

**Bourbeau, Philippe:**

**SECURITIZATION OF MIGRATION.  
A STUDY OF MOVEMENT  
AND ORDER.**

New York, NY: Routledge. 2011/2013.  
166 pages.

DOI: 10.5817/PC2017-1-72

The study under review contributes to one of the most dynamic fields of research in contemporary security studies, namely securitization theory. Despite being published more than five years ago, it deserves attention thanks to its presentation of an innovative research framework on a highly topical issue – the securitization of migration. While comparatively examining cases of Canada and France between 1989 and 2005, the study by Philippe Bourbeau focuses on processes of institutionally and discursively integrating international migration into security frameworks that emphasize policing and defense (p. 1; cf. Messina 2014; Huysmans 2006).

Bourbeau, lecturer at the University of Cambridge, is the author and editor of numerous pieces of research on international relations, security and securitization studies, resilience and comparative immigration policies including *Handbook on Migration and Security* (forth.) and *Security: Dialogue across Disciplines* (2015). Drawing upon recent findings and debates in international relations, migration studies and political sociology (p. 33–43), he builds the study on almost characteristic, for his work, interdisciplinary optics that may be considered as the innovative core of the framework study.

The study particularly draws on Copenhagen School (CoS) securitization theory (Buzan et al. 1998) and its as yet not deeply investigat-

ed limitations, that are identified in ill-defined contextual factors, the misunderstood role of the audience in the securitization process, the inability to explain variations in levels of securitized migration and a narrow understanding of the concept of power (p. 40–43). The analytical framework is built upon constructivist insights proposed by Price and Reus-Smit (1998), and the sociologist arguments on how symbolic power works within political relations by Michael Barnett, Raymond Duval (2005) and Michael C. Williams (2007). The study further draws upon the role of identity-specific values and on the need for building a coherent, comprehensive framework which makes sense of the link between migration and security (pp. 32–33ff.).

The methodological framework of the study enables the qualitative examination of a relatively big sample and a relatively long time period. The primary research method used is a traditional content analysis that is triangulated with statistical analysis and discourse analysis. Additionally, analysis of interviews, survey and poll research as well as socio-historical analysis are employed to capture the role of public opinion and contextual factors in the securitization of migration (p. 5ff.). The use and combination of indicators is innovative, offering nominal and degree measurements, with both within-case and cross-case analyses. This facilitates an explanation of variation in levels of securitized migration (p. 18–28).

In the second part of the book, the author pursues an analysis of the role of political agents, media agents and contextual factors in the process of securitizing migration. In the fourth chapter, he presents the outcomes of a content analysis conducted on more than 3500 speeches of the high state representatives – Presidents, Prime ministers, Foreign Affairs Ministers and Interior Ministers – and a subsequent temporal analysis of their securitizing

moves, showing different patterns of their engagement in the two country cases. In the fifth chapter summarizes the results of a content analysis of about 900 editorials of two Canadian and two French daily newspapers, and offers a temporal analysis of securitizing moves presented by editorialists of the journals. An argument worth further investigation is that of the role of (printed) media in the *process of securitization of migration* (p. 96, *emph. added*). This may be understood better in the context of the sixth chapter, in which a comparative analysis of mass audience's response to securitizing moves of political and media agents in face of exogenous shocks in form of the refugee crisis of the early 1990s and the 9/11 terrorist attacks is performed. The power of contextual factors or differences in domestic audience's socio-historical understanding of (im)migration are marked as a site for potential explanation for the 'significant variations' in levels of securitized migration (p. 122–124). Thus, an argument for using a 'sociological' lens in securitization research is articulated (p. 126–130).

Despite possible objections towards the combination of positivist and post-positivist methodology or a rather meta-theoretically heterogeneous analytical framework, the study represents one of the first comparative examinations of the role of several political agents, numerous media agents and contextual factors across cases within a relatively long time span. Bourbeau himself highlights the contribution of using the constructivist approach stressing the importance of a polymorphous understanding of power as being embedded in the historically contingent, multifaceted cultural settings co-constituted by its agents (cf. 125–126). Further, putting *logic of exception* and that of *governmentality of unease* (p. 130–131) on a continuum or the argument on conceiving securitization and politicization as two not necessarily connected

processes may be seen as a contribution to securitization studies. And last, but not at least, the claim that the securitization of migration is not merely a function of objective reactions to material factors or exogenous shocks, particularly those in the form of refugee pressure (p. 106, 121) that is related to the argument on the role of contextual or socio-historical factors seems to be highly relevant in the context of differing reactions to the current migration situation across Europe. In sum, *Securitization of migration. A study of movement and order* makes arguments worth the attention of scientists pursuing securitization research, but also of a wider academic audience based in IR and migration studies.

## References:

- Barnett, Michael and Raymond, Duvall. 2005. 'Power in global governance,' In: *Power in Global Governance*. Eds. Michael Barnett and Raymond Duvall. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1–32.
- Buzan, Barry and Wæver, Ole and de Wilde, Jaap. 1998. *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*. London, Boulder: Lynne Rieder Publishers.
- Huysmans, Jef. 2006. *The Politics of Insecurity. Fear, migration and asylum in the EU*. London, New York: Routledge.
- Messina, Anthony A. 2014. 'Securitizing migration in the Age of Terror.' *World Politics* 66, no. 3, 530–559.
- Price, Richard and Reus-Smit, Christian. 1998. 'Dangerous liaisons? Critical international theory and constructivism.' *European Journal of International Relations* 4, no. 3, 259–294.
- Williams, Michael C. 2007. *Culture and Security. Symbolic Power and the Politics of International Security*. London: Routledge.