answer stands out:

The benefit is huge. If you have at least a little humility, you can learn a lot. People who bring otherness in any sense and extent are

free school. They will bring different cultures, customs, mentalities, and a different perception of reality to your doorsteps. It teaches respect if people are open to it. (man, 26, Bratislava)

Lastly, one of the aspects a foreign culture leaves behind is the cuisine, thanks to which the gastronomy in the country becomes more diverse:

When you go to Hamburg, you can get food from all parts of the world, because there are people from all parts of the world. Thus, the city can be perceived as global because people can experience another culture just by walking down the street. (man, 28, Skalica)

WAS THERE A MOMENT THAT SHAPED YOUR VIEW ON MIGRANTS?

As the expert from Mareena stated, “All it takes for the young people to change their view on migration is one positive experience, nothing more”. Hence, the personal experience is a significant factor in opinion-shaping, with those who have personal experiences or meet foreigners more often holding somewhat positive views on migrants.

One of the respondents, who moved to Brno for university, mentioned how certain he was that Czechs would never accept him fully and perceive him only as another young Slovak who will temporarily stay to finish his degree. To his surprise, the moment of disrespect and closeness never came from the Czech site:

The acceptance I received taught me to accept anyone from anywhere—also, migration changes over time. It does not matter if you are a migrant, single mother, or anyone else with any other ‘otherness’. We [Slovaks] are so conservative that only when those ‘others’ somehow integrate into our community do we realise that they are also human beings with two legs and two arms. (man, 26, Bratislava)

Another respondent pointed out a recent migration crisis that puts him differently into reality

When one sees that not even 500 km from us²⁰, people who want to get here die at the border. They want a chance at life and believe that the chance is in Europe. (man, 28, Skalica)

Among the relatively positive views on migration developed by a personal encounter, there is one from the other side of the spectrum - based on his friend's story, one of the respondents noted that

There is a refugee camp in Humenné²¹ with refugees from Africa, and it is a disaster there. They [refugees] do not come here for work, and they are already behaving like our gypsies - they will set up shackles, the state will give them money, food, clothes, and even give them phones and let them go live just like that. (man, 24, Spišské Vlachy)

One of the respondents went on a train trip across the Balkans in 2015 when the migration crisis took place, and he considers it a very eye-opening experience:

The disorganization shed a bad light on migration. It is probably something that no one likes to see, and we never had a situation like that in our region. It certainly only helped that society had to face it and deal with it. There was definitely fear at the beginning, maybe even resistance, but I think that is the way how to build positive relationships. (man, 25, Prievidza)

There was scepticism among some people as an outcome of the 2015 migration crisis. Some of them realised that the situation in Slovakia was hugely securitised and used by the politicians who *"have ridden the wave of migration quite incredibly"* (man, 26, Drietoma). This usage of migration left behind rather a negative feeling that leads people to question whether Slovakia, even though being one of the wealthiest countries in the world, can accept the *others*.

²⁰ Reference to migration crisis on the Poland-Belarusian border in 2021.

²¹ The evacuation transit centre in Humenné provides temporary placement for a maximum of six months for those refugees who need to be urgently evacuated from the country where they sought refuge for the first time, due to the risk of return to the territory where they would face refoulement or dangerous, unstable, or inhuman conditions (UNHCR Slovakia, 2016).

II. Securitising Discourse

While the anti-Muslim response of the Western European states was constantly developing with its apex after 9/11, the phenomenon of securitisation of migration came to be alive in Slovakia only recently. As Tabosa (2020) shows in her study, immigration was not mentioned as an issue until the year 2014, while as for 2015, immigration became “the third most mentioned issue for Slovaks” (p. 13). The name connected the most with a solid anti-immigrant, and anti-Muslim rhetoric is Robert Fico, the prime minister of Slovakia during the migration crisis in 2015. As a high-level politician with power, he helped to promote the topic of migration to the level of existential threat. He made a clear connection between migrants, Muslims, and terrorists by claiming that “80 per cent of migrants are men, the overwhelming majority of them aged 25-35, not women with children fleeing war” (Fico, 2016, as quoted in Tabosa, 2020, p. 14). Therefore, the author decided to ask the respondents what they think immigrants look like and why they come to Slovakia.

WHAT DO YOU THINK A MIGRANT LOOKS LIKE?

Just as R. Fico stated in the quote above, two features most of the respondents agreed on were age and gender; they all pictured a man in his thirties. The second most mentioned feature connecting the responses was that the man comes from an Arabic country and is, therefore, a Muslim. Three respondents mentioned a dark-skinned man from an African country, while only one person stated they think of a Slavic-type man when picturing a migrant. Interestingly, even though the question asked about migrants in general, the vast majority of respondents automatically envisioned a refugee.

One person distinguished between man and woman – while men were coming alone for economic purposes, women accompanied their children and fled their home because of war. Only three respondents mentioned women as either accompanying the men or children, while the rest pictured a man travelling alone. Regarding the feelings, the most mentioned were the feelings of fear, tiredness, and exhaustion.

One respondent made a direct comparison to a marginalised Roma people in Slovakia:

I imagine them [migrants] as our Roma. They [migrants] did not convince me that they would be of any value to the state, receiving only benefits and not working. If they convince me and I see that they are working and want to improve something for themselves and us, it will be about something else. (man, 24, Spišské Vlachy)

In Slovakia, the incompetence of the politicians and policymakers to integrate the Roma community was a huge point that let respondents be sceptical about the possibility to integrate very distant cultures into the system. Consequently, unintegrated migrant communities will become a thorn in the eye due to inconsistent integration policies, assuring people of the prejudices they might already have. One of them is crime increase.

WOULD YOU SAY MIGRATION RAISES THE CRIME RATE IN A COUNTRY?

After 2015, migration happened to be a victim of the strongly securitising rhetoric of politicians running for parliamentary elections in Slovakia. Roads were filled up by billboards from the SMER-SD party with a slogan *Chránime Slovensko [We protect Slovakia]*, while politicians claimed Muslims are under heavy surveillance from the Slovak Information Service setting aside one million euros to buy a fence against migrants. According to the CVEK study (Kriglerová, Kadlečíková, Chudžíková, & Pířová, 2021), the securitising rhetoric was very efficacious as more than two-thirds of people (64.8 per cent) believe that the presence of foreigners "more or decisively" worsens crime in Slovakia (p. 47). Furthermore, 62.3 per cent of people believe it worsens national security as well (p. 47). Slightly more negative data were reported by the IOM's study, conducted twelve years prior to CVEK's, with 67.9 per cent of people concerned about the possible increase in crime by some foreigners (Vašečka, 2009, p. 47).

The results are very different in the scope of respondents interviewed for this thesis. Half of the respondents stated there is no direct connection between migration and

increased crime rate. Many of them believe that the more people, the higher the criminality rate and that, in general, *“bad people commit more crime, and it has nothing to do with migration”* (man, 18, Bratislava).

There were only two people who stated that migrants tend to increase the crime rate, namely Black people as they *“are committing more crime which can also be justified by the environment they grow up in and the lack of opportunities they get. Also, I feel like they do not have such a culture of respect as we do”* (man, 21, Bratislava). As for the second respondent, although he did not say directly that migrants were worsening crime, he emphasized that their number was significant. In particular, if migrants *“make up 25-30 per cent of the home country's population, the situation can become dangerous”* (man, 29, Dobrá Niva).

The rest of the respondents stated that it is highly individualistic and depends on the person. While there might be criminals among the Black community, there are criminals among the Caucasian people as well: *“I can feel more threatened by white Slovak guys than any other person of colour”* (woman, 24, Trebišov). The same applies to religious groups – just as much as there are criminal Muslims, there are criminal Christians and Jews. The respondents stated that *“Poor people are forced to look for sometimes illegal shortcuts out of their desperate situation”* (man, 26, Skalica), or that it also depends on *“the hosting society which might not be opened towards migrants and therefore be more aggressive towards them”* (woman, 24, Veľký Grob). Two respondents believe that migrants, in general, are not causing a higher rate of criminality, but the extremists are. Also, the danger is more significant *“in communities which are not fully integrated into the society and hence they are building their districts where a white person cannot even go to”* (man, 22, Bratislava).

The conflict of religions and its radicalization is also noted by Kouhossounon (2017), who states that European countries are *“facing an increasing rate of vandalism, with its sources mostly coming from religious ideologies, religious radicalism, Islamic jihadism and, moreover, from the Islamic state”* (pp. 223-224).

SHOULD MUSLIMS HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO PRACTICE THEIR FAITH ON THE SAME LEVEL AS SLOVAK CHRISTIANS?

Slovak Constitution, adopted in 1993, clearly states that “It is not bound to any ideology or religion” (Const. of SR art. 1 par. 1). Further, the Slovak Republic is internationally bounded by the United Nations' Declaration of Human Rights (1948), International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966), and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966) and the Council of Europe's European Convention on Human Rights (1950), through which Slovakia has agreed to promote and secure freedom of religion.

As was already mentioned in this thesis, the Slovak National Council proposed an amendment to a law that would adjust the number of signatories needed to officially recognize a new church from 20 000 to 50 000. The law came into effect in March 2017, shortly after the migration crisis and the heavy securitisation of the topic.

Data from the 2021 census show that only five religious groups out of eighteen would pass through the threshold of 50 000²² (Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, 2022). Having this in mind, it is a highly inhospitable environment for any new religion that would like to become officially recognized in Slovakia. *“Every time they [Muslims] try to move forward, there are new obstacles – those signatories, the fact that we are the last country in EU that does not have a mosque”* (expert from Mareena). Without a change in the Slovak law, there will not be any other world religion represented in the country in the near future.

The official state recognition of Islam would be, firstly, a welcoming step. Secondly, through state funding, the state would gain control over Islam, and thirdly, by recognizing Islam, we would be able to prevent the potential radicalization of Muslims in Slovakia more easily. (expert from BPI)

While the legislative system is firmly set up not to accept other religions, people's views are quite different. For example, IVO's research from 2017 showed that just

²² In 2021 consensus, 3 862 individuals reported Islam as their religion (Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, 2022).

after 2015, the social distance to Muslims increased by almost 30 percentage points and that the most negative emotions related to foreigners were associated with refugees and Muslims (Kriglerová, Kadlečíková, Chudžíková, & Pířová, 2021, p. 52).

The data gathered for this thesis show the same phenomenon as the CVEK study data; most of the younger respondents said that freedom of religion should be guaranteed to everyone, regardless of the type of religion. Since the scope of the respondents for this thesis were only young individuals, we can observe that seven out of twelve agreed to Muslims having the same level of religious freedom and rights as Christians. Out of those seven respondents, four identified as religious people, with two of them going to church two times a week and two of them three times a week.

Only three respondents would allow Muslims to officially register their religion with limitations, such as banning female coverage since it is *“dangerous as they are hard to be identified”* (man, 22, Bratislava). Moreover, Muslims would be advised to practice their religion *“only privately or convert to Christianity but not by force”* (man, 29, Dobrá Niva). On top of that, Slovaks should *“not let them [Muslims] despise what is here in Slovakia already [Christian values], not let them build their mosques on non-functional churches, and not let them force others to convert to Islam”* (man, 26, Bratislava). Out of those three respondents, two identify as religious, and only one goes to church.

Only two respondents claimed that Muslims should not have the same rights and freedoms as Christians mainly because *“Christianity is the most widespread religion in Slovakia and there could not be a mosque in every village as it is with churches”* (man, 24, Spiřské Vlchy) and because *“the values and traditions should stay Slovak and Christian”* (man, 22, Sečovce). Out of those two respondents, one identifies as religious and goes to church two times a week, while the other identifies as a non-religious person. Both of them are from eastern Slovakia.

WHAT IS YOUR POLITICAL PREFERENCE, AND DO YOU IDENTIFY AS A CONSERVATIVE OR LIBERAL?

The anti-immigration rhetoric of the Slovak political elites has been mentioned here already a few times. Political parties' election programmes are no longer available for further analysis, but few have their general programmes shared on their web pages. One of them is Republika, a patriotic and conservative political party, which would gain a vote from one respondent for this thesis, mainly because he likes *“MEP Milan Uhrík, who knows what he is saying and there is no such racism [as there is in K-ĽSNS, a party the respondent voted for in the last parliamentary elections] in a sense that we will take to the streets and stand against the Roma”* (man, 24, Spišské Vlachy). However, MEP Uhrík shared his contribution to plenary debates on his Twitter account, saying that *“We, in Slovakia, do not want to receive #migrants. None of us, none of you, has the right to #force us to want them”* (Uhrík, 2021). Furthermore, the party in its program states that they push for the EU to return to its *“purely economic platform of independent and sovereign states”* and that they *“refuse immigrants from the Middle East and Africa, dangerous ideologies and gender policies, European federalization, transfer of national competencies and unpleasant political pressure”* (Hnutie Republika, 2022).

Another political party, Homeland (Vlasť)²³, which has announced its bankruptcy in April 2021, shared on its working programme that they

Will enforce the cessation of the admission of any illegal economic migrants to Slovakia due to the organized constant increase in their numbers in the EU... We will push for the announcement of the termination of adoption of the Global Pact on Refugees, which puts Slovakia in terms of its sovereignty under management and control from abroad and poses a severe risk to the security of Slovak citizens. (Vlasť, 2022)

When it comes to the most far-right party in Slovakia, K-ĽSNS, their programme is not available online, but their rallies are. *Denník N*, a Slovak newspaper, visited one

²³ Vlasť (Homeland)

of the rallies and wrote that Marian Kotleba, the party leader, urged for border protection so that immigrants from Hungary do not abuse the people of this region (Sudor, 2016). "If we are given such a mandate that we will be able to decide on this, we will not only not accept a single migrant, but will also expel those who have been brought here" (Kotleba, 2016 as cited in Sudor, 2016). Kotleba goes even further and connects the Roma minority with immigrants, which is a connection directly made by the respondent for this thesis who voted for K-ĽSNS:

A dark African citizen comes to Slovakia or passes through Slovakia so that he does not have to be in his country so that he does not have to work. This is why our gypsies from Spiš work in England. African migrants come here to benefit from the state support, just as our gypsies. (man, 24, Spišské Vlachy)

The last party that got the respondents' votes for this thesis is KDH, a conservative Christian democratic party. According to Denník N, on the one hand, KDH talks about the need to help refugees, and, on the other hand, the party portrays them as threats to European "Christian" society (Hlinčíková, 2016). Further, KDH believes that Slovakia should help those in need but with a distinction between those who are and who are not eligible for the help, which, according to Hlinčíková, might be an indicator for the "right" religious belief to be one of the merits in the process of asylum granting (Hlinčíková, 2016). This merit eventually took its position in the decision process as Slovakia made headlines by accepting only Christian asylum seekers and refugees as they would fit into the Slovak culture more efficiently: *The Washington Post* headline saying: "Slovakia Will Take in 200 Syrian Refugees, but They Have to be Christian" (Tharoor, 2015), *BBC News*: "Migrants Crisis: Slovakia 'will Only Accept Christians'" (BBC News, 2015) or *Daily Sabah*: "Slovakia Refuses Entry of Muslim Migrants" (Terece, 2015).

Interestingly, the political preference was not a clear indicator for forming respondents' views on migrants. None of those who voted (or would vote) for nationalistic parties such as K-ĽSNS, Vlasť, and Republika, were strongly opposing migration as such. However, the respondent who voted for K-ĽSNS and would vote

for Republika did acquire the anti-Roma and anti-African rhetoric of the K-ĽSNS leader. Still, as he said during the interview, he explicitly *“did not vote for Kotleba for his racism but because of the party’s policy regarding the use of Slovak manufacturers, suppliers, and products”* (man, 24. Spišské Vlachy). Nevertheless, when it comes to migrants, the respondent believes that if they contribute to the Slovak system by being legally employed, they are very much needed and welcomed.

When it comes to the respondent who voted for Vlasť, he did not show any signs of any systematic hatred towards migrants, as he experienced how it feels to become one. However, he mentioned the need for the EU states to help the emigrating nations via increased development aid (man, 29, Dobrá Niva). Regarding the voters of KDH, none explicitly mentioned they are against Muslim migrants and refugees. Hence, it can be concluded that respondents for this thesis were not voting for the political parties because of the party’s anti-immigration agenda since none of them opposed migration.

III. Identity Role

“Each society has ‘its’ state and each state ‘its’ society. Societal security – defined as the cultural, linguistic and identitive survival of a particular social group – then becomes the logical extension of the security” (Theiler, 2003, p. 250). The author already introduced the connection between identity and its connection to securitisation, backed up by academics such as Potočárová (2018) and Tabosa (2020). As Theiler (2003) further states, the groups formed within a state want to preserve the ‘group markers’ such as values, habits, language, traditions, and rituals (p. 251). Hence, *“people who come from a different cultural background are a big challenge for the type of people who want to maintain the identity that their parents have given them”* (expert from BPI). Suppose societal security exists to help these groups preserve their authenticity and identity. In that case, it is a valuable tool: *“It comes hand in hand with the need that we [Slovaks] always have to protect something, in this case, our Slovak nation”* (expert from Mareena). However, once each community wants to enhance their differences, it will be easy for people

opposing these groups to categorize them, eventually making a clear distinction between *us* and the *others*. Those 'group makers' appeared to be quite a significant indicator of what makes Slovaks Slovak and when a foreigner can call themselves a part of this national group.

WHAT VALUES AND BEHAVIOUR SHOULD A MIGRANT ACQUIRE IN ORDER TO CALL THEMSELVES SLOVAK?

A strong relationship with family members, connections needed to secure oneself a better job position, mistrustful, kisses on the cheeks, seeing the world only black and white, and the reluctance to change what has been well-established – these are some of the characteristics of Slovaks described by foreigners living in Slovakia (Križnerová, et al., 2016). According to the respondents for this thesis, Slovaks are, on the one hand, purposeful and hard-working (man, 29, Dobrá Niva), while on the other hand, they are lazy, envious, and constantly complaining while not doing anything (man, 24, Spišské Vlachy). Regarding the responses gathered for this thesis, there are also a few core elements that should migrants acquire to become a part of the Slovak community. However, none of the respondents said explicitly that THIS is the ONE thing that makes Slovaks Slovak – all of the respondents had to take a few minutes to think about their response.

One of the most repeated answers was the need for the foreigners to learn Slovak to communicate with the local people efficiently and adequately. The importance of language was considered significant by less than five per cent of respondents of a study conducted for the Milan Šimečka Foundation (Sivý, 2021). The second most common answers were both the interest in the local lifestyle and some degree of affection towards Slovakia and the lust for integration into the Slovak community.

Another aspect that plays a role in transiting from a foreigner to a Slovak is the length of the stay. While some respondents were general about their answers, some were quite specific and set the shortest considerable stay to at least five years. The study for Milan Šimečka Foundation shows that the length of the stay is the most crucial aspect (32,5 per cent) in the transition process, with the requirement of foreigners spending more than half of their life in Slovakia (Sivý, 2021). Lastly, the

receipt of legal documents such as citizenship and permanent residence as well as the knowledge of Slovak laws were other aspects mentioned by the interviewees.

Therefore, we can conclude that there are certain aspects, such as religion, the length of stay and the motivation to be a part of the Slovak group, which can help people from the outside, the *others*, become a part of *us*. Nevertheless, certain specific groups of people are considered to adapt to the Slovak culture more quickly than others.

WHICH MIGRANTS ARE PERCEIVED AS MORE ACCEPTABLE FOR SLOVAKS?

When it comes to determining who is more acceptable for Slovak society, a few aspects influence the results, and one of them is group identity. As Theiler (2003) shows in his study through the social identity theory, groups “display consistent ingroup favouritism” as “we tend to see those who are placed in the same category – *including ourselves* – as more similar to each other than is actually the case while we overestimate the differences that separate us from members of other groups” (pp. 259 - 260). CVEK’s study provides results showing that Slovaks are more acceptable towards foreigners who (a) are highly qualified workers (teachers, doctors, scientists, and medical personnel) and who (b) are culturally close to Slovaks (Vašečka, 2009, pp. 71-73). On the other hand, Slovaks are less open towards foreigners from less developed and poorer countries (73,1 per cent agreed to this thesis) (Vašečka, 2009, p. 72). Religion is also an important indicator, as was shown in previous chapters.

Regarding the data from the interviews, the most often mentioned feature of those more acceptable was their Caucasian origin, most preferably a Slavic person. Among these, Ukrainians and Poles were marked as the most readily acceptable. These were followed by both students and highly educated people who would enhance Slovak society. Economic migrants who would work in Slovakia and hence contribute to the system were the third most commonly mentioned factor followed by the need to be Christians since Slovakia is a Christian country. As the scope of respondents for this project believed that white, Slavic, and more educated people are considered more acceptable for the Slovak society, the data from the interviews correspond with the findings from CVEK’s study (2009).

Conclusion and Discussion

Slovakia has been an emigrating country for a long time, and many families have relatives who emigrated to the USA, Germany, or United Kingdom. Currently, many Slovaks also have first-hand personal experiences as migrants outside Slovakia as exchange students or workers. This, however, applies mainly to a younger generation, which was the group analysed within the scope of this thesis. Currently, the country is slowly becoming a more attractive country for foreigners. Hence, the local community is going to be seeing people of different nationalities in public transports, shops, and churches. The national identity of Slovaks will need to be adapted by foreigners so that the country can prosper – both economically and socially. Therefore, the discourse on the protection of national identity is becoming more evident.

On the other hand, the protection can be misused and consequently become a tool for manipulation on fame-gaining. This is what has happened in Slovakia after the migration crisis in 2015. The migration crisis was heavily securitised by the Slovak political elites, who were artificially creating a scarecrow to earn votes, as the securitisation was at its peak during the election campaigns.

Various data and research show that Slovaks are naturally more closed towards their own and the outsiders. The reason behind it might be the communist regime which forced people to trust less and verify more. As a relatively young nation, the country went through several changes – from a united Czechoslovak state to Slovakia, from communism to Mečiarism, from finding their own identity to finding themselves a part of the European Union. The current generation seems to be the turning point between today and the post-communist era, as today children did not experience it, and the generation which did is dying out. The differences between older and younger people are seen in data regarding the acceptance of foreign cultures, as young people tend to travel more and speak more languages.

The focus question for this thesis has been the impact of the heavily securitised discourse of Muslim migrants on young Slovaks. The younger generation seems to be a turning point in the spectrum of openness as all respondents expressed that

migration is natural, necessary, economically beneficial, and welcomed at certain levels. Indeed, various factors are shaping the opinions, such as religion and the difference between a more open urban environment versus a more conservative rural environment. Nevertheless, most of the people interviewed for this thesis agreed that Muslims should have their religion officially recognized by Slovakia as the right for religion is a right of everyone. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is an understanding of the securitisation of migration among the respondents; a few of them mentioned the rhetoric of politicians who are using it to gain votes. However, the individuals from the younger generation do not seem to be personally impacted by it and do not perceive migrants as a threat. Indeed, they are more sceptical about Muslims, as their radicalization and its consequences were and are heavily medialized in European media (as they were designed to entertain the audience). The distance of cultures and the lack of personal contact with Muslims are also factors that create a distance between *them* and *us*.

Nevertheless, most respondents did not show any intense hatred towards Muslims. When it comes to the influence of national identity, the need to preserve it was a significant factor in deciding who could be called Slovak and who not. The focus was mainly on the language as it was the most commonly mentioned factor, followed by the length of the stay and the foreigner's interest and relationship with Slovakia. As some respondents said, foreigners should follow the Slovak way of life to assimilate into society.

The findings of this thesis aim to fill the gap in the coverage of securitisation theory through the lenses of the societal sector applied to Slovakia. The results of this thesis are significant mainly because of the lack of analysis of the impact and consequences of the securitisation of migrants in Slovak society. This research is relevant for people from academia, experts in the field of migration, and the general public. As for the latter one, this study should be eye-opening with a hope to evoke a realisation moment that the whole situation about the migrants in Slovakia was built based on fear-selling and power restoration, with a touch of the understanding of group identity and the hands which pull the strings in the backstage.

With all being said, this study broadens the understanding of the securitisation of migrants, which could later, with further detailed research, serve policymakers and think-thanks as a source of knowledge. Because of the time limitation, this thesis does not detail the broad society's perception of (Muslim) migrants. Therefore, further research should be conducted to analyse the behavioural connections between securitisation and its impact on society in different societal and psychological sectors by a more representative sample (age group, regional representation, level of education).

Resumé

Migrácia bola v rokoch migračnej krízy pre Slovensko témou, ktorá hýbala politickým, ale aj spoločenským dianím. Zatiaľ čo dopad migračnej krízy na politiku bol skúmaný mnohými akademikmi a výskumníkmi, zakomponovanie dopadu na spoločnosť bolo len okrajové. Z tohto dôvodu sa autorka bakalárskej práce rozhodla skúmať migráciu a jej dopad na mladých Slovákov. Centrálnu teóriu tejto práce predstavuje teória sekuritizácie kodanskej školy bezpečnostných štúdií, ktorá proces sekuritizácie popisuje ako pretransformovanie obyčajného problému do bezpečnostnej hrozby, ktorá si vyžaduje abnormálne opatrenia. Na Slovensku sa migrácia stala bezpečnostnou hrozbou vďaka rétorike politikov a médií. Daná rétorika bola neskôr osvojená širokou spoločnosťou, čo má za následok uzavretosť spoločnosti voči *tým druhým*.

V úvode tejto práce autorka predstavila teóriu sekuritizácie a jej poňatie inými školami a akademikmi, ktorí jej pridali aktuálnejší vzhľad. Hlavným cieľom prehľadu literatúry bolo poukázať na fakt, že téma sekuritizácie migrácie v politickom sektore bola a je všestranne pokrytá akademikmi zameranými na slovenské diania. Ich objektmi výskumov boli predovšetkým politici a ich rétorika, prejavy či akcie, ktoré prispeli k formulácii verejnej mienky v otázke migrácie. Spoločenský sektor však vo väčšine analýz abstinoval či nebol priamo spájaný s politickým sektorom. Autorka sa preto rozhodla spojiť tieto dva sektory – politický vo forme politikov a spoločenský vo forme národnej identity. Tá je postavená na teórii Tobiasa Theilera (2003), ktorý poukazuje na faktor skupinovej identity a princípoch jej správania. Znakmi skupinovej identity, Theiler poznamenáva, sú faktory ako zvýhodňovanie členov skupiny, do ktorej jednotlivec patrí či vnímanie členov v skupine ako vzájomne podobnejších a nečlenov ako odlišnejších, než môže byť v skutočnosti pravda. Členovia si tak osvojujú správanie svojej kategórie (rasovej, vekovej, vzdelanostnej či menšinovej), jej myslenie, nadobúdajúc tak celkovú skupinovú identitu. Autorka tejto práce tak prepája vysoko politizovanú tému migrácie s prvkami skupinovej a národnej identity, ktorá vznikla na báze chápanie *my Slováci a oni cudzinci*.

Odpovede na otázku miery vplyvu vysoko sekuritizovaného diskurzu moslimských migrantov na vnímanie mladých Slovákov boli získané pomocou kvalitatívneho výskumu založenom na semi-štruktúrovaných rozhovoroch s dvanástimi mladými ľuďmi a dvoma odborníkmi z oblasti migrácie. Mladí ľudia boli vybraní na základe predpokladov podloženými kvantitatívnymi dátami z viacerých štúdií, a to, že mladí ľudia sú otvorenejší voči cudzincom viac, než starší ľudia. Subjekty na rozhovory boli získané pomocou metódy snehovej gule.

Autorka pomocou rozhovorov dospela k záverom, že sekuritizácia migrácie nemala na vzorku respondentov pre tento výskum signifikantný dopad. Respondenti si sekuritizačný diskurz uvedomujú, predovšetkým, čo sa týka rétoriky politikov a budovania volebných kampaní na téme migrácie ako aj negatívnej prezentácie tejto témy v médiách. Stereotypné názory a predstavy o migrantoch boli viditeľné u väčšiny respondentov a úroveň akceptácie migrantov bola založená na báze národnej identity, a teda, že cudzinci by mali akceptovať slovenské zvyky a ovládať slovenský jazyk. Osobné skúsenosti a celková väčšia otvorenosť voči cudzincom však prispela k pozitívnejšiemu vnímaniu respondentov. Čo sa týka moslimských migrantov, od viacerých respondentov bol voči tejto skupine cítiť určitý dištanc, nakoľko kultúra Slovenska a moslimských krajín je veľmi odlišná. Navyše, vysoká miera medializácie radikálnych moslimov v Európe vytvára určitý rozmer obozretnosti a strachu, čo bolo pozorované aj z odpovedí niektorých respondentov. Nikto z nich však neprejavoval silný odpor voči moslimom a väčšina sa zhodla na uznaní Islamu ako náboženstva na Slovensku.

Prínosom tejto práce je komplexné pokrytie politického, no najmä spoločenského sektora so zameraním na národnú identitu a pocit spolupatričnosti. Bakalárska práca rozširuje chápanie sekuritizácie migrácie a v kombinácii s detailnejším výskumom by mohla pomôcť tvorcom politik a mimovládnych spoločnostiam ako podklad pri skúmaní danej problematiky. Nakoľko bola táto práca časovo obmedzená, ďalší výskum by mal byť založený na reprezentatívnejšej vzorke, ktorá by pomohla hlbšie pochopiť vzťahy medzi správaním spoločnosti a sekuritizáciou.

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