



MONASH University

**THE ‘SECURITISATION’ OF ASYLUM SEEKERS
AND REFUGEES IN THE UNITED STATES OF
AMERICA: THE CASE OF DONALD TRUMP DURING
HIS FIRST 100 DAYS IN OFFICE**

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ABSTRACT

This study examined how asylum seekers and refugees were collectively identified and characterised by United States (US) politician and President Donald Trump during his first 100 days in office, from 20 January 2017 to 29 April 2017. Previous literature has explored the securitisation of migrants by actors such as politicians and the media on traditional platforms such as newspapers and speeches. However, this study is unique in the sense that it explores the speech acts of Trump on a social media site, Twitter, in addition to his utterances in media interviews and broadcast speeches. To answer the research question, a content analysis and discourse analysis of Trump's utterances across these platforms were conducted. The Securitisation Theory espoused by the Copenhagen School of Security Studies and the Social Identity Theory of Henri Tajfel and John Turner formed the theoretical backbone of this study. The study found that Donald Trump characterised migrants from Muslim-majority countries, including asylum seekers and refugees, as potential security threats with his rhetoric and speech acts. His speech acts created a narrative that these migrants could be a potential security threat given the scourge of Islamic-inspired terrorism that has affected the Western world. He did this by using language and rhetorical devices such as fables to depict asylum seekers and refugees in opposition to American citizens: migrants (the out-group) were potential aggressors or a menace seeking to terrorise innocent and vulnerable Americans (in-group) thus creating an 'us' vs 'them' narrative. This narrative is also extended in his differential characterisation of Christian and Muslim asylum seekers and refugees: Christian migrants of this class were portrayed as victims, while Muslim migrants were regarded as being more likely to be terrorists or a menace to US society. In other words, the results demonstrate that migrants from Muslim-majority countries were heavily securitised throughout Trump's discourse.

Keywords: Securitisation theory, Copenhagen School of Security Studies, immigration, United States, asylum seekers and refugees, Donald Trump

DECLARATION

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at any university or equivalent institution and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACLU	American Civil Liberties Union
BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party
CBN	Christian Broadcast Network
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CIS	Centre for Immigration Studies
CoC	Clash of Civilisations
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
EO	Executive Order
FAIR	Federation for American Immigration Reform
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
INA	Immigration and Nationality Act
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
ISIS	Islamic State in Iraq and Syria
LJ	Law and Justice
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
US	United States
USRAP	US Refugee Admissions Program

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION, RESEARCH PROBLEM AND METHODOLOGY

1.1 Introduction and contextual background

This study aims to examine how asylum seekers and refugees were collectively identified and characterised by United States (US) politician and President Donald Trump by studying his recorded statements during his first 100 days in office. In other words, this study seeks to explore what Trump has said about this group of migrants (his “speech acts” regarding the global refugee crisis) and whether or not this constitutes the securitisation of asylum seekers and refugees. In essence, the research seeks to investigate if Trump has portrayed asylum seekers and refugees as a security threat to the US society. “Securitisation”, explained more fully in section 1.4.2, is briefly explained here as a process by which an actor, such as a politician, uses language to transform an issue or agenda item into an existential threat or security issue, thus justifying emergency measures to combat the perceived threat.¹ This study uses the Securitisation Theory espoused by the Copenhagen School of Security and the Social Identity Theory proposed by Henri Tajfel and John Turner in order to examine how asylum seekers and refugees were collectively identified and characterised by Donald Trump on the different platforms he used to disseminate his message, namely through speeches, broadcast and print interviews, policy documents such as his executive orders, and through social media (namely Twitter). To carry out this investigation, the study examines Trump’s rhetoric surrounding his policy proposals for immigration reform, and in particular his views on how the US should respond to the global refugee crisis, as published on a number of platforms, including recorded speeches, broadcast and print interviews, policy documents and tweets published on Twitter.com.

The 2016 US presidential election provides the background of this study for a number of reasons. First of all, it coincided with what has been described as the largest refugee crisis on record following a number of humanitarian crises, including the Syrian civil war.² Since 2011,

¹ Barry Buzan, "Rethinking Security after the Cold War," *Cooperation and conflict* 32, no. 1 (1997): 14.

² UNHCR, "Syria Emergency [Online]," UNHCR, <http://www.unhcr.org/syria-emergency.html>.

over five million people have fled Syria in search of refuge in surrounding countries such as Lebanon, Turkey and Jordan.³ The Syrian refugee crisis, therefore, became a contested topic during the presidential campaign, with different views on the responsibility of the US in accommodating some of the asylum seekers (such as how many the US should take in).⁴

For instance, the then Democratic Party presidential candidate, Hillary Clinton, proposed that the US should accept more than 65,000 refugees from the war-torn country.⁵ The then Republican Party candidate Donald Trump, in contrast, came under scrutiny for what some commentators such as Tanvi Misri perceived to be “anti-immigrant” rhetoric; specifically his characterisation of immigrants – notably the manner in which he described Mexicans and immigrants from Muslim countries and policy proposals such as the so-called Muslim ban and halting the entry of Syrian refugees.⁶

Mr. Trump has also been accused of conflating immigration with criminal activities and terrorist activities including during his 2016 election campaign.⁷ He has further been accused of “othering” minorities such as Muslims, Mexican immigrants and other marginalized groups.⁸ His rhetoric and campaign promises during the election earned him this reputation. Another campaign promise Trump made was to build a wall between the US and Mexico to prevent the flood of illegal immigrants and to tackle drug trafficking and other criminal activities associated with immigration.⁹ Trump argued that illegal immigration from Mexico cost taxpayers billions of dollars in health, housing, education and welfare, and had a “disastrous” impact on unemployed Americans.¹⁰ The researcher has chosen to focus this study

³ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, "Syria Emergency[Online]," UNHCR, <http://www.unhcr.org/syria-emergency.html>.

⁴ Russell Berman, "The Presidential Candidates Debate Granting Asylum to Syrian Refugees," *The Atlantic*, <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/09/the-syrian-refugee-crisis-and-the-2016-campaign/406513/>.

⁵ CBS NEWS, "Face the Nation Transcripts September 20: Clinton and Paul[Online]," CBS News, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/face-the-nation-transcripts-september-20-clinton-and-paul/#>.

⁶ Tanvi Misri, "The Year in Anti-Immigrant Rhetoric: Trump Was Just the Tip of the Iceberg in 2015.," <http://www.citylab.com/work/2015/12/2015-year-anti-immigration-trump/421893/>; Donald Trump, "Immigration Reform That Will Make America Great Again," *Donaldjtrump.com* (2016).

⁷ Mohammed Cherkaoui, "Part 2: The Mediatized Islamophobia in America: What Is Beyond Othering Muslims?," (2016): 2.

⁸ *ibid.*; Grace A Carlson, "I'm Not Racist, I Love Those People: How Trump's Language Reveals His Bigotry," (2016).

⁹ Trump, "Immigration Reform That Will Make America Great Again." *Donaldjtrump.com* (2016).

¹⁰ *ibid.*

on just asylum seekers and refugees, from all corners of the world, due to the constraints of time while being aware that other types of migrants do enter the US.

Another campaign promise he uttered was his plan to ban the entry of Muslims into US territory following the San Bernardino Massacre in which a US citizen and his Pakistani wife, Tashfeen Malik, murdered 14 people on 2 December 2015.¹¹ This campaign promise found expression during Trump's first 100 days in office, with the signing of a controversial executive order – popularly referred to as a “Muslim ban”.¹² The original executive order, titled *Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States*, is underpinned by national security concerns in “protect[ing] the American people from terrorist attacks”.¹³ The order originally barred the entry of citizens from seven Muslim-majority countries for 90 days.¹⁴ It also halted the official US Refugee Resettlement Programme for 120 days.¹⁵ Mr Trump contended that the measures were designed to “keep radical Islamic terrorists out of the US”.¹⁶ It is for these reasons that the 2016 elections are an important starting point in dissecting the characterisation of asylum seekers and refugees by Trump because his campaign promises have found expression in a range of policy actions throughout his presidency thus far.

This move is significant considering the long history the US has in being a leader in the resettlement of refugees from across the world, during and following conflicts such as World War II (despite incidents of US reluctance to take in displaced people, such as the Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi Germany before and after World War II. This will be covered in Chapter Two).¹⁷

¹¹ Faith Karimi, "San Bernardino Shooting: Who Were the Victims?[Online]," CNN, <http://edition.cnn.com/2015/12/03/us/sanbernardinoshootingsvictims/index.html>.

¹² Donald J Trump, "Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States, Executive Order No. 13769," *Federal Register* 82, no. 20 (2017).

¹³ *ibid.*

¹⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁵ James Rothwell and Charlotte Krol and James Rothwell, "Everything You Need to Know About Donald Trump's 'Muslim Ban' " The Telegraph, <http://telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/01/29/everything-need-know-donald-trumps-muslim-ban/>; Trump, "Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States, Executive Order No. 13769."

¹⁶ Rothwell, "Everything You Need to Know About Donald Trump's 'Muslim Ban' " .

¹⁷ David W Haines, "Safe Haven," *A History of Refugees in America*. Sterling, VA: Kumarian (2010): 1; Philip A Holman, "Refugee Resettlement in the United States," *Refugees in America in the 1990s: a Reference Handbook* (1996): 3.

However, in recent years the number of refugees resettled in the US has fluctuated. In 2017 the US resettled fewer refugees than the rest of the world combined: this was the first time such a thing has happened since 2003.¹⁸ In 2016 under the administration of former President Barack Obama, 97 000 refugees were resettled while in 2017 33 000 refugees were resettled.¹⁹ Despite the lower number, the US in 2017 took in more refugees than any other country in the world, with Canada coming in second with 23 000 and Australia admitting 15 000 refugees.²⁰ During his tenure Trump has incrementally lowered the refugee ceilings for each fiscal year his administration has been in power. For example, in 2017 then-President Obama set the ceiling at 110 000 for the 2017 fiscal year but when Trump came into office he reduced it to 50 000.²¹ In that year, only 33 000 refugees were resettled making this the second-lowest number since 2003 (when it stood at 28 000).²² Meanwhile, Trump set the ceiling for refugee admissions at 45 000 in fiscal year 2018. Most recently, the fiscal year 2019 refugee admissions ceiling has been capped at 30 000 refugees, making this the lowest number since the 1980 Refugee Act.²³ Ishaan Tharoor of *The Washington Post* argues that Trump's presidency has been characterised with "the denigration of refugees".²⁴

Trump's mentioned executive order has faced a number of challenges following a massive outcry inside the US and abroad and a string of legal representations in US courts.²⁵ Indeed, the response was so great that the director of the International Refugees Assistance Project,

¹⁸ Phillip Connor & Jens Manuel Krogstad, "For the First Time, U.S. Resettles Fewer Refugees Than the Rest of the World," 5 July 2018, Pew Research Center, http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/07/05/for-the-first-time-u-s-resettles-fewer-refugees-than-the-rest-of-the-world/?wpisrc=nl_todayworld&wpmm=1

¹⁹ Phillip Connor & Jens Manuel Krogstad, "For the First Time, U.S. Resettles Fewer Refugees Than the Rest of the World," Pew Research Center, http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/07/05/for-the-first-time-u-s-resettles-fewer-refugees-than-the-rest-of-the-world/?wpisrc=nl_todayworld&wpmm=1

²⁰ *ibid.*

²¹ Joel Rose, "Trump Administration to Drop Refugee Cap to 45,000, Lowest in Years," NPR, <https://www.npr.org/2017/09/27/554046980/trump-administration-to-drop-refugee-cap-to-45-000-lowest-in-years>.

²² Krogstad, "For the First Time, U.S. Resettles Fewer Refugees Than the Rest of the World".

²³ Ishaan Tharoor, "How Trump Has Sunk the Hopes of Refugees," *Washington Post*, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2018/09/14/how-trump-has-sunk-hopes-refugees/>; Michael R. Pompeo, "Remarks to the Media," U.S. State Department, <https://www.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2018/09/285960.htm>.

²⁴ Tharoor, "How Trump Has Sunk the Hopes of Refugees".

²⁵ Reuters, "Trump Travel Ban: Us Appeals Court Allows Partial Implementation," *The Guardian*, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/nov/14/trump-travel-ban-us-appeals-court-allows-partial-implementation>.

Becca Heller, stated that during his campaign “Trump has been successful in politicizing refugee admissions in a way that they have not been politicized before.”²⁶

Heller suggests that Trump’s rhetoric leveraged on the fears and anxieties expressed by a number of Republican officials, including state governors, for political gain.²⁷ Concerning this, throughout the campaign, a number of prominent Republicans did come out in opposition to accepting more refugees, including Republican governors who declared they would block refugees from being resettled in their states.²⁸ In fact, when then-President Barack Obama announced the country would be accepting an additional 10 000 Syrian refugees, members of the Republican Party came out in opposition.²⁹ For example, Sen. Richard Burr, of North Carolina, and chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee proposed that the refugee program “should be suspended until the American people are satisfied that they know exactly who the president is admitting into the country via this program”.³⁰ A number of Republican officials vowed to also block refugees entirely due to security concerns. The governor of Texas, Greg Abbott, tweeted that “Texas will not accept any Syrian refugees & I demand the US act similarly. Security comes first.”³¹

Other states followed suit, namely Alabama, Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Kansas, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, Nebraska, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Tennessee and Wisconsin.³² This is striking as this move was partisan: Democratic governors in states such as Washington, Hawaii and Colorado said they would continue accepting Syrian refugees, except for Democrat governor Maggie Hassan of New Hampshire who “believes that

²⁶ Deborah Amos, "For Refugees and Advocates, an Anxious Wait for Clarity on Trump's Policy," NPR, <http://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2016/11/15/502010346/for-refugees-and-advocates-an-anxious-wait-for-clarity-on-trumps-policy>. .

²⁷ Deborah Amos, "For Refugees and Advocates, an Anxious Wait for Clarity on Trump's Policy," NPR, <http://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2016/11/15/502010346/for-refugees-and-advocates-an-anxious-wait-for-clarity-on-trumps-policy>. .

²⁸ Sabrina Siddiqui, "Marco Rubio: Us Should Not Take in More Syrian Refugees after Paris Attacks," *The Guardian*, 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/nov/15/marco-rubio-syrian-refugees-paris-terror-attacks>.

²⁹ Eric Bradner & Ted Barrett, "Republicans to Obama: Keep Syrian Refugees Out," Cable News Network, 2015, <https://edition.cnn.com/2015/11/16/politics/republicans-syrian-refugees-2016-elections-obama/index.html>.

³⁰ Eric Bradner & Ted Barrett, "Republicans to Obama: Keep Syrian Refugees Out," Cable News Network, <https://edition.cnn.com/2015/11/16/politics/republicans-syrian-refugees-2016-elections-obama/index.html>.

³¹ *ibid.*

³² *ibid.*

the federal government should halt acceptance of refugees from Syria”.³³This illustrates that the topic of refugee admissions was split along party lines, and it may suggest that Trump was merely appealing to his fellow Republicans.

This study is mindful that in Western countries such as the US, policy debates on immigration have been influenced by national security concerns.³⁴ Therefore, this study seeks to deconstruct the political discourse of Donald Trump as broadcast in public platforms, namely recorded/televised speeches, policy documents and tweets, within the context of perceived national security concerns *vis-à-vis* these specific groups of people. Furthermore, this study is conceptually aware of the challenges associated with attempts to “read off” ideologies from texts, and that according to Fairclough, “texts are open to diverse interpretations”.³⁵

In the context of wider national security concerns in the US, and the apparent “securitisation” of immigration and immigrants, the study uses a qualitative content and discourse analysis of Trump’s utterances about asylum seekers and refugees that were published in public platforms such as recorded speeches, broadcast and print interviews, policy documents and through social media during his first 100 days in office. The study derives its cue partly from van Dijk’s discourse analysis of *Ethnic minorities and the media*, in which he argues in favour of discourse analysis of “text and talk” in relation to the social, economic or political context the discourse operates under.³⁶

1.2 Rationale

This study seeks to examine Donald Trump’s collective identification and characterisation of asylum seekers and refugees by analysing his public statements and recordings surrounding asylum seekers and refugees during the first 100 days of his term in office. Trump’s rhetoric found expression on a number of platforms, such as broadcast speeches, interviews on radio,

³³ *ibid.*

³⁴ Michelle Mittelstadt, Burke Speaker, Doris Meissner, and Muzaffar Chishti. "Through the Prism of National Security: Major Immigration Policy and Program Changes in the Decade since 9/11," *Migration Policy Institute 2* (2011).

³⁵ Norman Fairclough, "Critical Discourse Analysis. The Critical Study of Language." *Language in Social Life Series*, London: Longman, 1995.

³⁶ Teun A Van Dijk, "New(s) Racism: A Discourse Analytical Approach," *Ethnic minorities and the Media* 2000, <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/dc0e/d424307e8c84360bac6d031d6bc299d92c19.pdf>.

television and newspapers as well on social media platforms such as Twitter.³⁷ It is against this contextual background that Donald Trump's rhetoric has been analysed through the platforms he used to reach people, and which generated a lot of media coverage. In other words, this thesis will examine how Trump used language to describe this group of migrants. Securitisation theory and the Social Identity Theory form the theoretical backbone of this study. Ultimately, the research investigates, how, if at all, Trump securitised immigration – particularly the granting of asylum and refugee resettlement of refugees. In essence, does Trump depict asylum seekers and refugees as an existential threat to the national security of the US?

This study focuses on a time in the past few years where there was a number of humanitarian crises across the world, such as the Syrian civil war, and which have triggered mass forced displacements at unparalleled levels.³⁸ The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees estimates that as of January 2019 over 68.5 million people have been forcibly displaced from their homes across the world; at least 25 million of these people are classified as refugees.³⁹ Latest figures indicate that out of 68.5 million people who have been forced to flee their homes; 40 million have been internally displaced, while more than 3.1 million are asylum seekers.⁴⁰

The majority of those refugees (85%) are hosted in developing countries such as Turkey, Uganda and Pakistan. Currently, Turkey is hosting the most refugees with 3.5 million refugees, while Uganda comes in second with 1.4 million refugees in its country. The rest of the refugees, at least 16%, are hosted in the Americas (including North America).⁴¹

As of January 31, 2019, Syria has the world's largest number of displaced people in the world – with more than six million internal refugees⁴² in a country that has been gripped by ongoing violence since the start of a civil war in 2011.⁴³ More than 60% of the refugees have been hosted in neighbouring Turkey, while the rest are in other neighbouring countries such as

³⁷ Jennifer Calfas, "President Trump: The Media Wants Me to Stop Tweeting, but I Won't [Online]," *Time*, <http://time.com/4806949/trump-tweets-mainstream-media/>

³⁸ UNHCR "Figures at a Glance [Online]," UNHCR, 19 June 2018 <http://www.unhcr.org/figures-at-a-glance.html>.

³⁹ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, "Figures at a Glance[Online]," UNHCR, <http://www.unhcr.org/figures-at-a-glance.html>.

⁴⁰ United Nations, "Refugees," United Nations, <https://www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/refugees/>.

⁴¹ Refugees, "Figures at a Glance[Online]".

⁴² *ibid.*

⁴³ United Nations, "Refugees".

Lebanon. Given the scale of the Syrian crisis, it is unsurprising that resettlement of Syrian refugees featured frequently in debates and discussions about the US's responsibility towards these refugees both during the elections and after the elections.⁴⁴

At the same time in Western countries such as the US refugee resettlement has triggered massive debates and a climate of fear and anxiety over the perceived threats that immigration has on security given the Islamic-inspired terrorist attacks in countries such Paris, Brussels and domestically after San Bernardino.⁴⁵

It is within this context that Trump's rhetoric has been analysed amidst a combination of a growing concern over national security and humanitarian crises triggering countries to also meet their obligations under international conventions such as the UN convention. Powell and Menendian contend that Trump's rhetoric during the 2016 elections capitalised on the anxieties of Islamic terrorism brought on by a series of terrorist attacks domestically and abroad.⁴⁶ Following several terror attacks, as previously discussed, public opinion polls reflected this climate of fear or apprehension around refugees, particularly those who are Muslim, especially among Republican voters and leaders. For example, after the November 2015 Paris attacks, a Bloomberg poll conducted on among 628 adults, more than half of American adults (53%) did not want Syrian refugees resettled in the country due to national security fears.⁴⁷ The opposition towards settling Syrian refugees was bipartisan, with more Republicans (69%) calling for the discontinuation of the Syrian refugee effort than Democrats.⁴⁸

Trump has been accused by a number of scholars and organisations for capitalising on these fears, even going as far as "othering" groups of people, which involves expressing prejudices based on group-based identities (this will be further explained).⁴⁹ In a 2016/7 report titled, *The State of the World's Human Rights*, human rights organisation, Amnesty International, accused

⁴⁴ Berman, "The Presidential Candidates Debate Granting Asylum to Syrian Refugees".

⁴⁵ Jenna Johnson, "Donald Trump Says He 'Absolutely' Wants a Database of Syrian Refugees," *The Washington Post*, 2015, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2015/11/21/donald-trump-says-he-absolutely-wants-a-database-of-syrian-refugees/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.92610a41df37.

⁴⁶ John A. Powell & Stephen Menendian, "The Problem of Othering," *Othering & Belonging: Expanding the Circle of Human Concern* 2016, 19.

⁴⁷ Eric Bradner, "Poll: Americans Oppose Syrian Refugees in U.S.," Cable News Network, <https://edition.cnn.com/2015/11/18/politics/syrian-refugees-poll-paris-obama-republicans-isis/index.html>.

⁴⁸ *ibid.*

⁴⁹ Powell, "The Problem of Othering."

Trump of being part of a group of politicians pushing forth “a toxic, dehumanising ‘us vs them’ rhetoric” that is a hindrance to global human rights efforts.⁵⁰

Secretary-General of the organisation, Salil Shetty, argued that:

2016 was the year when the cynical use of ‘us vs them’ narratives of blame, hate and fear took on a global prominence to a level not seen since the 1930s. Too many politicians are answering legitimate economic and security fears with a poisonous and divisive manipulation of identity politics in an attempt to win votes.⁵¹

This study is important for several reasons. First, the rhetoric expressed by an influential political actor such as Trump has tangible consequences for people such as refugees and asylum seekers displaced from their homes, as it could translate into unfavourable policies and feed into negative perceptions about refugees. Then the researcher has chosen to analyse his utterances using the Securitisation Theory framework because essentially when an actor uses the language of security – suggesting the threat or risks an issue poses – emergency action is justified which affects the lives of those affected. As Buzan *et al.* write:

The invocation of security has been the key to legitimising the use of force, but more generally it has opened the way for the state to mobilize, or to take special powers, to handle existential threats.⁵²

This is relevant because the language of security can result in extraordinary measures to tackle a threat, such as the abovementioned executive order, *Protecting The Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States* (this will be further explained in section 4.1.1.2).

Amnesty International argues that this rhetoric creates an atmosphere in which human rights progress is stifled.⁵³ Furthermore, the “securitisation” of immigration has consequences in terms of policy responses towards humanitarian issues such as the settlement of refugees. For example, several Republican governors withdrew their support for the Refugee Resettlement Program due to perceived security threats even though refugees undergo extensive vetting

⁵⁰ Amnesty International, “‘Politics of Demonization’ Breeding Division and Fear,” 2017, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2017/02/amnesty-international-annual-report-201617/>.

⁵¹ Amnesty International, “‘Politics of Demonization’ Breeding Division and Fear,” <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2017/02/amnesty-international-annual-report-201617/>.

⁵² Buzan, Barry, Ole Wæver, and Jaap De Wilde. *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998.

⁵³ Amnesty International, “‘Politics of Demonization’ Breeding Division and Fear”.

before being resettled in the US.⁵⁴ This is not to say Trump influenced these policy actions, but it does illustrate how the language of security can affect how refugees are treated.

However, other organisations, such as The Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR), have expressed support for Trump's policy proposals regarding immigration reform. The FAIR is an organisation that purports to advocate for immigration reform that works in the best interests of the American people.⁵⁵ It seeks to limit "mass immigration", "chain migration" and enforce stronger border controls while accepting more highly skilled immigrants.⁵⁶ FAIR has supported Trump's plans to build a "big, beautiful wall" between the USA and Mexico border in order to guard the American people.⁵⁷ It argues that the longer it takes to erect such a wall, the more vulnerable the US is to security threats from Mexico and other countries in Central and South America, in the form of drug cartels, illegal immigrants, human traffickers and other undesirable elements.⁵⁸ In a 2017 article, FAIR stated that the country needs "a big, effective barrier that is resistant to determined aliens and traffickers (human/drug/weapons) on foot or in vehicles."⁵⁹ Furthermore, The Centre for Immigration Studies (CIS) has expressed concerns over "[f]oreign-born militant Islamic terrorists" that come to the country as "students, tourists, and business visitors" and acquired citizenship and permanent residency.⁶⁰ They go as far as to claim that: "Terrorists have even used America's humanitarian tradition of welcoming those seeking asylum".⁶¹ These concerns expressed by organisations such as FAIR and the CIS reflect the broader context that Trump's characterisation of asylum seekers and refugees operates in: growing concern over the perceived security threats migration poses for the country.

⁵⁴ Barrett, "Republicans to Obama: Keep Syrian Refugees Out".

⁵⁵ FAIR, "About Fair," Federation for American Immigration Reform, <https://fairus.org/about-fair>.

⁵⁶ *ibid.*

⁵⁷ FAIR. "What Type of 'Wall' Can Be Built with Trump's Border Security Budget?," <https://fairus.org/issue/national-security/what-type-wall-can-be-built-trumps-border-security-budget>.

⁵⁸ FAIR, "What Type of 'Wall' Can Be Built with Trump's Border Security Budget?," <https://fairus.org/issue/national-security/what-type-wall-can-be-built-trumps-border-security-budget>.

⁵⁹ *ibid.*

⁶⁰ The Center for Immigration Studies, "About the Center for Immigration Studies," The Center for Immigration Studies, <https://cis.org/About-Center-Immigration-Studies>.

⁷³ Steven A. Camarota, "How Militant Islamic Terrorists Entered and Remained in the United States, 1993-2001: The Open Door," The Center for Immigration Studies <https://cis.org/How-Militant-Islamic-Terrorists-Entered-and-Remained-United-States-19932001>.

Finally, this study is important because it not only examines rhetoric uttered on traditional platforms, but it also examines Trump's rhetoric that has been published on the social media site, Twitter. Throughout the presidential campaign and even during his term in office, Donald Trump was criticised for his often controversial and frequent use of Twitter to communicate with the public.⁶² Part of this criticism stems from his history of using his Twitter page to retweet images from other users who have been affiliated with anti-Semitism. For example, in 2016 Trump retweeted an online image of his opponent, Hillary Clinton superimposed on a background of dollar bills. The image also featured the words, "Most corrupt candidate ever" inside a Jewish Star of David.⁶³ The image was traced to a website run by a group purported to be anti-Semitic white supremacists. This simple act of sharing an image gave the impression that Trump endorsed those messages, according to the Anti-Defamation League.

During the election, Twitter was "Trump's medium of choice".⁶⁴ In fact, Trump himself has attributed his success in the elections to his frequent use of Twitter to communicate with voters and the world at large.⁶⁵ In an interview on Fox Business Network, the politician said: "I doubt I would be here if it weren't for social media, to be honest with you."⁶⁶ He went on further to add that: "Tweeting is like a typewriter – when I put it out, you put it immediately on your show."⁶⁷ Through his personal use of Twitter, he is able to set the agenda and not have his words distorted or silenced by the media, which he has on many occasions accused of being

⁶² Chris Baynes, "Donald Trump Says He Would Not Be President without Twitter[Online]," *Independent* <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/donald-trump-tweets-twitter-social-media-facebook-instagram-fox-business-network-would-not-be-a8013491.html>.; Matt Kapko, "Twitter's Impact on 2016 Presidential Election Is Unmistakable[Online]," CIO, <https://www.cio.com/article/3137513/social-networking/twitters-impact-on-2016-presidential-election-is-unmistakable.html>.

⁶³ JTA, "Donald Trump Deletes Tweet Showing Hillary Clinton and Star of David Image," Jewish Telegraphic Agency, 3 August 2016, <https://www.jta.org/2016/07/03/politics/donald-trump-deletes-tweet-showing-hillary-clinton-and-star-of-david-image>.

⁶⁴ Kapko, "Twitter's Impact on 2016 Presidential Election Is Unmistakable[Online]".

⁶⁵ Chris Baynes, "Donald Trump Says He Would Not Be President without Twitter[Online]," *Independent* <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/donald-trump-tweets-twitter-social-media-facebook-instagram-fox-business-network-would-not-be-a8013491.html>.

⁶⁶ *ibid.*

⁶⁷ *ibid.*

unfair and biased.⁶⁸ In his own words: “When somebody says something about me, I am able to go bing, bing, bing and I take care of it. The other way, I would never get the word out.”⁶⁹

Trump’s use of Twitter throughout his campaign and during his term in office has been mired in controversy for his use of insults at political opponents, policies and so forth.⁷⁰ Critics have also warned that his tendency to conduct diplomacy over Twitter could be dangerous.⁷¹ His opponent in the presidential race, Hilary Clinton, argues: “The most dangerous thing he does is conduct diplomacy on Twitter. He is trading insults with Kim Jong-un, which is just like catnip for Kim Jong-un.”⁷² However, Trump is not the only politician to use the social media network. In fact, it has become increasingly commonplace for leaders to use Twitter to communicate to audiences, as will be discussed below.

1.2.1 The use of Twitter by political actors

This section will briefly outline how the use of Twitter by high profile political actors to engage with the public is becoming a growing trend

For example, the use of Twitter by Trump and other American politicians to engage with the public is a trend that has been documented by researchers even before the 2016 US presidential elections.⁷³ Former US President Barack Obama is credited with popularising the use of social media in politics during the 2008 presidential elections.⁷⁴ According to Carr, Obama tapped into the potential of social media platforms to mobilise a movement, raise money, build his

⁶⁸ Calfas, "President Trump: The Media Wants Me to Stop Tweeting, but I Won't[Online]"; Chris Cillizza, "Donald Trump's 57 Most Outrageous Quotes from His Arizona Speech," CNN, 2017, <https://edition.cnn.com/2017/08/23/politics/donald-trump-arizona/index.html>.

⁶⁹ Baynes, "Donald Trump Says He Would Not Be President without Twitter[Online]".

⁷⁰ *ibid.*, 64; Brian L Ott, "The Age of Twitter: Donald J. Trump and the Politics of Debasement," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 34, no. 1 (2017); Neal Gabler, "Donald Trump, the Emperor of Social Media," Moyers & Company, 29 April 2016 <http://billmoyers.com/story/donald-trump-the-emperor-of-social-media/>

⁷¹ Baynes, "Donald Trump Says He Would Not Be President without Twitter[Online]".

⁷² *ibid.*

⁷³ David Carr, "How Obama Tapped into Social Networks' Power," *The New York Times*, <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/10/business/media/10carr.html>; Feng Chi and Nathan Yang, "Twitter in Congress: Outreach Vs Transparency," 2010, https://mpr.ub.uni-muenchen.de/24060/1/MPRA_paper_24060.pdf; Jennifer Golbeck, Justin M Grimes, and Anthony Rogers, "Twitter Use by the US Congress," *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology* 61, no. 8 (2010).

⁷⁴ Chi and Yang, "Twitter in Congress: Outreach vs Transparency," 4. Carr, "How Obama Tapped into Social Networks' Power".

personal brand and ultimately reach out to unique audiences, such as young people.⁷⁵ In fact, the Obama campaign team reportedly recruited a staff of nearly 100 people to coordinate his social media profile for public relations activities.⁷⁶

Obama's use of social media marked a departure from traditional means of communicating with the public. Traditionally, politicians and policymakers communicated with the public through the use of websites of candidates, email lists and online fundraisers.⁷⁷ If one is to trace it back to before the dawn of the internet, leaders such as Franklin D. Roosevelt and John F. Kennedy relied on broadcast means such as radio and television, respectively, to reach audiences.⁷⁸ Hence this use of social media network in this age is reflective of the way technology is changing the way actors reach people. As articulated by Gabler: "What FDR was to radio and JFK to television, Trump is to Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, et al."⁷⁹

A leader whose use of Twitter that has been deemed even more controversial than Donald Trump's is Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi.⁸⁰ He uses Twitter extensively to reach his audience: unlike Trump, he does not host press conferences. Instead, he relies on Twitter and his own radio show to communicate with people.⁸¹ Like Barack Obama, Modi and his party Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) came into power through the use of an extensive social media campaign.⁸² His ruling party is described as the "first Indian political party to harness the power of the technology to bypass mainstream press and connect directly with a new generation of supporters."⁸³ The controversy over his Twitter use stems from his alleged association with right-wing nationalists who propagated what some perceive to be extremist views on the

⁷⁵ David Carr, "How Obama Tapped into Social Networks' Power," *The New York Times*, <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/10/business/media/10carr.html>.

⁷⁶ Feng Chi and Nathan Yang, "Twitter in Congress: Outreach Vs Transparency," (2010): 5.

⁷⁷ Leticia Bode and Kajsa E Dalrymple, "Politics in 140 Characters or Less: Campaign Communication, Network Interaction, and Political Participation on Twitter," *Journal of Political Marketing* 15, no. 4 (2016): 311.

⁷⁸ Neal Gabler, "Donald Trump, the Emperor of Social Media," Moyers & Company, <http://billmoyers.com/story/donald-trump-the-emperor-of-social-media/>

⁷⁹ *ibid.*

⁸⁰ Tim Hume, "Modi Might Be the Only World Leader Whose Twitter Use Is More Problematic Than Trump's[Online]," *VICE News*, https://news.vice.com/en_us/article/zmqaq3/modi-might-be-the-only-world-leader-whose-twitter-use-is-more-problematic-than-trumps.

⁸¹ *ibid.*

⁸² *ibid.*

⁸³ *ibid.*

network.⁸⁴ This is within the context of right-wing Hindu extremism, where opponents of the government have reportedly been at the receiving end of verbal abuse online. The perpetrators have been linked to the Prime Minister himself.⁸⁵

The above illustrates why examining Twitter is a worthy cause, as Ott maintains: “We are in the age of Twitter: Just as the Age of Typography gave way to the Age of Television, the Age of Television is steadily giving way to the Age of Twitter.”⁸⁶

1.3 Problem statement

It has been argued that immigration has become increasingly securitised in the US, especially since the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks on the US, commonly known as 9/11.⁸⁷ In the US, policy debates around immigration have been influenced by national security concerns, which have resulted in tougher measures.⁸⁸ Current US President Donald Trump has been identified as a leader who has exploited the economic and security fears of voters to gain votes, by associating immigration with terrorism and crime.⁸⁹ Trump has arguably securitised refugees and asylum seekers by presenting this group of migrants as a security threat. This has wider implications in terms of how the US responds to issues of forced migration and to immigration policy in general.

1.4 Research questions

This study seeks to examine the collective characterisation of asylum seekers and refugees by Donald Trump using securitisation as a core theory. In essence, this research wants to examine

⁸⁴ *ibid.*; Michael Safi, "India's Ruling Party Ordered Online Abuse of Opponents, Claims Book," *The Guardian*, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/dec/27/india-bjp-party-ordering-online-abuse-opponents-actors-modi-claims-book>.

⁸⁵ VICE News, "Modi Might Be the Only World Leader Whose Twitter Use Is More Problematic Than Trump's[Online]".

⁸⁶ Ott, Brian L. "The Age of Twitter: Donald J. Trump and the Politics of Debasement." *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 34, no. 1 (2017): 59.

⁸⁷ Michelle Mittelstadt et al., "Through the Prism of National Security: Major Immigration Policy and Program Changes in the Decade since 9/11," *Migration Policy Institute* 2 (2011): 1.

⁸⁸ *ibid.*

⁸⁹ Molly Ball, "Donald Trump and the Politics of Fear [Online]," *The Atlantic*, <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/09/donaldtrumpandthepoliticsoffear/498116/>; Amnesty International, "'Politics of Demonization' Breeding Division and Fear"; Alex Altman, "No President Has Spread Fear Like Donald Trump," *Time*, 9 February 2017, <http://time.com/4665755/donald-trump-fear/>.

how, if at all, Trump has securitised refugees and asylum seekers, in the wake of concerns that immigration could potentially pose a national security threat. In other words, has Trump used language to construct/characterise refugees and asylum seekers as security threats? In order to carry out this study, the researcher has conducted a content analysis of Trump's discourse surrounding this group of migrants, as it has been published on a number of platforms, namely recorded speeches, broadcast and print interviews, policy documents and on social media (Twitter).

The main research question of this study is: How has Donald Trump collectively characterised asylum seekers and refugees during the first 100 days of his term in office?

1.4.1 Sub-questions

- What are the main themes/concerns in Donald Trump's rhetoric when it comes to asylum seekers and refugees?
- How, if at all, does Donald Trump's characterisation of asylum seekers and refugees contribute to the construction of an "us vs them" narrative?
- How, if at all, have asylum seekers and refugees been securitised by Donald Trump?

1.5 Conceptualisation

This section will briefly outline the conceptual and theoretical framework that will underpin this study on the characterisation of asylum seekers/refugees in the US by Donald Trump after the 2016 US presidential elections. This section will begin with an overview of important concepts, such as "refugees", "asylum seekers" and "migrants", as well "othering", "stereotyping" and "national security".

1.5.1 Migrant

According to the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), a migrant is:

Any person who is moving or has moved across an international border or within a state away from his/her habitual place of residence, regardless of (1) the person's legal status; (2) whether the movement is voluntary or involuntary; (3) what the causes for the movement are;

or (4) what the length of the stay is.⁹⁰

This definition by the IOM includes people who have left their homes for whatever reason – whether it is voluntary or involuntary.⁹¹ Therefore, refugees and asylum seekers would fall under this definition of migrant, but they also have very specific definitions as explained below.

1.5.2 Asylum seeker

An asylum seeker is:

A person who seeks safety from persecution or serious harm in a country other than his or her own and awaits a decision on the application for refugee status under relevant international and national instruments.⁹²

According to UNESCO, asylum seekers apply for refugee protection from a host country usually once they have left their home country and arrived in the host country.⁹³ For example, asylum seekers in the US apply for asylum either once they have already entered the country.⁹⁴ Once they have applied, they have to wait to see if their application for refugee status has been approved or not. The right to apply for asylum is embedded in local and international instruments such as the US 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) that allows any foreign national who enters the US to apply for asylum. Similarly, the 1951 Refugee Convention, which is rooted in article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human rights, guarantees every person has the right to apply for asylum.⁹⁵

Once an asylum seeker is granted refugee status, they become a refugee and are granted protections under international law.⁹⁶ What distinguishes an asylum seeker from a refugee is where they are located: refugees apply for refugee protection before entering their host country. Meanwhile, refugee applications are processed outside the borders of the host country.⁹⁷ Only once the refugee status is confirmed, can they enter their host country. Meanwhile asylum

⁹⁰ IOM, "Key Migration Terms," United Nations, <https://www.iom.int/key-migration-terms>.

⁹¹ *ibid.*

⁹² *ibid.*

⁹³ UNESCO, "Asylum Seeker," UNESCO, <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/international-migration/glossary/asylum-seeker/>

⁹⁴ U.S. Department of Homeland Security, "Refugees and Asylees," U.S. Department of Homeland Security, <https://www.dhs.gov/immigration-statistics/refugees-asylees>

⁹⁵ United Nations. *Draft Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*.

⁹⁶ Security, "Refugees and Asylees".

⁹⁷ *ibid.*

seekers often apply for refugee protections after they have entered the intended host country or at a port of entry. Often times asylum seekers may have to cross the border without any legal right to do so, and then prove that their lives are in danger.⁹⁸

1.5.3 Refugee

A refugee is a person who has “fled from his or her home country and cannot return because he or she has a well-founded fear of persecution based on religion, race, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group.”⁹⁹

The 1951 Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees define a refugee as a person who escapes their home:

Article 1: owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted 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.¹⁰⁰

Even though refugees are “migrants”, it is crucial to make a distinction between migrants and refugees.¹⁰¹ The term “migrant” suggests that the person’s movement was voluntary, and not due to a fear of harm or danger in their home country.¹⁰² A refugee, on the other hand, leaves his/her home because his/her life could be in grave danger if they stayed.

The terminology is very important as refugees are afforded certain protections and assistance under international law instruments such as the 1951 Refugee Convention. One of them is the principle of non-refoulement, which states that a host nation cannot force a displaced person to go back home, if it is too dangerous to do so.¹⁰³ Conflating a migrant and a refugee has grave implications as it undermines “public support for refugees and the institution of asylum at a time when more refugees need such protection than ever before”.¹⁰⁴ The movement of peoples from Central America into the US is an example of how it matters whether or not migrants are

⁹⁸ *ibid.*

⁹⁹ United States Department of State, "Refugee Admissions".

¹⁰⁰ *Draft Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees.*

¹⁰¹ UNHCR, "Unhcr Viewpoint: ‘Refugee’ or ‘Migrant’ – Which Is Right?(Online)," UNHCR, <http://www.unhcr.org/news/latest/2016/7/55df0e556/unhcr-viewpoint-refugee-migrant-right.html>.

¹⁰² *ibid.*

¹⁰³ *Draft Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees.*

¹⁰⁴ "UNHCR Viewpoint: ‘Refugee’ or ‘Migrant’ – Which Is Right? [Online]".

classified as refugees or not. For several decades people from Central American countries such as Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala have left their homes in order to go to the US or Mexico in hopes of acquiring refugee status under international and domestic law.¹⁰⁵ Despite the violence experienced by these people, presidents such as Ronald Reagan in the 1980s insisted that these people were “economic migrants” instead of refugees.¹⁰⁶ This had crucial implications as to how the US and other countries responded: if the thousands seeking asylum were not considered refugees, then the US was not technically obligated to assist them.¹⁰⁷ This also highlights how politicised the designation of refugee status is as will be discussed in future sections, who is classified as a refugee or not has historically been motivated by foreign policy interests.¹⁰⁸

Carly Goodman has compared Reagan’s response to Central Americans to Trump’s response to the hundreds of Central Americans crossing the border daily.¹⁰⁹ The Trump administration has been said to be creating obstacles to for acquiring asylum for families, women and children escaping gang violence and poverty in Central America.¹¹⁰ He has questioned the validity of asylum claims even going as far as trying to ban asylum seekers who enter the country illegally. He has used language such as “invasion” and “BIG CON” to describe groups of migrants attempting to enter the US.¹¹¹ This highlights the impact that language can have in creating differing narratives: migrants crossing the border are either victims or people trying to take advantage of the US, and are thus not deserving of people’s sympathy.

¹⁰⁵ Maria Cristina Garcia. ., *Seeking Refuge : Central American Migration to Mexico, the United States, and Canada*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2006.

¹⁰⁶ Carly Goodman, "Like Donald Trump, Ronald Reagan Tried to Keep out Asylum Seekers. Activists Thwarted Him.," *The Washington Post*, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/made-by-history/wp/2018/07/02/line-donald-trump-ronald-reagan-tried-to-keep-out-asylum-seekers-activists-thwarted-him/>; María Cristina García et al., *Seeking Refuge : Central American Migration to Mexico, the United States, and Canada* (Berkeley, UNITED STATES: University of California Press, 2006), 6.

¹⁰⁷ *Seeking Refuge : Central American Migration to Mexico, the United States, and Canada*, 34.

¹⁰⁸ *ibid.*, 15.

¹⁰⁹ Goodman, "Like Donald Trump, Ronald Reagan Tried to Keep out Asylum Seekers. Activists Thwarted Him."

¹¹⁰ Sofía Martínez, "Today’s Migrant Flow Is Different," *The Atlantic Monthly*, 26 June 2018, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2018/06/central-america-border-immigration/563744/>.

¹¹¹ Donald J. Trump, "Twitter Post," *Twitter*, <https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/1063593456579354624?lang=en>.

1.5.4 Stereotyping

Stuart Hall defines stereotyping as a representational practice that involves reducing people to “a few, simple, essential characteristics”.¹¹² This process is also an exercise in power. This means that stereotypes are indicative of power differences. The person or group who wields the most power often use stereotypes to describe the inferior or subordinate group.¹¹³ In this case, the superior group would be Trump, while the inferior group would be the immigrants such as asylum seekers and refugees.

1.5.5 Othering

According to John A. Powell and Stephen Menendian, “othering” is:

a term that not only encompasses the many expressions of prejudice on the basis of group identities, but ... it provides a clarifying frame that reveals a set of common processes and conditions that propagate group-based inequality and marginality.¹¹⁴

Powell and Menendian argue that the 21st century is plagued by the problem of othering which is prejudice based on group-based differences. The authors argue that othering underscores virtually every conflict on a global, national and regional level:

In a world beset by seemingly intractable and overwhelming challenges, virtually every global, national, and regional conflict is wrapped within or organized around one or more dimension of group-based difference.¹¹⁵

They also use Trump as an example of using an “us vs them” narrative them in his rallying cry during his election campaign to ban groups such as Mexicans and Muslims, as if they are separate to the US. They further explain that othering can occur on the basis of group-based identities such as religion, sex, race, ethnicity and skin tone.¹¹⁶ According to Scott Thornbury, othering is “the way members of one social group distance themselves from, or assert

¹¹² Stuart Hall, "Chapter 4: The Spectacle of the "Other"," in *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, edited by Stuart Hall. London: Sage / Open University, 1997, 257.

¹¹³ Stuart Hall, "Chapter 4: The Spectacle of the "Other"," in *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, ed. Stuart Hall (London: SAGE / Open University, 1997).

¹¹⁴ Powell, "The Problem of Othering.;" *ibid.*

¹¹⁵ Menendian, "The Problem of Othering," 14.

¹¹⁶ *ibid.*

themselves over another by construing the latter as being fundamentally different (the ‘other’).¹¹⁷

In this study, the researcher examines the manner in which Trump, like many other political leaders, has appealed to group-based identities, most specifically exploiting the fear of the “other” to acquire political power.¹¹⁸

1.5.6 Security

Security has been conceptualised in a number of ways in international relations, depending on the time and place.¹¹⁹ It is associated with survival amidst potential threats.¹²⁰ According to Williams and McDonald, security is associated with the reduction of threats to cherished values, objects or entities. In *Security Studies: An Introduction*, they write:

security is most commonly associated with the *alleviation of threats to cherished values*, especially those which, left unchecked, threaten the survival of a particular referent object in the near future [emphasis in original].¹²¹

In the past, especially prior to the end of the Cold War, security was associated with the state and the military. In the US for example, when one refers to security, one is most likely talking about national security.¹²² According to former US Secretary of Defence Harold Brown:

National security... is the ability to preserve the nation's physical integrity and territory; to maintain its economic relations with the rest of the world on reasonable terms; to preserve its nature, institution, and governance from disruption from outside; and to control its borders.¹²³

A key component of national security as defined in the US National Security Act of 1947 is national defence. The Act was signed in 1947 to promote national security by creating a bureaucratic structure to coordinate foreign policy in the US during the Cold War. The Act created a new Department of Justice by bringing together the Navy Department and War

¹¹⁷ Scott Thornbury, "O Is for Othering [Online]," <https://scottthornbury.wordpress.com/2012/04/08/o-is-for-othering/>.

¹¹⁸ Powell, "The Problem of Othering," 22.

¹¹⁹ Paul D. Williams and Matt McDonald, *Security Studies : An Introduction* London.: Routledge, 2018: 2.

¹²⁰ Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap De Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998).

¹²¹ Paul D. Williams and Matt McDonald, *Security Studies : An Introduction* (Milton, UNITED KINGDOM: Routledge, 2018), 6.

¹²² Buzan, "Rethinking Security after the Cold War," 5.

¹²³ Cynthia Ann Watson, *Us National Security: A Reference Handbook*. Santa Barbara,, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2002: 2.

Department. It also created the Central Intelligence Agency, to collect intelligence and carry out secret missions in foreign countries. The US government is mandated by the constitution to defend the country through various arms of government, such as the air force, army and navy.¹²⁴ Cynthia Ann Watson writes that since the end of the Cold War in 1989, the national security concerns of the US have undergone changes in terms of the conceptualisation of what constitutes a security threat.¹²⁵

Traditionally, national security is associated with safeguarding the territorial integrity or sovereignty of a country.¹²⁶ It seeks to “defend the vital interests” of the country against elements that seek to threaten it.¹²⁷ However, since the end of the Cold War, the US government has considered the possibility of other threats to national security, such as economic instability (for example, the 1973 oil embargo and the resultant fuel increases) and natural disasters (such as Hurricane Katrina in 2005, which killed nearly 2000 people and damaged property).¹²⁸ Therefore, national security can be interpreted as the ability to preserve “the American Way of Life” which comprises ideological beliefs, political and economic systems, religious freedoms and the “personal freedoms” of citizens.¹²⁹ These systems of values are embedded in a 1950 policy paper drafted by the Department of State and the Department of Defense titled, “United States Objectives and Programs for National Security”. This document was drafted in the context of the Cold War; however, the same principles have been incorporated in other more recent documents such as the “National Security Strategy for the United States” in 2002. In addition, Paleri defines national security as the “measurable state of the capability of a nation to overcome the multi-dimensional threats to the apparent well-being of its people and its survival as a nation-state at any given time, by balancing all instruments of state policy through governance ... and is extendable to global security by variables external to it”.¹³⁰

¹²⁴ Cynthia Ann Watson, *US National Security: A Reference Handbook* (Abc-clio, 2002).

¹²⁵ *ibid.*, 1.

¹²⁶ *ibid.*, 3.

¹²⁷ Jane Holl Lute. "Rethinking the Architecture of U.S. National Security". In Burns, Nicholas and Jonathan Price (Eds) , *America's National Security Architecture. Lessons from the Homeland*. 147-56: Washington, DC: Aspen Institute, 2016.

¹²⁸ Cynthia Ann Watson, *U.S. National Security: A Reference Handbook*, , 6.

¹²⁹ Watson, *US National Security: A Reference Handbook*, 3.

¹³⁰ Prabhakaran Paleri, *National Security: Imperatives and Challenges*.. New Delhi: Tata McGraw-Hill, 2008, 521.

However, scholars such as Buzan have challenged the state-centric nature of security. Barry Buzan, a key scholar in the field of security studies (and part of the Copenhagen School of Security Studies, which will be further explained in section 1.6.1) argues that security can be divided into five sectors. In his 1983 book, *People, States and Fear*, Buzan identified five sectors of security, namely military security, economic, political, societal and environmental.

Finally, security as a whole has come to be encapsulated in other dimensions as well, for example in the concept of “human security”, which broadens the scope of security by focusing on various threats to the individual.¹³¹ Unlike the traditional conceptualisation of security, proponents of the human security paradigm argue that the referent object should be the human, not the state and here the focus is on the various threats that could affect the individual such as natural disasters, political violence, and food insecurity

1.6 Theoretical framework

This section will explain the key theories used in the study, namely the Securitisation Theory and Social Identity Theory. Both of these theories are useful in examining how asylum seekers and refugees are represented through the political rhetoric of Donald Trump, broadcast on a number of platforms including speeches at public gatherings, and through conventional media and social media.

1.6.1 Securitisation Theory

Security studies have traditionally been preoccupied with “the study of the threat, use, and control of military force”.¹³² This traditionalist agenda came under scrutiny towards the end of the Cold War, when a new debate among scholars arose out of the frustrations of the “military and nuclear obsessions of the Cold War”.¹³³ The concept of “securitisation” emerged, when a group of scholars started arguing that non-military issues could also pose a security threat.¹³⁴

¹³¹ Amitav Acharya, Subrat K Singhdeo, and M Rajaretnam, "Introduction: Human Security from Concept to Practice," in *Human Security: From Concept to Practice* 1-12: World Scientific Series on Human Security, 2012. <https://doi.org/10.1142/7949..>

¹³² Stephen Walt cited in Buzan, Wæver, and De Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*.

¹³³ Buzan, "Rethinking Security after the Cold War," 9.

¹³⁴ Buzan, Barry. *People, States & Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era*. Sussex: Wheatsheaf Press, 2008, 27.

One such group is the Copenhagen School, which called for the widening of the security agenda beyond the realist preoccupation with military issues, power and war.¹³⁵ Other arguments included adding non-military issues such as the environment, transnational crime and economic issues to the security agenda.¹³⁶

“Securitisation” is essentially a process in which an actor, such as a politician, uses language to transform an issue into a security issue.¹³⁷ The actor uses language to present an issue as an existential threat using imagery that alludes to danger, destruction, survival and a sense of urgency to tackle the danger.¹³⁸ These actions are called “securitising moves”. One of the key exponents of this theory, Barry Buzan, argues that: “The process of ‘securitisation’ is what in language theory is called a “speech act” performed by a political actor”.¹³⁹ It is through this speech act that:

an intersubjective understanding is constructed within a political community to treat something as an existential threat to a valued referent object and to enable a call for urgent and exceptional measures to deal with the threat.¹⁴⁰

Through this act of securitising an issue, any unusual or extraordinary measures to tackle the problem are justified, if the securitising actor is successful in convincing an audience of the existential threat present.¹⁴¹ In essence, the securitising actor makes an issue a security issue by labelling it as such and convincing an audience that this issue is an “existential threat” to a referent object, which therefore justifies extraordinary measures that fall outside the realm of normal politics.¹⁴² What is important to note, is that through the “speech acts”, an “intersubjective understanding” of an issue is constructed. This suggests that the threat might not be grounded in reality (i.e. they are subjective phenomena). It is constructed and has an impact on how people perceive security concerns.¹⁴³ Therefore, anything can be presented as a threat through a combination of factors such as the authority of the securitising actor and the

¹³⁵ Buzan, Wæver, and De Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*.

¹³⁶ Buzan, "Rethinking Security after the Cold War."

¹³⁷ *ibid.*

¹³⁸ Buzan, Wæver, and De Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, 25-26.

¹³⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ Holger Stritzel, "Towards a Theory of Securitization: Copenhagen and Beyond," *European Journal of International Relations* 13, no. 3 (2007).

¹⁴¹ Buzan, "Rethinking Security after the Cold War."

¹⁴² *ibid.*

¹⁴³ *ibid.*

willingness of an audience to accept the claims.¹⁴⁴ Securitising actors can be government elites but the mass media can also shape the security discourse through agenda setting and disseminating security “speech acts” by prominent government officials.¹⁴⁵

The Copenhagen School’s conceptualisation of “securitisation” has been criticised for its apparent weaknesses. In a 2005 article, Thierry Balzacq argues that the Securitisation Theory put forth by the Copenhagen School is incomplete and that one needs to go beyond just the speech act in order to study securitisation.¹⁴⁶ In essence, the Copenhagen School framework focuses on “speech acts” but ignores context – external context, or, in other words, “the actual dynamics of world politics wherein the meaning of actions is not always determined by the conventional rules governing illocutionary acts”.¹⁴⁷ According to Balzacq, the effective securitisation of an issue is dependent on three core attributes: “First, an effective securitisation is highly context-dependent. Second, an effective securitisation is audience-centred. Third, securitisation dynamics are power-laden.”¹⁴⁸ This goes beyond the “speech act” framework proposed by the Copenhagen School.¹⁴⁹ In other words, securitisation speaks to the context, audience and power dynamics between the securitising actor and the audience (i.e. the public who receives the security utterances).¹⁵⁰ Balzacq suggests that the audience component of securitisation is very important: for effective securitisation, the audience must agree with the securitising actor. One needs to take into consideration the actual characteristics of the audience: who they are and what their psycho-cultural dispositions, interests and needs are.¹⁵¹

1.6.2 Social Identity Theory

The second theory to be used in the study is the Social Identity Theory. Proposed by British psychologists Henri Tajfel and John Turner, it is often used to explain intergroup conflict.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁴ Thierry Balzacq, "The Three Faces of Securitization: Political Agency, Audience and Context," *European journal of international relations* 11, no. 2 (2005).

¹⁴⁵ Annabelle Cathryn Wilmott, "The Politics of Photography: Visual Depictions of Syrian Refugees in UK Online Media," *Visual Communication Quarterly* 24, no. 2 (2017): 68.

¹⁴⁶ Balzacq, "The Three Faces of Securitization: Political Agency, Audience and Context," 179.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Balzacq, "The Three Faces of Securitization: Political Agency, Audience and Context."

¹⁵² Henri Tajfel, "Social Identity and Intergroup Behaviour," *Social Science Information/sur les sciences sociales* (1974).

In the context of this research, the “conflict” under analysis is that the rhetoric that Trump uses to describe asylum seekers and refugees operates within an environment in which tensions already exist between cultures in American society. Conflict can arise between the two groups, especially when the “in-group” perceives the “out-group” as a threat or nemesis.¹⁵³

In essence, the theory proposes that individuals identify with a specific social group, and compare their own groups to other groups to forge a separate identity. In other words, “othering” refers to the way one social group distances itself from another group, making that group appear different. Said suggests that people construct an identity in opposition to something different.¹⁵⁴ Orgad contends that people, groups or individuals, have a need to distinguish themselves from another in order to define themselves or gain more insight on them, or to forge a separate identity. In other words, how one defines and understands oneself depends on how one defines others.¹⁵⁵

1.7 Literature review

The purpose of this literature review is to evaluate critically the relevant literature that exists on the securitisation of immigration – and most specifically refugees and asylum seekers in Western countries such as the US. As will be discussed, several scholars argue that the securitisation of immigration is a trend that has emerged in Western countries such as the US and the United Kingdom. This section will outline some of the written works on this trend in developed countries, especially after the 9/11 attacks.

1.7.1 The securitisation of immigration in the Western world

A number of scholars have written on what they argue is the securitisation of immigration in Western countries such as the US. This has come with the transformation of the understanding of security in a post-Cold War era.¹⁵⁶ Some of the literature on this issue focuses on European countries such as France, and the political discourse and effort by states to toughen border

¹⁵³ *ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ Edward Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient (Revised Edition)*. London: Penguin, 1995.

¹⁵⁵ Shani Orgad, *Media Representation and the Global Imagination* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2014), 53.

¹⁵⁶ Maggie Ibrahim, "The Securitization of Migration: A Racial Discourse1," *International migration* 43, no. 5 (2005): 167.

control. An example includes Philippe Bourbeau's *The Securitisation of Migration: A study of Movement and Order*.¹⁵⁷ The author suggests that in Western countries, there is general anxiety and apprehension towards the movement of people across borders.¹⁵⁸ The unease around immigration could be related to concerns over national security and cultural identity, which is perceived to be in danger as a result of mass immigration.¹⁵⁹ This anxiety is reflected in the security practices of states, as particularly seen in the US after the 9/11 attacks.¹⁶⁰ Bourbeau conducted an extensive study on the securitisation of migration in two countries, Canada and France, between 1989 and 2005, in order to examine how the movement of people is increasingly being framed as an existential threat. In order to carry out this study, he looked at how the process of constructing an issue as a "security threat" can occur discursively and institutionally.¹⁶¹ For example, Bourbeau found that both Canada and France showed signs of securitising; but also that France showed significantly higher levels of securitising immigration than Canada between the years 1989–2005.¹⁶²

The author came to this conclusion by analysing utterances of securitising agents, just as this study aims to do. For instance, in his study of Canada Bourbeau found that the political agents who securitised migration or attempted to do so through rhetoric were mainly foreign affairs ministers who made securitised issues.¹⁶³ In a study of over 500 speeches from prime ministers he found a few examples of securitisation such former Prime Minister Kim Campbell's 1993 speech in which she said that he knew the Public Security portfolio:

consolidates the responsibilities for policing, border protection, customs, processing of Immigrants 'applications and the enforcement of immigration laws' in order to ensure that Canadian society was not at risk.¹⁶⁴

Another scholar who has studied this phenomenon is Maggie Ibrahim. In *The 'Securitisation' of Migration: A Racial Discourse*,¹⁶⁵ Ibrahim argues that since the end of the Cold War, there

¹⁵⁷ Philippe Bourbeau, *The Securitization of Migration: A Study of Movement and Order*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2011.

¹⁵⁸ Philippe Bourbeau, *The Securitization of Migration: A Study of Movement and Order* (Routledge New York, 2011).

¹⁵⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ *ibid.*, 1.

¹⁶¹ *ibid.*

¹⁶² *ibid.*

¹⁶³ *ibid.*

¹⁶⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁶⁵ Ibrahim, "The Securitization of Migration: A Racial Discourse1."

has been a trend in Western countries such as the US to securitise migration.¹⁶⁶ She interrogates the impact of the 9/11 attacks on immigration policies in countries such as the US. According to her, debates surrounding immigration policy became framed with national security concerns such as strengthening border controls.¹⁶⁷ One of the reasons for this securitisation of immigration is rooted in the perception that immigrants or diasporic communities could have links with and support for terrorist groups or insurgencies. As noted by Ibrahim, after the 9/11 attacks, about a dozen Somali nationals were deported due to the fear that they were linked to an organisation linked to the terrorist group al-Qaeda.¹⁶⁸

Scholars such as Ibrahim and Van Dijk have argued that this fear created around immigration/immigrants had a racial bias.¹⁶⁹ Also, when speaking about the threats of immigration, it is presented as having destabilising effects on the culture of the host country.¹⁷⁰ It has been noted that even before the 9/11 attacks, the anti-immigrant narrative in the US and Europe perceived immigrants as a threat to the national identity of the host nation, and ultimately a threat to social cohesion.¹⁷¹ According to Ibrahim, “this new migrant-as-a-threat narrative is in fact a racist discourse.”¹⁷² Examples of this have been documented in Martin Barker’s book, *The New Racism: Conservatives and the Ideology of the Tribe*. Barker puts forward that a “New Racism” discourse formed the backbone of Britain’s Conservative party’s construction of immigration as a threat to the British people. Cultural difference was presented as a menace to the host nation.¹⁷³ In other words, “fear of the ‘other’ is at the core of the new racism.”¹⁷⁴ It has been suggested that this fear of the other narrative was articulated by Trump during the 2016 US presidential elections. In fact, scholars such as Todd Scribner argue that Trump’s rhetoric regarding immigration, and in particular refugee resettlement, is reflective of

¹⁶⁶ *ibid.*, 167.

¹⁶⁷ Mittelstadt et al., "Through the Prism of National Security: Major Immigration Policy and Program Changes in the Decade since 9/11."

¹⁶⁸ Ibrahim, "The Securitization of Migration: A Racial Discourse," 173.

¹⁶⁹ Van Dijk, "New(s) Racism: A Discourse Analytical Approach."; Ibrahim, "The Securitization of Migration: A Racial Discourse1."

¹⁷⁰ Ibrahim, "The Securitization of Migration: A Racial Discourse," 166.

¹⁷¹ Ariane Chebel d'Appollonia, *Frontiers of Fear: Immigration and Insecurity in the United States and Europe* (New York, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012), 5.

¹⁷² Ibrahim, "The Securitization of Migration: A Racial Discourse," 164.

¹⁷³ Martin Barker, *The New Racism: Conservatives and the Ideology of the Tribe* (Junction Books, 1981), 24.

¹⁷⁴ *ibid.*

the Clash of Civilisations (CoC) paradigm posited by Samuel Huntington.¹⁷⁵ Scribner argues that the CoC paradigm is a useful lens to understand Trump's rhetoric regarding international relations issues such as migration. The main argument behind this paradigm is that in a post-Cold War world, culture, as opposed to political ideology, is useful in understanding international conflict.¹⁷⁶

The literature presented thus far examines the securitisation of immigration post-Cold-War era and shortly after the 9/11 attacks. For example, Ibrahim's analysis of the securitisation of migration interrogates the shows how the 9/11 attacks had an impact on how immigration policies were framed: national security concerns such as fears of terrorism led to calls for tighter border controls.¹⁷⁷ However, much has happened since the 9/11 attacks that has influenced the framing of migration and security. By the time Trump entered office in 2017 humanitarian crises across the world, such as the Syrian civil war, had already led to the mass forced displacements of millions of people.¹⁷⁸ According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, as of January 2019, over 68.5 million people have been forcibly displaced from their homes across the world; at least 25 million of these people are classified as refugees.¹⁷⁹ At the same time terrorists attacks in the post-9/11 era continue to occur and they lead to massive debates and a climate of fear and anxiety over the perceived threats that immigration has on security given the Islamic-inspired terrorist attacks in countries such Paris, Brussels and domestically after San Bernardino.¹⁸⁰

Therefore, this study intends that through a rigorous examination of Trump's speech acts, one can examine how asylum seekers and refugees are securitised in the current era therefore adding a contemporary contribution to the body of literature that already exists on the subject.

¹⁷⁵ Todd Scribner, "You Are Not Welcome Here Anymore: Restoring Support for Refugee Resettlement in the Age of Trump," *Journal on Migration and Human Security*,. 5 (2017).

¹⁷⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁷⁷ Mittelstadt et al., "Through the Prism of National Security: Major Immigration Policy and Program Changes in the Decade since 9/11."

¹⁷⁸ UNHCR "Figures at a Glance [Online]," UNHCR, 19 June 2018 <http://www.unhcr.org/figures-at-a-glance.html>.

¹⁷⁹ Refugees, "Figures at a Glance[Online]".

¹⁸⁰ Jenna Johnson, "Donald Trump Says He 'Absolutely' Wants a Database of Syrian Refugees," *The Washington Post*, 2015, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2015/11/21/donald-trump-says-he-absolutely-wants-a-database-of-syrian-refugees/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.92610a41df37.

Also this study looks specifically at rhetoric of a specific class of migrants, namely, refugees and asylum seekers, whilst previous studies looked at migration as a whole.. The rhetoric expressed by an influential political actor such as Trump has tangible consequences for people such as refugees and asylum seekers displaced from their homes, as it could translate into unfavourable policies and feed into negative perceptions about refugees.

1.7.2 The impact of the 9/11 attacks

Several scholars note in their work that Western countries such as the US responded almost immediately after the 9/11 attacks with security measures such as tougher border restrictions.¹⁸¹ However, it is important to note that securitisation was also happening before 9/11 and this attitude is reflected in the militarisation of borders in the US.¹⁸² Authors d'Appollonia and Ariane Chebel argue in their 2012 book, *Frontiers of Fear: Immigration and Insecurity in the United States and Europe*, that the US instituted emergency actions to boost border security after the attacks.¹⁸³ One such example is the passing of the INA, which authorised the detention of foreigners for 48 hours without charges and for longer periods of time in special cases.¹⁸⁴

Following 9/11, there was a perception that immigrants could pose a threat to American society, especially considering that the hijackers who carried out the 9/11 attacks, were immigrants themselves.¹⁸⁵ It is estimated that more than 3 000 people were killed in the attacks, while dozens were injured. Following the attack, then-President George W. Bush promised to fight terrorism, and Congress put in place a number of legislative measures to combat the “threat”.¹⁸⁶ These measures sought to secure American borders, identify terrorists and other potential threats to the country’s national security.¹⁸⁷ One of the most significant measures was the creation of the Department of Homeland Security,¹⁸⁸ with the mandate to “prevent terrorism

¹⁸¹ Mittelstadt et al., "Through the Prism of National Security: Major Immigration Policy and Program Changes in the Decade since 9/11."

¹⁸² Ariane Chebel d'Appollonia, *Frontiers of Fear: Immigration and Insecurity in the United States and Europe* (Cornell University Press, 2012), 7.

¹⁸³ *ibid.*, 1.

¹⁸⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁸⁵ Philip L Martin and Elizabeth Midgley, "Immigration: Shaping and Reshaping America," Population Reference Bureau, (2003), 19.

¹⁸⁶ Philip L Martin and Elizabeth Midgley, "Immigration: Shaping and Reshaping America," (2003): 19.

¹⁸⁷ *ibid.*, 3.

¹⁸⁸ Mittelstadt et al., "Through the Prism of National Security: Major Immigration Policy and Program Changes in the Decade since 9/11."

and also be less vulnerable (secure); control US borders; enforce immigration law; and screen visitors to the country etc.”¹⁸⁹ Another important measure was the introduction of the US Patriot Act of 2001, of which the full name is “Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act of 2001”.¹⁹⁰ The Act granted the US government extensive surveillance powers, including authorisation to arrest foreign nationals suspected of illegal behaviour.¹⁹¹ Under the Act, more money was deployed towards border security efforts and the US Attorney General had the authority to detain anybody deemed to be a threat to national security.¹⁹² After the 9/11 attacks, more than 1 000 foreigners were arrested because they were believed to be linked to terrorism.¹⁹³

The 9/11 attacks also had an impact on the US refugee programme, suspending it for four months. The following year, the number of refugees settling in the US was also significantly lower; in 2002, about 27 000 refugees were resettled, compared to 72 000 the previous year.¹⁹⁴

1.7.3 Political actors as securitising actors

In addition to Bourbeau, Ceyhan Ayse and Anastasia Tsoukala posit that political actors such as state officials can be securitising actors.¹⁹⁵ They consider how actors produce rhetoric that creates a sense of fear around immigration.¹⁹⁶ The authors suggest that the process of constructing an issue as a “security threat” can occur discursively and institutionally.¹⁹⁷ In essence, state actors can use speech acts to securitise an issue on a discursive level. Meanwhile, if one is to measure the securitisation of an issue on an institutional level, one would analyse the institutions in place and how they might securitise an issue. For example, Bourbeau argues that the detention and deportation of migrants are reflective of a trend of securitised migration, or certain laws and policies.¹⁹⁸

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Martin and Midgley, "Immigration: Shaping and Reshaping America," 20.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ Martin and Midgley, "Immigration: Shaping and Reshaping America," 20.

¹⁹⁴ Haines, "Safe Haven," 1.

¹⁹⁵ Ayse Ceyhan and Anastassia Tsoukala, "The Securitization of Migration in Western Societies: Ambivalent Discourses and Policies," *Alternatives* 27, no. 1_suppl (2002): 24.

¹⁹⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁹⁷ Bourbeau, *The Securitization of Migration: A Study of Movement and Order*, 1.

¹⁹⁸ *ibid.*, 11.

1.8 Methodology

This section will outline the research methodology used to examine Trump’s public statements and recordings surrounding asylum seekers and refugees, in order to uncover the securitisation of this group of migrants. This study is guided by the interpretivist paradigm, and as such, this study is a qualitative study. The researcher’s data collection and analysis methods are qualitative content analysis and discourse analysis of primary and secondary data in the form of social artefacts – most specifically public statements and recordings made by Trump on the following platforms: speeches at campaign rallies, broadcast and print interviews and posts made on social media websites, Twitter and news articles. The time frame chosen for this study is Trump’s first 100 days in office (although it is also necessary to establish context and therefore Trump’s election campaign will also be covered).

1.8.1 Qualitative research

The research approach used in this investigation is qualitative, most specifically qualitative content analysis (also referred to as textual analysis).¹⁹⁹ This approach was chosen as the most appropriate method in the examination of the discursive construction of asylum seekers and refugees by Donald Trump. The core objective of qualitative research is to gain an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon in order to uncover the subjective experiences and meanings of those being studied.²⁰⁰ When collecting and analysing data, there is an emphasis on words as opposed to numbers, as seen in quantitative research.²⁰¹ Quantitative research is also guided by the research tradition of positivism, which calls for data collection methods that are more objective, such as measuring and collecting numerical data in order to predict and control outcomes.²⁰² In essence, when choosing data collection methods, a qualitative researcher must ensure the chosen methods align with the key objective of qualitative research, which is to “explore, understand and describe”.²⁰³

¹⁹⁹ Annemi Strydom and Rose-Marie Bezuidenhout, "Qualitative Data Collection," in *Research Matters*, ed. Corne Davis du Plooy Cillers, Rose-Marie Bezuidenhout (Cape Town: Juta, 2014), 173.

²⁰⁰ *ibid.*, 174.

²⁰¹ F Du Plooy-Cilliers and J Cronje, "Research Paradigms and Traditions," *Research Matters*. Cape Town: Juta (2014).

²⁰² Bezuidenhout, "Qualitative Data Collection," 173.

²⁰³ *ibid.*, 174.

Qualitative research data collection can be divided into two major approaches, namely field research and non-reactive and unobtrusive research.²⁰⁴ According to Earl R. Babbie, the unobtrusive methods of research include qualitative content analysis, analysing statistics and historical analysis.²⁰⁵

1.8.2 Qualitative content analysis

The research approach used in this investigation is qualitative research, most specifically content analysis (also known as textual analysis).²⁰⁶ The main objective of content analysis is to examine textual data “to describe the characteristics of the document’s content by examining who says what, to whom and with what effect”.²⁰⁷ This method involves an in-depth study or analysis of social artefacts or contents of human communications such as books, newspapers, and journals, in order to gain an in-depth or detailed understanding of a social phenomenon.²⁰⁸ In qualitative content analysis, the researcher seeks to analyse texts and seek any patterns and themes that may emerge, and their meanings.²⁰⁹

In this study, the researcher has analysed public statements and recordings by Donald Trump between 20 January 2017 and 29 April 2017. This time frame was chosen because it coincides with the run-up to the US presidential elections and the first 100 days of Trump’s presidency. The specific dates were chosen because Trump announced his bid to become president on 16 June 2015, while the 100th day of Trump’s presidency fell on 29 April 2017.²¹⁰ The goal of the research is to examine content in Trump’s speeches, statements, and tweets, in order to identify themes or patterns that are later analysed and interpreted into findings. The study analyses what Trump has said on asylum seekers and refugees, to see whether or not he has characterised this

²⁰⁴ *ibid.*, 175.

²⁰⁵ Earl R Babbie, *Introduction to Social Research*, Boston, MA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2011, 327.

²⁰⁶ Bezuidenhout, "Qualitative Data Collection," 173.

²⁰⁷ Michael Bloor and Fiona Wood, *Keywords in Qualitative Methods: A Vocabulary of Research Concepts* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2006, 58.

²⁰⁸ Bezuidenhout, "Qualitative Data Collection," 191.

²⁰⁹ Rose-Marie Bezuidenhout and Franci Cronje. “Qualitative Data Analysis.” In *Research Matters*, edited by du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis, Corne and Rose-Marie Bezuidenhout, 228-50. Cape Town: Juta, 2014.

²¹⁰ Reem Nasr, "Donald Trump Announces Candidacy for President (Online)," CNBC, <https://www.cnn.com/2015/06/16/donald-trump-announces-candidacy-for-president.html>; David Leonhardt, "Donald Trump’s First 100 Days: The Worst on Record (Online)," *The New York Times*, 26 April 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/26/opinion/donald-trumps-first-100-days-the-worst-on-record.html>.

group of migrants as a security threat. In essence, this study operates within “an interpretative paradigm with the goal of providing a thick description of the social reality mirrored in the texts”.²¹¹ This method has a number of advantages. Qualitative content analysis is a form of non-reactive/unobtrusive research.²¹² The researcher avoids the trap of interfering in the research and affecting the outcomes of the study because she will be dealing with texts in newspaper reports.²¹³ This is in contrast to field research, where the researcher has to observe phenomena or people in their natural settings. As Bezuidenhout and Strydom note, in field research, there is a danger that “researchers may inadvertently affect the outcome of the study merely because of their presence in the social setting”.²¹⁴

The limitations of content analysis are that the findings cannot be generalised to a wider population.²¹⁵ However, this obstacle is overcome because as a qualitative researcher, the objective is not to generate generalisable outcomes.

1.8.3 Discourse analysis

Once textual categories have been identified through content analysis, the study employs discourse analysis to uncover the use of language and how it has been used to convey certain ideas and values.²¹⁶ Discourse analysis is concerned with uncovering meaning in texts, whether written or spoken as in an interview.²¹⁷ In other words, it looks at how language is used to construct meaning. Discourse analysis also allows the researcher to examine text and talk in relation to the social, political or economic context.²¹⁸

In order to define what discourse analysis entails, it is crucial to define what “discourse” is as well as the philosophical and theoretical underpinnings of this method of social

²¹¹ Bezuidenhout, "Qualitative Data Collection," 191.

²¹² *ibid.*

²¹³ *ibid.*

²¹⁴ Rose-Marie Bezuidenhout and Franci Cronje, "Qualitative Data Analysis," *ibid.*, ed. Corne Davis Du Plooy Cillers, Rose-Marie Bezuidenhout, 190-91; *ibid.*

²¹⁵ Klaus Krippendorff, *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2012, 407.

²¹⁶ Rose-Marie Bezuidenhout and Franci Cronje, "Qualitative Data Analysis," in *Research Matters*, ed. Corne Davis Du Plooy Cillers, Rose-Marie Bezuidenhout (Cape Town: Juta, 2014), 243.

²¹⁷ *ibid.*

²¹⁸ Teun A Van Dijk, "New (S) Racism: A Discourse Analytical Approach," *Ethnic minorities and the media* (2000): 35.

inquiry.²¹⁹ Discourse can be defined as “a particular way of talking about and understanding the world (or an aspect of the world”.²²⁰ The idea is that language is arranged in patterns and is used to create meaning; therefore discourse analysis seeks to look at these patterns and uncover the meaning behind them.²²¹ Discourse can be written texts, spoken words or visual images.²²² In this case, this study examines written or transcribed material from broadcast interviews and speeches; as well as written tweets.

There are a number of discourse analysis approaches pioneered by different scholars such as Michel Foucault, Norman Fairclough and Teun van Dijk.²²³ Although the different approaches have different methods and slightly different theoretical underpinnings, one of the commonalities is the belief that:

Discourse is a form of social action that plays a part in producing the social world – including knowledge, identities and social relations – and thereby in maintaining specific social patterns.²²⁴

In other words, it is through discourse that one constructs reality or a version of reality.²²⁵ In addition, discourse analysis examines how this is done through discursive and linguistic practices.

This study specifically uses Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as espoused by Norman Fairclough, which essentially seeks to uncover how unequal power relations are exercised through language.²²⁶ The central question is how discourse perpetuates the subjugation of people. CDA seeks to “shed light on the linguistic discursive dimension of social and cultural phenomena and processes of change in late modernity”.²²⁷ It seeks to uncover the power

²¹⁹ Louise Philips and Marianne Jorgensen, *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method*, London: Sage, 2002, 4.
²²⁰ Louise Philips and Marianne Jorgensen, "Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method," *Retrieved May 12 (2002): 1.*
²²¹ *ibid.*
²²² *ibid.*, 61.
²²³ Van Dijk, "New(s) Racism: A Discourse Analytical Approach."; Norman Fairclough and Ruth Wodak, *Critical Discourse Analysis* (na, 2005); Norman Fairclough, "Discourse and Social Change," (1992).
²²⁴ Philips and Jorgensen, "Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method," 9.
²²⁵ *ibid.*
²²⁶ *ibid.*, 61.
²²⁷ *ibid.*

relations and ultimately bring about social change because of the premise that words shape the social world.²²⁸

This study approaches discourse analysis using Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional model for CDA.²²⁹ The premise is that the use of language is made up of three dimensions, namely text speech, written, visuals or a combination; discursive practice (production and consumption) and finally a social practice (the context).²³⁰

A crucial idea is that texts should be examined in relation to the social context in which they are embedded.²³¹ Discourse analysis is premised on social constructionism, which basically says that knowledge is socially constructed, and that context matters.²³² This is relevant because ultimately this study seeks to uncover the discursive constructionism of asylum seekers and refugees on a number of platforms, within the context of concerns over immigration and national security.

1.8.4 Unit of analysis

The unit of analysis for this study is Trump's public statements and recordings between 20 January 2017 and 29 April 2017, available on the online database Factbase.org and Trump Twitter Archive. This includes his recorded speeches, statements, policy proposals and tweets published on Twitter. Through content analysis, the researcher examines the text, using securitisation as a core theory, as well as the Social Identity Theory, in order to uncover any themes or patterns.

1.8.5 Data collection

The data has been collected from online databases, Factbase.org and Trump Twitter Archive, that are dedicated to curating every word Trump has said in public platforms, including television broadcasts, newspaper interviews and campaign rallies and on Twitter. Trump's statements have been collected from a website called Factbase that compiles Trump's public

²²⁸ *ibid.*, 64.

²²⁹ Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change*, 73.

²³⁰ Norman Fairclough, "Discourse and Social Change," (1992): 73.

²³¹ Jorgensen and Philips, *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method*, 62.

²³² Vivien Burr, *Social Constructionism*, 2015, 4.

statements that are available in the public domain, such as televised interviews. The objective of Factbase is to “make available, unedited, the entire corpus of an individual's public statements and recordings”.²³³ This means the researcher has analysed Trump’s statements in their pure, unedited form.

The other source used is the Trump Twitter Archive, a website that allows users to search all of Donald Trump’s tweets on a number of subjects including foreign policy, the environment and immigration.²³⁴ The researcher used the search tools to locate tweets where he speaks about refugees, Muslims, immigration and national security. Twitter is an important platform due to Trump’s extensive use of it to express his views on a number of issues pertaining to US policy. According to his Twitter profile, Trump has over 40 million followers.²³⁵ This suggests that his tweets reach millions of people across the world. Trump’s use of Twitter during the presidential campaign and during his time in office is significant, as his tweets often influenced his own media coverage.²³⁶

1.8.6 Population and sampling technique

The population for this study is Trump’s recorded public statements, including his speeches, policies and tweets that deal with subject matter related to refugees/asylum seekers. Purposive sampling has been used to identify specific statements pertaining to asylum seekers/refugees using keywords such as “refugees”, “Syrian”, “Muslim refugees”, “asylum”, “terrorism”, “radical Islam”, “national security” etc. For this investigation, the researcher sought to examine the securitisation of asylum seekers/refugees from 20 January 2017 until 29 April 2017 (the first 100 days of Donald Trump’s presidency). The chosen timeframe also includes key events regarding the US’s response to migrants, such as the EOs that Trump implemented as soon as he was inaugurated.

²³³ Factbase, "Mission," FactSquared, Inc, <https://factba.se/>.

²³⁴ Trump Twitter Archive, "About/Faq," <http://www.trumptwitterarchive.com/about>.

²³⁵ Donald J. Trump, "Verified Account: Donald J. Trump (@Realdonaldtrump)," Twitter, <https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump>.

²³⁶ Matt Kapko, "Twitter's Impact on 2016 Presidential Election Is Unmistakable," <https://www.cio.com/article/3137513/social-networking/twitters-impact-on-2016-presidential-election-is-unmistakable.html>.

1.9 Ethical consideration and feasibility

Since the unit of analysis is texts and not people, it will not be necessary to obtain any ethical clearance. The study is feasible as the data will be obtained from online databases, namely the Trump Twitter Archives and Factbase.

1.10 Limitations

The findings of this study are limited to the characterisation of asylum seekers and refugees by US President Donald Trump during the first 100 days in office, even though Trump has been in office for nearly two years at the time of writing. It therefore does not include discussions on the movement of peoples across the US-Mexico border – an issue that has also been repeatedly addressed by the Trump administration during Trump’s tenure in office.

1.11 Chapter outline

Chapter One provides the reader with an introduction that outlines the study’s contextual background, research problem and key research aims. It also contains a literature review of some of the relevant literature on the topics of securitisation and immigration in the US. Lastly, this section described the research methodology that will be used to carry out this investigation.

Chapter Two provides a historical overview of immigration in the US from the colonial era until the present day (2018). It unpacks the different waves or phases of mass immigration dating from the colonial era (1492-1763) up until 2017, and how the immigration policies of the country have evolved over time. It also examines the evolution of US refugee policies from 1939 up until 2017, the latter year being the focus of this study. This is in order to ascertain how previous administrations have dealt with asylum seekers and refugees. This historical overview allows one to determine if Donald Trump's statements and characterisation of asylum seekers and refugees during the first 100 days of his presidency are unique or if they are a continuing tradition that has been historically prevalent in American society.

In Chapter Three, a contextual overview of Donald Trump’s characterisation of asylum seekers and refugees during the 2016 US election campaign is provided. It briefly unpacks notable

utterances on a number of platforms, namely through recorded speeches, statements, media interviews as well as things he has published himself on Twitter.

Chapter Four contains the data that was collected from speeches and statements that Trump made on public platforms. It showcases the data that was collected, as well as the researcher's analysis of it. This chapter also provides an overview of the data that was collected from Trump's media engagements, namely his Twitter account and his utterances in broadcast interviews. His tweets and utterances, from interviews and speeches, were sourced from Factbase.org. Another website that was used to collect just his tweets was Trump Twitter Archive.

Chapter Five concludes the study by referring back to the key research questions and aims and summarising main findings also suggests areas for future research.

CHAPTER TWO: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF IMMIGRATION IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a historical overview of immigration in the US from the colonial era up until the present day (2018). Immigration history in the US can be divided into large waves or phases of mass immigration, and, conversely, low levels of immigration. Therefore, this chapter covers the different waves dating from the colonial era (1492-1763) up until 2017, and how the immigration policies of the country have evolved over time. It then examines the evolution of US refugee policies from 1939 up until 2017, the latter year being the focus of this study. It briefly covers how previous administrations have dealt with asylum seekers and refugees. Finally, it concludes with an overview of Trump's policy proposals regarding refugee resettlement that were put forth throughout the course of the 2016 US elections. Through a historical background, one can determine if Donald Trump's statements and characterisation of asylum seekers and refugees during the first 100 days of his presidency, are unique or if they are a continuing tradition that has been historically prevalent in American society. This section also briefly looks at how former presidents such as Harry S Truman and Bill Clinton have collectively characterised asylum seekers and refugees. This allows one again to ascertain if Trump is continuing a tradition or if he represents a departure from tradition.

2.2 The US: A nation of immigrants

Throughout its history, the US has been an important destination for migrants across the world.²³⁷ Scholars have even gone so far as to declare that the US is “generally seen as the most important of all immigration countries and epitomizes the notion of free migration”.²³⁸ The country has a long history of welcoming new people across its borders – including asylum

²³⁷ Stephen Castles, Hein De Haas, and Mark J Miller, *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, 90; Aristide R Zolberg and Aristide R Zolberg, *A Nation by Design: Immigration Policy in the Fashioning of America*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009, 1.

²³⁸ Stephen Castles, Hein De Haas, and Mark J Miller, *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 90.

seekers, migrant labourers and international students – albeit through an arguably selective immigration policy (as discussed below).²³⁹

The history of immigration in the US can be summarised into ‘waves’ or flows.²⁴⁰ Immigration flows into the US have been influenced by a number of factors such as natural disasters as well as global events, especially the industrial revolution, World War I, the Great Depression and World War II.²⁴¹ At the onset, immigration to the US was largely unregulated until the introduction of the qualitative and quantitative restrictions in the 1880s and the 1920s respectively, which restricted certain groups such as prostitutes and Asians.²⁴² A large number of people who came to the US came from Europe, largely for economic reasons (besides other reasons such as fleeing political and religious persecution). The peak of the industrial revolution coincided with the mass immigration that was seen in the 19th century.²⁴³ The waves of immigration are summarised below. There appears to be no consensus on the exact dates of when the waves occurred but for the purposes of this study, the periods are divided as follows:

2.2.1 Colonial-era immigration (1492–1763) and first wave (pre-1820)

During the colonial era, immigration to the US was dominated by Europeans mainly from England, who established new communities in colonies throughout the country.²⁴⁴ For example, in the 1600s, the Pilgrims and the Puritans (who fall under the broader group of Protestants) left England in pursuit of religious freedom and economic prosperity.²⁴⁵ By the 1640s, over 20 000 people had settled in areas such as Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island and New Hampshire.²⁴⁶ It is not known how many people came to the US before 1820,

²³⁹ Aristide R Zolberg and Aristide R Zolberg, *A Nation by Design: Immigration Policy in the Fashioning of America* (Harvard University Press, 2009), 1.

²⁴⁰ Philip Martin, "Trends in Migration to the U.S," Population Reference Bureau, <http://www.prb.org/Publications/Articles/2014/us-migration-trends.aspx>.

²⁴¹ *ibid.*

²⁴² *ibid.*; Castles, De Haas, and Miller, *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World*, 90.

²⁴³ Castles, De Haas, and Miller, *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World*, 90; Churgin, "Mass Exoduses: The Response of the United States," 311.

²⁴⁴ History.com Editors, "U.S. Immigration before 1965 [Online]," *History*, 16 May 16, 2019, <https://www.history.com/topics/u-s-immigration-before-1965>.

²⁴⁵ Thomas J. Archdeacon, "European Immigration from the Colonial Era to the 1920s: A Historical Perspective," *Americans All*®, 2001, 1; History.com Staff, "U.S. Immigration before 1965[Online]".

²⁴⁶ Thomas J. Archdeacon, "European Immigration from the Colonial Era to the 1920s: A Historical Perspective," (*Americans All*®: *Americans All*® 2001), 2.

as records were not kept.²⁴⁷ The first wave of immigration is estimated to have been towards the end of the 18th century to the early to mid-1800s. Initially, immigrants largely came from Northern and Western Europe such as the British Isles.²⁴⁸

However, not all immigrants were welcomed. For instance, Benjamin Franklin, a man described as the Founding Father of the US, expressed discontent at the increasing presence of Germans in Pennsylvania.²⁴⁹ In 1751, Franklin warned that “Pennsylvania will in a few years become a German colony; instead of their learning our language, we must learn theirs or live as in a foreign country.”²⁵⁰ He also said that the Germans who enter the country are “generally the most stupid of their own nation.” Kentucky Senator Garrett Davis also expressed concern over the moral character of European immigrants.²⁵¹

Statements made back in the 18th century by leaders of early America bear a striking resemblance to Trump’s comments about Mexican immigrants when he announced his candidacy for president in 2015:

When Mexico sends its people, they’re not sending the best. They’re sending people that have lots of problems and they’re bringing those problems. They’re bringing drugs, they’re bringing crime. They’re rapists and some, I assume, are good people, but I speak to border guards and they’re telling us what we’re getting.²⁵²

This highlights that the characterisation of immigrants by US leaders or politicians historically, has, at times, been hostile or sceptical.

2.2.2 Immigration in the 19th century and the Second Wave (1820–1860)

The 19th century was characterised by a massive wave of immigrants – mainly from the United Kingdom (including Ireland) and German states.²⁵³ During the second wave of immigration,

²⁴⁷ *ibid.*, 3.

²⁴⁸ Martin, "Trends in Migration to the U.S".

²⁴⁹ Bill Ong Hing, "A Nation of Immigrants, a History of Nativism." In *To Be an American: Cultural Pluralism and the Rhetoric of Assimilation* edited by Bill Ong Hing, 13-31, New York: NYU Press, 1997, 14.

²⁵⁰ Bill Ong Hing, "A Nation of Immigrants, a History of Nativism," in *To Be an American*, ed. Bill Ong Hing, Cultural Pluralism and the Rhetoric of Assimilation (NYU Press, 1997), 14.

²⁵¹ *ibid.*

²⁵² Misri, "The Year in Anti-Immigrant Rhetoric: Trump Was Just the Tip of the Iceberg in 2015."

²⁵³ Michael J Churgin, "Mass Exoduses: The Response of the United States," *International Migration Review* (1996): 311; Castles, De Haas, and Miller, *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World*.

other groups came from Europe in search of economic opportunities, political freedom or just to escape poverty at home.²⁵⁴ The reasons for their emigration were largely economic or political.²⁵⁵ By 1860, 66% of the migrants originated from Britain and 22% from Germany. Other groups also came, including Irish, Spanish, Italians and Eastern Europeans,²⁵⁶ as well as Chinese. It is estimated that between the years 1850 to 1860, 50 000 Chinese labourers came into the US to work in the mines or along the railroads.²⁵⁷ In addition, the US also accepted people who would be classified as refugees, such as the Irish during the mid-19th century.²⁵⁸

2.2.2.1 *Irish refugees in the US*

Immigration between Ireland and North America had been going on for some time. However, The Great Famine or the Great Irish Potato Famine had a profound influence on the migration patterns of Irish nationals between the years 1845 and 1851.²⁵⁹ The Great Famine prompted the mass exodus of at least two million refugees to flee Ireland by ship, mostly to North America.²⁶⁰ This would become “the largest-single population movement of the 19th century”.

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Klein argues that “Ireland’s population was nearly halved by the time the potato blight abated in 1852”.²⁶² The exiles made their way across the sea on 5 000 boats in cramped conditions. Emigrants faced tough conditions such as overcrowding and insufficient food, which led to malnutrition and sickness, and treacherous storms, which could account for the deaths that

²⁵⁴ Martin, "Trends in Migration to the U.S"; Churgin, "Mass Exoduses: The Response of the United States."

²⁵⁵ "Mass Exoduses: The Response of the United States," 311.

²⁵⁶ Castles, De Haas, and Miller, *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World*, 90.

²⁵⁷ Churgin, "Mass Exoduses: The Response of the United States," 311.

²⁵⁸ William A. Spray, "Irish Famine Emigrants and the Passage Trade to North America," in *Fleeing the Famine: North America and Irish Refugees, 1845-1851*, edited by. Margaret M Mulrooney,: Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2003, 3.

²⁵⁹ William A. Spray, "Irish Famine Emigrants and the Passage Trade to North America," in *Fleeing the Famine: North America and Irish Refugees, 1845-1851*, ed. Margaret M Mulrooney (United States of America: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2003), 3.

²⁶⁰ Christopher Klein, "When America Despised the Irish: The 19th Century's Refugee Crisis [Online]," *History.*, 14 March 2019, <https://www.history.com/news/when-america-despised-the-irish-the-19th-centurys-refugee-crisis>.

²⁶¹ Christopher Klein, "When America Despised the Irish: The 19th Century's Refugee Crisis[Online]," A&E Television Networks, LLC., <https://www.history.com/news/when-america-despised-the-irish-the-19th-centurys-refugee-crisis>.

²⁶² Klein, "When America Despised the Irish: The 19th Century's Refugee Crisis [Online]"

happened at sea and even on arrival to the US.²⁶³ This bears resemblance to the present-day conditions of thousands of migrants and refugees making the voyage across the treacherous waters of the Mediterranean Sea in what has been dubbed the EU Migrant Crisis.²⁶⁴

The Irish arriving in the US faced discrimination and prejudice, just like other ethnic groups such as the Chinese and the Japanese. By the 1850s, a nativist political party emerged, called the “Know-Nothing” party, which advocated against immigration and for a 21-year naturalization waiting period.²⁶⁵ Many Americans resented the presence of these refugees, as they were poor, unskilled and Catholic. Religious tension between the predominately Anglo-Saxon Protestant population and the Catholic arrivals was a feature of relations. Conflict arose between Protestants and Catholics, and this would at times be expressed violently.²⁶⁶ Instances of violence are well documented in history. In an event known as the Bible Riots of 1844, anti-Catholic and anti-Irish groups in Philadelphia demolished homes and burnt churches.²⁶⁷ Acts of violence were carried out in the 1850s as well; some were deadly, as seen in Louisville, Kentucky, where between 20 and 100 people died on August 1855.²⁶⁸

The discrimination carried out against the Irish was also reflected in pillars of the society including the print media. Newspaper classified advertisements for jobs would state things such as “No Irish Need Apply” and cartoons making fun of this group were published in newspapers.²⁶⁹ In the 1840s and 1850s, secret societies sprang up in American society, such as the Order of the Star-Spangled Banner, which was made up of exclusively Protestant men and sought a return to “Temperance, Liberty and Protestantism”.²⁷⁰ A prominent party called the “Know-Nothings” was established, which was anti-Catholic and anti-immigrant.²⁷¹ Jay P. Dolan in *The Irish Americans: A History* writes that the “Know-Nothings believed that

²⁶³ Spray, "Irish Famine Emigrants and the Passage Trade to North America," 3.

²⁶⁴ UNHCR, "UNHCR Desperate Journeys Report Provides Snapshot of Changing Refugee Movements to Europe," United Nations Refugee Agency, 12 April 2018, <http://data2.unhcr.org/en/news/20796>.

²⁶⁵ Hing, "A Nation of Immigrants, a History of Nativism," 17.

²⁶⁶ Klein, "When America Despised the Irish: The 19th Century's Refugee Crisis[Online]".

²⁶⁷ *ibid.*

²⁶⁸ *ibid.*

²⁶⁹ *ibid.*

²⁷⁰ *ibid.*

²⁷¹ Jay P Dolan, *The Irish Americans: A History* New York, NY: Bloomsbury Publishing USA, 2010. Cited in *ibid.*

Protestantism defined American society. From this flowed their fundamental belief that Catholicism was incompatible with basic American values".²⁷²

2.2.3 Third Wave (1880–1914) (also known as the Industrialisation phase)

Martin describes the period of 1880-1914 as the third wave of immigration in the US, in which over 20 million European immigrants made their way to the US.²⁷³ According to Martin, an average of 650 000 per year came. A large number of immigrants were from Southern and Eastern Europe. The ones who arrived via the iconic Ellis Island in New York worked factory jobs in North-eastern and Midwestern cities.²⁷⁴ This flow did slow down due to World War I and restrictions of the 1920s.²⁷⁵ The industrial revolution had a profound effect on immigration flows coming to the US. The peak of the industrial revolution coincided with the mass immigration that was seen in the 19th century.²⁷⁶

The peak of this immigration has been argued to be between the years 1861 and 1920, with estimates saying that 30 million immigrants entered over this period. Many comprised Jews from Eastern Europe, and Italians.²⁷⁷ Borjas states that between 1820 and 1987, a staggering 54 million immigrants had settled in the US.²⁷⁸

It was also during this phase when the US government began to introduce restrictions targeting specific groups like the Chinese.²⁷⁹ Although large numbers of Chinese people were encouraged to meet labour demands on the mining or railroad sector, the late 19th century and 20th century saw the passage of a spate of legislation that sought to limit this immigration. One

²⁷² Jay P Dolan, *The Irish Americans: A History* (Bloomsbury Publishing USA, 2010). Cited in Klein, "When America Despised the Irish: The 19th Century's Refugee Crisis[Online]".

²⁷³ Martin, "Trends in Migration to the U.S".

²⁷⁴ *ibid.*

²⁷⁵ *ibid.*, 90.

²⁷⁶ Castles, De Haas, and Miller, *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World*, 90; Churgin, "Mass Exoduses: The Response of the United States," 311; Martin, "Trends in Migration to the U.S".

²⁷⁷ Castles, De Haas, and Miller, *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World*, 90.

²⁷⁸ George J Borjas, "National Origin and the Skills of Immigrants in the Postwar Period," in *Immigration and the Workforce: Economic Consequences for the United States and Source Areas* (University of Chicago Press, 1992).

²⁷⁹ Martin, "Trends in Migration to the U.S"; History.com Staff, "Chinese Exclusion Act [Online]," *History*, 7 June 2019, <https://www.history.com/topics/chinese-exclusion-act>.

example of such legislation was the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act.²⁸⁰ The legislation temporarily halted the entry of Chinese skilled and unskilled labourers from entering the country for 10 years.²⁸¹ This was amidst rising unemployment where Chinese immigrants were scapegoated for the economic and social issues in the country.²⁸² Chinese immigrants were affected by other subsequent laws all the way through 1943, in the midst of the Second World War that excluded Chinese and other nationalities of Asian origin such as Filipinos.²⁸³

In addition, in 1917, the US government implemented the first comprehensive restrictive law that was passed in an effort to curb immigration.²⁸⁴ It was implemented within a context of concerns of national security during World War I and general hostility towards immigration in the country.²⁸⁵ The 1917 Act, among other things, increased the number of tax immigrants had to pay upon arrival, gave officials more power to deny visas at their own discretion, and barred anyone from the “Asiatic Barred Zone”, except for Japanese and Filipinos.²⁸⁶

2.2.4 Immigration pause (the 1920s–1960s)

Between the 1920s and 1960s, immigration slowed down due to a number of factors, including World War I, the Great Depression and immigration quotas that sought to limit the number of people coming into the country.²⁸⁷ The 1920s were a period of more immigration restrictions, but which favoured immigrants from Western and Northern Europe.²⁸⁸ For example, The National Quota of 1921 was a precursor to the Immigration Act of 1924, which set quotas on

²⁸⁰ History.comStaff, "Chinese Exclusion Act[Online]," A + E Networks, <https://www.history.com/topics/chinese-exclusion-act>.

²⁸¹ *ibid.*

²⁸² *ibid.*

²⁸³ *ibid.*

²⁸⁴ U.S. Department of State. "The Immigration Act of 1924 (the Johnson-Reed Act)," <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1921-1936/immigration-act>.

²⁸⁵ "The Immigration Act of 1924 (the Johnson-Reed Act)," U.S. Department of State, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1921-1936/immigration-act>.

²⁸⁶ *ibid.*

²⁸⁷ Martin, "Trends in Migration to the U.S".

²⁸⁸ Muzaffar Chishti, Faye Hipsman, Isabel Ball, "Fifty Years on, the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act Continues to Reshape the United States[Online]," Migration Policy Institute, 15 October 2015, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/fifty-years-1965-immigration-and-nationality-act-continues-reshape-united-states>.

nationalities. It was passed in 1921 under the administration of President Warren Harding and renewed in 1922.²⁸⁹ According to the US Department of State:

Immigration expert and Republican Senator from Vermont William P. Dillingham introduced a measure to create immigration quotas, which he set at three percent of the total population of the foreign-born of each nationality in the US as recorded in the 1910 census. This put the total number of visas available each year to new immigrants at 350,000.²⁹⁰

These restrictive and racialised policies would continue for the next 40 years.²⁹¹ Yet, despite these restrictions, the US did loosen restrictions under certain circumstances, as was the case in World War II, when the US implemented the Bracero Program.²⁹² The program was an agreement between the US and Mexico, which would allow for Mexican labourers to work in the agriculture sector in the US.²⁹³ It was created in order to address the shortage of workers. It is estimated that 4.6 million Mexican labourers came to work in the US under this program.²⁹⁴

2.2.5 The Fourth Wave (1965–present)

Martin argues that the Fourth Wave of immigration started after the passage of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 (also known as the Hart-Celler Act).²⁹⁵ This Act removed the country's previous immigration policy, which was based on race and ethnicity, in favour of a policy that was more welcoming of a diverse range of immigrants from regions such as Asia, Latin America and Africa.²⁹⁶ In theory, ethnicity and race would no longer be a barrier to migrating to the country. It also favoured family reunification and highly skilled immigrants. This Act had a profound effect on the demographic, ethnic and racial composition of the

²⁸⁹ U.S. Department of State. "The Immigration Act of 1924 (the Johnson-Reed Act)".

²⁹⁰ *ibid.*

²⁹¹ Faye Hipsman Muzaffar Chishti, Isabel Ball, "Fifty Years on, the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act Continues to Reshape the United States[Online]," Migration Policy Institute, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/fifty-years-1965-immigration-and-nationality-act-continues-reshape-united-states>.

²⁹² D'vera Cohn and Ana Gonzalez-Barrera Jeffrey S. Passel, "II. Migration between the U.S. And Mexico [Online]," Pew Research Centre, 23 April 2012, <http://www.pewhispanic.org/2012/04/23/ii-migration-between-the-u-s-and-mexico/>.

²⁹³ D'vera Cohn and Ana Gonzalez-Barrera Jeffrey S. Passel, "Ii. Migration between the U.S. And Mexico[Online]," Pew Research Centre, <http://www.pewhispanic.org/2012/04/23/ii-migration-between-the-u-s-and-mexico/>.

²⁹⁴ Chishti, "Fifty Years on, the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act Continues to Reshape the United States [Online]".

²⁹⁵ Martin, "Trends in Migration to the U.S"; Muzaffar Chishti, "Fifty Years on, the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act Continues to Reshape the United States[Online]".

²⁹⁶ "Fifty Years on, the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act Continues to Reshape the United States[Online]".

American society.²⁹⁷ Since 1965, more than half of the foreign-born population came from Latin America, while a quarter came from Asian countries.²⁹⁸

However, historically this influx of immigrants encountered resistance from the US public. McBride writes that as the immigrant population grew, the US introduced a series of restrictive policies that would curb immigration – and refugee resettlement.²⁹⁹ This was due to the perception held by some members of the public that immigration was a threat to the cultural and economic fabric of the US.³⁰⁰ The public's discontent with the rising immigration levels was demonstrated through the passage of laws such as Proposition 187 in California in 1994.³⁰¹ Proposition 187 would deny undocumented immigrants taxpayer-funded social services such as healthcare and education. It also made provision for the school administrators to report illegal immigrants, to expel undocumented kids from school and so on. This was in response to the growing Latin American community in California, which made up a large number of immigrants in the country. In the Proposition voters or supporters of the measure argued that Californians were under economic threat and a criminal threat due to the growing immigrant population. The restrictive policies or actions also had an impact on US refugee resettlement as discussed below.³⁰²

2.3 Refugees and asylum seekers in the US from 1939 to 2017

As noted above, the US has a long history of accepting refugees and displaced persons.³⁰³ However, it also has a history of turning away displaced persons such as Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi Germany before and during World War II.³⁰⁴ Before the end of World War II, the

²⁹⁷ *ibid.*

²⁹⁸ *ibid.*

²⁹⁹ Michael J. McBride, "Migrants and Asylum Seekers: Policy Responses in the United States to Immigrants and Refugees from Central America and the Caribbean," *International Migration* 37, no. 1 (1999): 290.

³⁰⁰ Michael J. McBride, "Migrants and Asylum Seekers: Policy Responses in the United States to Immigrants and Refugees from Central America and the Caribbean," *International Migration* 37, no. 1 (1999).

³⁰¹ *ibid.*

³⁰² *ibid.*, 292.

³⁰³ Holman, "Refugee Resettlement in the United States," 3; Todd Scribner, "You Are Not Welcome Here Anymore: Restoring Support for Refugee Resettlement in the Age of Trump," *J. on Migration & Hum. Sec.* 5 (2017).

³⁰⁴ Sally Kohn, "America's Response to the Refugee Crisis Reflects the Worst of Its Past[Online]," Quartz Media LLC, 11 September 2015, <https://qz.com/500440/americas-response-to-the-refugee-crisis-reflects-the-worst-of-its-past/>.

refugee admissions policy in the country was largely ad hoc.³⁰⁵ It was not until the passage of the 1948 Displaced Persons Act that the US took steps to formalise and solidify a response to the growing humanitarian crises and demand for aid to displaced persons.³⁰⁶ The modern refugee system was established in 1980, with the passage of the 1980 Refugee Act.³⁰⁷ It was formed in the context of an influx of Indochinese people who fled due to the Vietnam War. By the 1990s, the largest refugee population came from countries such as Cuba, Vietnam and Soviet bloc countries such as Hungary.³⁰⁸

The refugee policies or the country's response to displaced persons is related to their overall immigration policy discussed earlier in this chapter. For instance, during their open-door immigration policy before the 19th century, a distinction was not made between immigrants and refugees – they were treated under the same protocol.³⁰⁹ Throughout history, the refugee policies or approaches have been affected by anti-Semitism, the Great Depression and the ideological battleground of the Cold War also known as “communist-fears”.³¹⁰

Having stated the above, this chapter will now provide a brief overview of landmark decisions and policies in refugee resettlement and give examples of refugee crises from the 1950s to the present day (2018). As has been stated before, the Refugee Crisis in the Mediterranean has been declared as the worst refugee crisis since World War II.³¹¹ Kohn argues: “Despite the fact that the United States was founded as a nation of immigrants fleeing colonial oppression, it hasn't always lived up to those values.”³¹²

World War II was a landmark event in the 20th century, as the world witnessed the widespread genocide of millions of people during the Holocaust where an estimated six million European Jews were systematically killed by the Nazi regime and its allies.³¹³ Before World War II and

³⁰⁵ Scribner, "You Are Not Welcome Here Anymore: Restoring Support for Refugee Resettlement in the Age of Trump," 264.

³⁰⁶ Holman, "Refugee Resettlement in the United States," 6.

³⁰⁷ Churgin, "Mass Exoduses: The Response of the United States," 319.

³⁰⁸ Holman, "Refugee Resettlement in the United States," 3.

³⁰⁹ *ibid.*

³¹⁰ *ibid.*, 6.

³¹¹ Refugees, "Figures at a Glance[Online]".

³¹² Sally Kohn, "America's Response to the Refugee Crisis Reflects the Worst of Its Past[Online]," Quartz Media LLC <https://qz.com/500440/americas-response-to-the-refugee-crisis-reflects-the-worst-of-its-past/>.

³¹³ *ibid.*

during the war, a massive refugee flow ensued due to Hitler's aggression towards Jewish people.³¹⁴ This prompted thousands of Jews to seek refuge elsewhere in countries such as the US, by migrating like the many other refugees and asylum seekers that today flee their homes from violence, war and other humanitarian concerns.³¹⁵ However, immigration policy in the US was largely informed by anti-Semitism and national security concerns, which limited the number of Jewish refugees granted entry into the country as far back as 1939.³¹⁶ Several polls carried out found that US citizens wanted to restrict the entry of Jewish people due to national security concerns.³¹⁷ In the same year (1939) a German steamer carrying more than 900 refugees was famously turned away over fears that the refugees could be Nazis.³¹⁸ In total during this period of WWII, the US took in more than 130 000 Jews, which was significantly lower than quotas would allow.³¹⁹ This means that refugee quotas targeting specific ethnic groups is not a new phenomenon. Just as the Jews fleeing Nazi Germany were in dire straits, so are the present refugees who are fleeing dangerous conditions, such as the refugees from Syria, Afghanistan, Eritrea and so forth.

2.3.1 Truman signs the 1948 Displaced Persons Act

The end of World War II ushered in an era of a more formalised approach to dealing with the hundreds and thousands of displaced peoples across the world. President Harry S Truman issued an executive order authorising the entry of 40 000 refugees.³²⁰ This was followed in

³¹⁴ Ellen Umansky, "After Kristallnacht, America Chose Not to Save Jewish Children from the Nazis[Online]," The Slate Group, 8 March 2017,

http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/history/2017/03/after_kristallnacht_america_chose_not_to_save_jewish_children_from_the_nazis.html.

³¹⁵ UNHCR, "Unhcr Desperate Journeys Report Provides Snapshot of Changing Refugee Movements to Europe," United Nations Refugee Agency, <http://data2.unhcr.org/en/news/20796>.

³¹⁶ Holman, "Refugee Resettlement in the United States," 5; Umansky, "After Kristallnacht, America Chose Not to Save Jewish Children from the Nazis [Online]"

³¹⁷ Uriel Heilman, "What Did Americans Say About Jewish Holocaust Refugees? [Online]," Haaretz Daily Newspaper Ltd., 3 December 2015, <https://www.haaretz.com/jewish/what-did-americans-say-about-jewish-refugees-1.5430021>.

³¹⁸ Ellen Umansky, "After Kristallnacht, America Chose Not to Save Jewish Children from the Nazis[Online]," The Slate Group, http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/history/2017/03/after_kristallnacht_america_chose_not_to_save_jewish_children_from_the_nazis.html.

³¹⁹ Kohn, "America's Response to the Refugee Crisis Reflects the Worst of Its Past[Online]"

³²⁰ Churgin, "Mass Exoduses: The Response of the United States," 313.

1948 by Truman signing into effect the Displaced Persons Act.³²¹ This was the first Congress-initiated legislation pertaining to refugees. This was in response to the growing number of European refugees fleeing war-torn Europe.³²²

The Displaced Persons Act made provisions for the permanent settlement of European displaced persons following the end of World War II. The 1948 Displaced Persons Act facilitated the entry of 200 000 refugees (excluding many Jews).³²³ The processing of these applications took place outside the country's borders.³²⁴ The bill made the provision that "Two hundred thousand displaced persons may be admitted in the next 2 years, as well as 2,000 recent Czech refugees and 3,000 orphans".³²⁵ The people who were coming into the country were displaced and had a well-founded fear of danger or persecution on the basis of their race, religion or political affiliation.³²⁶

President Truman may have signed the legislation, but he publicly denounced some aspects of it, which he deemed "discriminatory" against Jewish people.³²⁷ According to Truman, the bill discriminated "in callous fashion against displaced persons of the Jewish faith".³²⁸ The original version of the bill made provision for the entry of refugees from Baltic countries and Eastern Poland. It also contained provisions such as a preference for agricultural workers, and of course, the Cold War politics at the time made sure that the bulk of people admitted were from communist-dominated countries.³²⁹ He added that the bill also excluded "many displaced persons of the Catholic faith who deserve admission".³³⁰

³²¹ Harry S. Truman, "Statement by the President Upon Signing the Displaced Persons Act," Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/statement-the-president-upon-signing-the-displaced-persons-act>.

³²² Holman, "Refugee Resettlement in the United States," 6.

³²³ United States Congress. Senate Committee on the Judiciary, *Displaced Persons Act of 1948*, Washington, D.C., 1948..

³²⁴ Churgin, "Mass Exoduses: The Response of the United States," 313.

³²⁵ Harry S. Truman, "Statement by the President Upon Signing the Displaced Persons Act," Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=12942>.

³²⁶ United States. Congress. Senate. Committee on the Judiciary, *Displaced Persons Act of 1948* (Washington : [s.n.], 1948., 1948).

³²⁷ Truman, "Statement by the President Upon Signing the Displaced Persons Act".

³²⁸ *ibid.*

³²⁹ Richard Ferree Smith, "Refugees," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 367, no. 1 (1966): 45.

³³⁰ Truman, "Statement by the President Upon Signing the Displaced Persons Act".

2.3.2 Refugee policies in the 1950s (Hungary and the other communist states)

Refugee resettlement has historically been influenced by foreign policy interests such as the containment of Communism during the Cold War. During the 1950s, Cold War politics continued to play a role in the refugee resettlement programme of the US – it often dictated who gained refugee status and who did not.³³¹ The 1950s were characterised by people fleeing communist states.³³² Policymakers at the time believed that assisting displaced people from these states would generate anti-communist sentiment.³³³ Several acts were also introduced during this time, such as the 1953 Refugee Relief Act, which provided refugee status to over 200 000 refugees from Europe and communist-dominated countries after the 1948 Displaced Persons Act expired.³³⁴ This Act was similar to the 1948 Act; however, it admitted a more diverse range of nationalities and asylum seekers such as German escapees, Italians, 4,000 war orphans, Arabs and Asians.³³⁵ This was a departure from the previous law that excluded Asians. It still, however, maintained that a refugee was one who was escaping from a communist or communist-dominated country.

Between 1956 and 1957 the US granted asylum to at least 30 000 Hungarian refugees following the Hungarian Revolution of 1956.³³⁶ The revolt was an anti-communist patriotic demonstration by people who wanted reforms, an end to communist domination and the removal of Soviet troops from Hungary.³³⁷ People fled after the demonstrations were suppressed by forces loyal to the Soviet Union.³³⁸ It is estimated that at least 200 000 people

³³¹ Scribner, "You Are Not Welcome Here Anymore: Restoring Support for Refugee Resettlement in the Age of Trump," 268; Holman, "Refugee Resettlement in the United States," 6.

³³² Churgin, "Mass Exoduses: The Response of the United States," 314.

³³³ Scribner, "You Are Not Welcome Here Anymore: Restoring Support for Refugee Resettlement in the Age of Trump," 269.

³³⁴ Dwight D. Eisenhower, "Statement by the President Upon Signing the Refugee Relief Act of 1953," Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=9668>; Smith, "Refugees," 45.

³³⁵ "Refugees," 46.

³³⁶ Peter Pastor, "The American Reception and Settlement of Hungarian Refugees in 1956-1957," *Hungarian Cultural Studies* 9 (2016): 197; Scribner, "You Are Not Welcome Here Anymore: Restoring Support for Refugee Resettlement in the Age of Trump," 269.

³³⁷ Pastor, "The American Reception and Settlement of Hungarian Refugees in 1956-1957," 197.

³³⁸ Arthur A Markowitz, "Humanitarianism Versus Restrictionism: The United States and the Hungarian Refugees," *The International Migration Review* 7, no. 1 (1973): 40.

fled Hungary to neighbouring countries such as Austria and were later resettled in third countries such as the US.³³⁹

2.3.3 The Refugee Act of 1980

The modern refugee system was established in 1980 with the passage of the 1980 Refugee Act, following the end of the Vietnam War.³⁴⁰ The war had devastated the Indochinese region and during the two decades following the end of the war, at least two million people had fled from Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos.³⁴¹ By 1992, at least one million had been resettled in the USA.³⁴² The 1980 Act was established in the backdrop of growing demand for a more comprehensive policy to deal with the refugees. The Act was signed into law by President Jimmy Carter, and raised the ceiling from 17 400 to 50 000.³⁴³ In addition, it expanded the definition of a refugee to match with the official UN definition and led to the creation of the Office of Refugee Resettlement to oversee resettlement programs.³⁴⁴ At the same time, throughout the 1980s and 1990s and beyond, many people were fleeing war and persecution from countries such as from Cuba and from conflicts in Central American countries such as Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala even though they were not always classified as refugees, as discussed below.³⁴⁵

2.3.4 Refugees in 1990s: Presidents HW Bush and Bill Clinton

By the 1990s, the US had already welcomed asylum seekers and refugees from across the world. One of the countries was Haiti. In 1991, Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide was

³³⁹ Pastor, "The American Reception and Settlement of Hungarian Refugees in 1956-1957," 198; Rupert Colville, "Fiftieth Anniversary of the Hungarian Uprising and Refugee Crisis[Online]," UNHCR, <http://www.unhcr.org/news/latest/2006/10/453c7adb2/fiftieth-anniversary-hungarian-uprising-refugee-crisis.html>.

³⁴⁰ Churgin, "Mass Exoduses: The Response of the United States," 319.

³⁴¹ George Rupp, "The Largest Refugee Resettlement Effort in American History," International Rescue Committee, 28 July 2016 <https://www.rescue.org/article/largest-refugee-resettlement-effort-american-history>.

³⁴² George Rupp, "The Largest Refugee Resettlement Effort in American History," International Rescue Committee, <https://www.rescue.org/article/largest-refugee-resettlement-effort-american-history>.

³⁴³ National Archives Foundation, "Refugee Act of 1980," National Archives Foundation, <https://www.archivesfoundation.org/documents/refugee-act-1980/>

³⁴⁴ USCIS, "Refugee Timeline: Immigration and Naturalization Service Refugee Law and Policy Timeline, 1891-2003 [Online]," U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services <https://www.uscis.gov/history-and-genealogy/our-history/refugee-timeline>.

³⁴⁵ Churgin, "Mass Exoduses: The Response of the United States," 319.

ousted from power in a coup orchestrated by the military. By November 1992, about 40 000 Haitians, claiming to be refugees, had attempted to reach the US by sea.³⁴⁶ The flood of refugees reaching the country led to processing centres being overwhelmed, which prompted President HW Bush to authorise the US Coast Guard to send back Haitians who were found at sea.³⁴⁷ In 1992, Bush signed executive order 12807 “Interdiction of Illegal Aliens”, which according to the state, was to “avert tragedy at sea”.³⁴⁸ The White House said the situation was a “dangerous and unmanageable situation” that needed to be controlled. Asylum seekers were subsequently housed at a camp at Guantanamo Bay.³⁴⁹

The executive order stated that:

The President has authority to suspend the entry of aliens coming by sea to the United States without necessary documentation, to establish reasonable rules and regulations regarding, and other limitations on, the entry or attempted entry of aliens into the United States, and to repatriate aliens interdicted beyond the territorial sea of the United States.³⁵⁰

In order to justify its actions, the US government argued that many of the people fleeing Haiti were not refugees, but rather migrants.³⁵¹ Brunson McKinley of the US State Department stressed the importance of making a distinction between “real refugees” and migrants so that the desperate can get the help they need.³⁵² This was in the context of a US Coast Guard Interdiction Operation, which blocked boats from entering the country. The US government argued this in order to protect the Haitians, as more than a dozen had already drowned.³⁵³ However, the executive action received backlash from civil society organisations such as TransAfrica and presidential hopeful, Bill Clinton. Randall Robinson, executive director of TransAfrica, accused the Bush policy of being “racist and discriminatory” towards Haitians.³⁵⁴ Robinson argued that other refugee groups such as the Vietnamese were treated better than the Haitians. This argument was also put forth by Marleine Bastien and Rosta Telfort, who state

³⁴⁶ Howard French, "More Haitians Trying to Reach U.S.," *The New York Times* 1992.

³⁴⁷ George Bush, "George Bush: "Executive Order 12807—Interdiction of Illegal Aliens.," The American Presidency Project, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=23627>.

³⁴⁸ "Nbc Today Show," in *President George H.W. Bush Signs Executive Order on Haitian Refugees* (NBC Universal: NBC Universal, 1992).

³⁴⁹ *ibid.*

³⁵⁰ "George Bush: "Executive Order 12807—Interdiction of Illegal Aliens.,"

³⁵¹ Brunson McKinley, "U.S. Policy on Haitian Boat People," *In Defense of the Alien* 15 (1992): 133.

³⁵² *ibid.*, 137.

³⁵³ *ibid.*, 133.

³⁵⁴ "Let Haitian Refugees into USA ", *USA TODAY* 1992.

that of the hundreds and thousands of refugees who descended onto US shores in the 1980s, Haitians received substandard treatment. While Cubans “received red-carpet treatment, the Haitians were kept in detention for months and sometimes years”.³⁵⁵

Presidential hopeful Bill Clinton also slammed the executive order as a “cruel policy of returning Haitian refugees to a brutal dictatorship without an asylum hearing”.³⁵⁶ Clinton made promises to end the policy of returning Haitians to sea; however, after he was inaugurated as president in 1993, he announced that “the practice of returning those who flee Haiti by boat will continue, for the time being, after I become president”.³⁵⁷

This scenario is one of many examples in which the willingness of the US to accept refugees was called into question in the 1990s. McBride writes that by the 1990s the US continued to resettle refugees if it was in accordance with their foreign policy objectives.³⁵⁸ The Cold War had ended so there was less preoccupation with a communist threat and increased public pressure to limit immigration. The US reluctance to resettle Haitians can be seen through this lens: Haiti was not in US foreign policy interests.³⁵⁹

2.3.5 Post 9/11 refugee resettlement

The 9/11 attacks had an impact on the US Refugee Resettlement Program to some extent, due to the state’s fears that terrorists could potentially use the immigration system to enter the country and ultimately threaten the national security of the US.³⁶⁰ Arguably, one of the biggest casualties following 9/11 was the temporary suspension of the US Refugee Resettlement

³⁵⁵ Marleine Bastien and Rosta Telfort, "Detention of Women Asylum Seekers in the United States a Disgrace," in *Interrupted Life, Experiences of Incarcerated Women in the United States*, edited by Rickie Solinger. Paula C. Johnson. Martha L. Raimon, Tina Reynolds and Ruby C. Tapia 287-93. Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2010, 288.

³⁵⁶ Stephen Chapman, "President Clinton, Trying to Escape Candidate Clinton," *Chicago Tribune*, 17 January 1993, http://articles.chicagotribune.com/1993-01-17/news/9303163172_1_gennifer-president-clinton-haitians.

³⁵⁷ Stephen Chapman, "President Clinton, Trying to Escape Candidate Clinton," *Chicago Tribune*, http://articles.chicagotribune.com/1993-01-17/news/9303163172_1_gennifer-president-clinton-haitians.

³⁵⁸ Michael J. McBride, "Migrants and Asylum Seekers: Policy Responses in the United States to Immigrants and Refugees from Central America and the Caribbean," *International Migration* 37, no. 1 (1999): 294

³⁵⁹ *ibid*

³⁶⁰ Scribner, "You Are Not Welcome Here Anymore: Restoring Support for Refugee Resettlement in the Age of Trump," 264; Arthur E. Dewey, "Immigration after 9/11: The View from the United States," U.S. Department of State, 3 April 2003, <https://2001-2009.state.gov/g/prm/rls/2003/37906.htm>; Martin and Midgley, "Immigration: Shaping and Reshaping America," 19.

Programme due to security concerns.³⁶¹ According to Arthur E. Dewey, Assistant Secretary for Population, Refugees and Migration within the Department of State, the US refugee admissions program was believed to be vulnerable to terrorists because:

[T]errorism thrives on unconventional weapons such as commercial aircraft, it is reasonable to expect that terrorists will use unexpected and unconventional means to enter the U.S. Such demented individuals might see the U.S. refugee admissions program as a soft underbelly for such entry.³⁶²

The security concerns of the government profoundly reduced the number of refugees admitted to the US. For the 2002 fiscal year, the president authorised the entry of 70 000 refugees into the country; however, only 27 000 were resettled.³⁶³ This is a drastic gap between the intended goals and the outcome, highlighting the national security concerns that gripped the country at this time. According to the Immigrant and Refugee Service, over 20,000 refugees were expected to arrive in the country, but their arrival was delayed following the attacks.³⁶⁴ Among the refugees due to be resettled in the USA, some were women fleeing the Taliban, from Iraq, or children from war-torn Sierra Leone.³⁶⁵ On top of that the US instituted a number of reforms such as the creation of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).³⁶⁶ The DHS was created to carry out several functions to protect the borders, such as tougher border control, more rigorous screening and vetting of visitors and monitoring.³⁶⁷

However, the argument that terrorists could enter the country posing as asylum seekers was widely criticised. According to Ms. Limon, then executive director in 2001 of Immigrant and Refugee Services of America, "If you wanted to come to this country as a terrorist, coming as

³⁶¹ Somini Sengupta, "A Nation Challenged: Immigration; Refugees at America's Door Find It Closed after Attacks[Online]," *The New York Times*, 29 October 2001

<https://www.nytimes.com/2001/10/29/nyregion/nation-challenged-immigration-refugees-america-s-door-find-it-closed-after.html> ; Scribner, "You Are Not Welcome Here Anymore: Restoring Support for Refugee Resettlement in the Age of Trump."; Dewey, "Immigration after 9/11: The View from the United States".

³⁶² Arthur E. Dewey, "Immigration after 9/11: The View from the United States," U.S. Department of State <https://2001-2009.state.gov/g/prm/rls/2003/37906.htm>.

³⁶³ *ibid.*

³⁶⁴ Somini Sengupta, "A Nation Challenged: Immigration; Refugees at America's Door Find It Closed after Attacks[Online]," *The New York Times* <https://www.nytimes.com/2001/10/29/nyregion/nation-challenged-immigration-refugees-america-s-door-find-it-closed-after.html>

³⁶⁵ *ibid.*

³⁶⁶ Mittelstadt et al., "Through the Prism of National Security: Major Immigration Policy and Program Changes in the Decade since 9/11."

³⁶⁷ Andrew I Schoenholtz, "Refugee Protection in the United States Post-September 11," *The Columbia Human Rights Law Review*. 36 (2004): 329-30.

a refugee has to be the stupidest way to come”.³⁶⁸ This is because of the extreme vetting that asylum seekers undergo, which can last up to two years.

According to a 2016 CATO study, of the 154 foreign-born terrorists that committed acts of terror since 1975, only 20 were refugees.³⁶⁹ Out of these acts, three were deadly (however, this was before the intensive screening procedures that came with the 1980 Refugee Act). In fact, history shows that the bulk of the people responsible for major terrorist attacks on US soil, were US citizens.³⁷⁰ In addition, the people who carried out 9/11 were not refugees or asylum seekers – they were immigrants who had gained access to the country through legal means.³⁷¹

2.3.6 Barack Obama and refugee resettlement

Former US President Barack Obama has expressed public support for the plight of asylum seekers and refugees from across the world, through a number of platforms, including the United Nations General Assembly.³⁷² At a 2016 Leaders’ Summit at the UN General Assembly, Obama expressed concern for the millions of people displaced by humanitarian crises such as the war in Syria, and urged for more to be done.³⁷³ He also called for states to not deny people refuge based on “their background or religion”. This contrasts with Donald Trump’s proposal to ban Muslims following the San Bernardino Massacre in which a US citizen and his Pakistani wife, Tashfeen Malik, murdered 14 people on 2 December 2015. According to Felter and McBride, humanitarian crises in Middle Eastern countries such as Syria have led to policymakers expressing scepticism towards refugees from these states, particularly during Obama’s administration.³⁷⁴

³⁶⁸ Sengupta, "A Nation Challenged: Immigration; Refugees at America's Door Find It Closed after Attacks[Online]".

³⁶⁹ Alex Nowrasteh, "Terrorism and Immigration: A Risk Analysis[Online]," Cato Institute, 13 September 2016, <https://www.cato.org/publications/policy-analysis/terrorism-immigration-risk-analysis>

³⁷⁰ Claire Felter and James McBride, "How Does the U.S. Refugee System Work?," Council on Foreign Relations, 10 October 2018, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/how-does-us-refugee-system-work>

³⁷¹ Claire Felter; James McBride, "How Does the U.S. Refugee System Work?," Council on Foreign Relations, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/how-does-us-refugee-system-work>

³⁷² Barack Obama, "Remarks by President Obama at Leaders Summit on Refugees," news release, 20 September, 2016, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2016/09/20/remarks-president-obama-leaders-summit-refugees>.

³⁷³ *ibid.*

³⁷⁴ Felter, "How Does the U.S. Refugee System Work?".

In 2015, Obama proposed raising the annual ceiling to 85 000 during the 2016 fiscal year,³⁷⁵ due to “humanitarian concerns” in regions such as Africa, East Asia and Europe and across the world.³⁷⁶ In 2016, he proposed increasing the number to 110 000 refugees for the fiscal year 2017, citing Syria as a grave concern given the millions of people displaced.³⁷⁷

2.3.7 Donald Trump and refugees: the 2015/2016 election campaign

Immigration reform was a focal point throughout Donald Trump’s election campaign.³⁷⁸ He made a number of proposals regarding immigration, such as building a wall along the US-Mexico border to deter illegal border crossings.³⁷⁹

The 2016 US elections also coincided with the Syrian civil war and other humanitarian crises, which displaced millions of people.³⁸⁰ On several occasions, Trump also made proposals that could have implications for the US refugee resettlement. One of his most controversial proposals was on what to do about refugees coming from Muslim countries such as Syria in the face of national security threats over radical Islam. For example, in 2015, Trump called for “a total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States” following the 2015 San Bernardino shootings.³⁸¹

Trump’s perceived threats were compounded by terrorist attacks in Europe and in the US. Islam has been presented as a threat to the US – because of terrorism but also due to the cultural,

³⁷⁵ Barack Obama, "Presidential Determination -- Presidential Determination on Refugee Admissions for Fiscal Year 2016," The White House Office of the Press Secretary, 29 September 2015, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2015/09/29/presidential-determination-presidential-determination-refugee-admissions>.

³⁷⁶ "Presidential Determination -- Refugee Admissions for Fiscal Year 2017," The White House Office of the Press Secretary, 28 September 2016, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2016/09/28/presidential-determination-refugee-admissions-fiscal-year-2017>.

³⁷⁷ Barack Obama, "Presidential Determination -- Refugee Admissions for Fiscal Year 2017," The White House Office of the Press Secretary, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2016/09/28/presidential-determination-refugee-admissions-fiscal-year-2017>.

³⁷⁸ Louise Liu, "Here's Where President-Elect Trump Stands on Immigration[Online]," Business Insider, 9 November 2016, <http://www.businessinsider.com/heres-where-donald-trump-stands-on-immigration-2016-11?IR=T>.

³⁷⁹ Louise Liu, "Here's Where President-Elect Trump Stands on Immigration[Online]," Business Insider, <http://www.businessinsider.com/heres-where-donald-trump-stands-on-immigration-2016-11?IR=T>.

³⁸⁰ Nick Corasaniti, "A Look at Trump's Immigration Plan, Then and Now[Online]," *The New York Times*, 31 August 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/08/31/us/politics/donald-trump-immigration-changes.html>.

³⁸¹ Liu, "Here's Where President-Elect Trump Stands on Immigration[Online]".

social fabric of the country (Islam is “external” and an “existential threat to the American way of life”). This fear extends to refugees, especially Muslims, who are collectively perceived to be a national security threat.³⁸²

Trump’s statements have been described as Islamophobic by commentators such as Kim Ghattas. Ghattas states that 2016’s “worst offender is Donald Trump” after calling for a ban on Muslims. He has also said that “radical Islam is coming to our shores.”³⁸³ This is relevant and served as a precursor to his 2017 executive orders on immigration. In contrast, former President Barack Obama warned against “painting all Muslims with a broad brush and [implying] that we are at war with the entire religion.” In addition, Trump received criticism from the Republican Party members such as House Speaker Paul Ryan, who argued that Trump’s proposed ban on Muslims would not be beneficial to the country.³⁸⁴ Donald Trump’s subsequent executive order barring migrants from seven Muslim-majority countries renewed the debate on national security considerations and refugee resettlement.³⁸⁵

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter was designed to provide the reader with a brief historical overview of key events in US immigration history from the colonial era to 2018. Within this, the chapter has broken down the different waves of immigration and key laws that were put in place to facilitate the process. Within this discussion of immigration, the chapter has specifically examined the US refugee programme by paying specific attention to developments such as the establishment of the 1980 Refugee Act, which is the foundation of the US Refugee Program today. It also outlined a number of global events that produced asylum seekers and refugees such as World War II, the Hungarian Revolution and the 1991 coup in Haiti. Furthermore, it looked at how the responses to these refugee crises has been influenced by external factors such as the Cold War politics and national security concerns following the September 11 terrorist attacks.

³⁸² Scribner, "You Are Not Welcome Here Anymore: Restoring Support for Refugee Resettlement in the Age of Trump."

³⁸³ Kim Ghattas, "The United States of Islamophobia," *Foreign Policy*, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/07/05/the-united-states-of-islamophobia/>.

³⁸⁴ "Highly Offensive': GOP Lawmakers Distance Selves from Trump after Orlando Response," *Chicago Tribune*, 14 June 2016, <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/nationworld/politics/ct-donald-trump-orlando-shooting-paul-ryan-20160614-story.html>.

³⁸⁵ Fenter, "How Does the U.S. Refugee System Work?"

Having outlined the historical background, one can deduce that previous administrations and presidents have responded to the phenomena of immigration differently throughout US history. It appears that national security concerns have always had an impact on the US Refugee Resettlement Programme as evidenced by the temporary suspension of the programme following the 9/11 attacks due to fears over national security. This attitude is similar to the current climate of concerns of national security threats. Through a historical background, one can determine if Donald Trump's statements and characterisation of asylum seekers and refugees during his first 100 days in office is unique, or if it is a continuing tradition that has been prevalent in American society. The following chapter will provide a contextual background of Trump's characterisation of asylum seekers and refugees during the presidential campaign in order to prepare the groundwork for the main topic, which is to study the characterisation of this group of migrants during his first 100 days in office.

CHAPTER THREE: A BACKGROUND TO MR TRUMP'S DISCOURSE DURING THE 2016 US ELECTION CAMPAIGN

3.1 Introduction

A key cornerstone of Donald Trump's presidential campaign was immigration, as the topic in general was fiercely contested during the 2016 US elections. It has been argued that the topic of immigration was more salient than in previous years because at the time of the elections, there was a growing humanitarian crisis in countries such as Syria, which triggered the mass displacements of millions of people. It is within this context that this chapter seeks to outline the conversations around refugees and asylum seekers during the 2016 US presidential campaign in order to provide some context to Trump's later immigration rhetoric as president (in Chapter Four). Most specifically, this chapter will briefly outline the collective identification and characterisation of refugees and asylum seekers by then-candidate Trump. This chapter begins with an overview of Trump's immigration agenda during the campaign and campaign promises he made, in which he characterised asylum seekers and refugees in certain ways. Trump's presidential campaign was launched on 16 June 2015, and ended on 8 November 2016, when he was announced as the winner.

This chapter also briefly discusses the viewpoints of other candidates who campaigned during the 2016 US presidential campaign such as the Democratic candidate, Hillary Clinton, runner-up Republican candidate, Ted Cruz, and candidates from smaller political parties, namely Gary Johnson from the Libertarian Party and Jill Stein from the Green Party of the United States and Evan McMullin who ran as an independent candidate, so as to provide some comparative perspective from the other candidates. Following that, it briefly discusses how the American people generally viewed some of these issues, gathered from poll data. It is important to examine these three components, namely Trump's speech acts, those of his opponents and public opinion, for a number of reasons. Trump's pre-victory rhetoric gives the reader insight into the evolution or roots of his policy actions. In other words, his campaign promises later translated into policy actions and utterances when he became president in 2017. During the campaign, Trump and his opponents used the language of threat and survival when speaking about refugees and asylum seekers, which later manifested into policy actions. A prominent

example is the Muslim ban, which was discussed in Chapter One. Secondly, the elections give the reader an insight into the external context in which Trump's utterances operate: an American society that is anxious about security amidst perceived threats of Islamic-inspired terrorism given the number of terror attacks that occurred during the election campaign. As scholars such as Buzan argue, a key component of successful securitisation is an audience willing to accept the claims of the securitising actor.³⁸⁶ The analysis of what the other candidates about asylum seekers and refugees were saying and what the American public believed also provides a solid contextual background in which the researcher analyses Trump's speech acts on the subject matter. And finally, effective securitisation is dependent on context, audience and power. Ultimately, this chapter provides a contextual background for the analysis of Trump's rhetoric in Chapter Four.

3.2 Immigration that will “make America Great Again”

A key focus of Trump's presidential campaign was on immigration, most specifically what to do about undocumented migrants making their way across the US-Mexican border, and refugees and asylum seekers from Muslim-majority countries such as Syria and Afghanistan. Throughout the campaign, Trump made a number of controversial remarks targeting specific ethnic groups such as Muslims and Mexicans.³⁸⁷ There was a heavy focus on the challenges that certain migrants could bring to the country, such as violent crime towards American citizens, radical Islam and economic insecurity for jobless Americans. Trump for example launched his campaign on 16 June 2015 with a call to deport millions of undocumented Mexican migrants.³⁸⁸ In his announcement speech, he said that Mexico was sending migrants who are not good for the country:

They're sending people that have lots of problems and they're bringing their problems ... they're bringing drugs, they're bringing crime, they're rapists, and some I assume are good people but I speak to border guards and they tell us what we are getting.³⁸⁹

³⁸⁶ Barry Buzan et al., *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998), 25.

³⁸⁷ John K. Wilson, "Racist Trump," in *President Trump Unveiled*, Exposing the Bigoted Billionaire (OR Books, 2017), 169; Reem Nasr, "Donald Trump Announces Candidacy for President(Online)," CNBC, <https://www.cnn.com/2015/06/16/donald-trump-announces-candidacy-for-president.html>.

³⁸⁸ Reem Nasr. "Donald Trump Announces Candidacy for President [Online]" CNBC, 16 June 2015, <https://www.cnn.com/2015/06/16/donald-trump-announces-candidacy-for-president.html>.

³⁸⁹ Nasr, "Donald Trump Announces Candidacy for President(Online)".

In addition, Trump promised to construct a “great, great wall on our southern border, and I will make Mexico pay for that wall”. According to Sarah Pierce and Andrew Seele, Trump framed immigration as an economic and national security threat, which is a departure from previous presidents, such as Ronald Reagan, John F Kennedy and Barack Obama, who have framed immigration as a positive thing for the economy and society in general.³⁹⁰ Former President John F Kennedy advocated for the removal of the national origins quota system as he deemed it discriminatory. In his book, *A Nation of Immigrants*, originally published in 1958 when he was still a Senator of Massachusetts, Kennedy wrote that immigration law should “base admission on the immigrant’s possession of skills our country needs and on the humanitarian grounds of reuniting families.”³⁹¹ When Ronald Reagan was running for office in 1980, he delivered a campaign speech in which he paid homage to the immigrant families who made a positive contribution to the country by building “cities and towns and incredibly productive farms”. Reagan also acknowledged the common values American citizens and immigrants shared: those of “courage, ambition and the values of family, neighbour, work, peace and freedom”.³⁹² This suggests that Reagan saw immigration as not only a positive thing for the economy, but also as a positive cultural contribution, as immigrants had shared values with the American people. Pierce and Seele argue that Trump’s proposals, such as a travel ban, are “unprecedented” in US history.³⁹³

During the elections Trump issued a policy brief entitled “Immigration that will make America Great Again”, outlining the core principles that would guide his immigration policies, should he win the election.³⁹⁴ Trump stated in the policy brief that immigration should prioritise the needs of working Americans. The policy document contains his immigration blueprint and is

³⁹⁰ Sarah Pierce and Andrew Seele, "Immigration under Trump: A Review of Policy Shifts in the Year since the Election," *Migration Policy Institute, Policy Brief*. 18 December 2017, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publications/TrumpatOne-final.pdf> (2017): 2.

³⁹¹ John F. Kennedy and Robert F. Kennedy, *A Nation of Immigrants* (1964).

³⁹² Ronald Reagan, "Labor Day Speech at Liberty State Park, Jersey City, New Jersey September 1, 1980," The U.S. National Archives and Records Administration: Ronald Reagan Presidential Library & Museum, <https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/9-1-80>.

Sarah Pierce and Andrew Seele, "Immigration under Trump: A Review of Policy Shifts in the Year since the Election," *Migration Policy Institute, Policy Brief*. Retrieved from <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publications/TrumpatOne-final.pdf> (2017): 2.

³⁹⁴ Trump, "Immigration Reform That Will Make America Great Again."

consistent with what he said on other platforms such as speeches, campaign rallies and media interviews.

According to Trump, immigration reform should encompass the following three core principles:

1. A nation without borders is not a nation. There must be a wall across the southern border.
2. A nation without laws is not a nation. Laws passed in accordance with our Constitutional system of government must be enforced.
3. A nation that does not serve its own citizens is not a nation. Any immigration plan must improve jobs, wages and security for all Americans.³⁹⁵

In other words, Trump endorsed tougher borders along the southern border to deter undocumented migrants from illegally entering the country. He directly accused the Mexican government of “taking advantage of the United States by using illegal immigration to export the crime and poverty in their own country (as well as in other Latin American countries).”³⁹⁶ Trump cited the violent crimes allegedly committed by migrants, as well as the impact that illegal immigration was having on US taxpayers, as they had to foot the bill on healthcare, housing, education, welfare etc. Trump also described the impact of illegal immigration on crime as “tragic”.³⁹⁷ The policy document states numerous headlines of criminals who were also illegal immigrants and who committed “horrific crimes against Americans”.³⁹⁸

Other parts of Trump’s document emphasise the need to defend the laws and Constitution of the US through actions such as increasing the number of officers who work for the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency and penalising immigrants who have overstayed their visa. The document also proposes that money that is used on “expensive refugee programs” should instead be used to move American children without parents into “safer homes and communities” and to improve community safety in crime-ridden communities.³⁹⁹ This suggests that immigration should place the needs of Americans first, with

³⁹⁵ *ibid.*

³⁹⁶ *ibid.*

³⁹⁷ *ibid.*

³⁹⁸ *ibid.*

³⁹⁹ *ibid.*

safety as a key component. This supports Scribner's view that Trump's rhetoric around immigrants contains traces of Nativism.⁴⁰⁰ Higham writes that Nativism is an "intense opposition to an internal minority on the ground of its foreign ("un-American") connections".⁴⁰¹ Essentially, Nativism is an anti-foreign sentiment and has been part of US history, as discussed in Chapter Two. Wilson even goes as far as to claim that "Donald Trump is a racist" in reference to Trump's racial stereotyping of non-white immigrants such as Mexicans and migrants from other regions such as the Middle East and Africa (as in Somali refugees).⁴⁰²

Trump ran for president based on the slogan that he would "make America Great Again"; however, Winders puts forth that Trump's statements imply that "immigration is a hurdle" to making that dream a reality for American citizens.⁴⁰³ Following the 9/11 attacks, immigration was increasingly perceived as a security threat and Trump drew a lot on that immigration-security connection.⁴⁰⁴

This brings the reader to what this overall study is examining – Trump's characterisation of a portion of these migrants, namely, asylum seekers and refugees. In his discussions about asylum seekers and refugees, Trump was accused of conflating terrorism with Islam when speaking about refugees from countries where a large population that seeks asylum follows the Muslim faith, such as Syria and Iraq.⁴⁰⁵ This has been demonstrated in his remarks and campaign promises throughout the 2016 campaign, such as his call to ban Muslims and deny Syrian refugees entry into the US.⁴⁰⁶ This is discussed further below.

⁴⁰⁰ Scribner, "You Are Not Welcome Here Anymore: Restoring Support for Refugee Resettlement in the Age of Trump," 263.

⁴⁰¹ John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925* New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2002, 4.

⁴⁰² Wilson, "Racist Trump," 165.

⁴⁰³ Jamie Winders, "Immigration and the 2016 Election," *Southeastern Geographer* 56, no. 3 (2016): 295.

⁴⁰⁴ Scribner, "You Are Not Welcome Here Anymore: Restoring Support for Refugee Resettlement in the Age of Trump," 264.

⁴⁰⁵ *ibid.*

⁴⁰⁶ Fortune, "Donald Trump's Muslim Ban: A Timeline," *Fortune*, 28 June 2016, <http://fortune.com/2016/06/28/donaldtrumpmuslimban/>; "Highly Offensive': GOP Lawmakers Distance Selves from Trump after Orlando Response".

3.3 Trump's campaign proposals: Muslim ban and banning Syrian Refugees

During the presidential campaign, candidates were divided on how best to deal with the refugee crisis along party lines: Democrats urged for more refugees to be admitted, with some figures going as high as 65 000,⁴⁰⁷ while on the Republican front, there was more apprehension – based on national security concerns.⁴⁰⁸

Throughout the election campaign, Trump made a number of comments on the global refugee crisis, which suggested that his policies would restrict the number of refugees being resettled into the US should he come to office, particularly Muslims and those from Syria.⁴⁰⁹ These proposals included temporarily suspending the entry of Syrian refugees, banning Muslims from entering the country and extreme vetting of asylum seekers before they were resettled into the US.⁴¹⁰ Although asylum seekers and refugees come from a myriad of countries, an overview of his remarks demonstrates that he was particularly vocal about refugees and asylum seekers coming from Muslim-majority countries such as Syria.

In a September 2015 interview with Fox News, Trump declared that the migrant crisis in Europe was “an unbelievable humanitarian problem” and argued that the US should take the initiative in resettling more refugees.⁴¹¹ In the same interview, Trump was asked what he would do about the millions of displaced Syrians. He responded by saying that he disliked the idea of admitting refugees from Syria due to the fear that terrorists could enter through the US Refugee Resettlement Programme, but the US had a humanitarian obligation to do so.⁴¹² He also

⁴⁰⁷ Rebecca Kaplan, "Hillary Clinton: U.S. Should Take 65,000 Syrian Refugees," CBS Interactive Inc., 20 September 2015, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/hillary-clinton-u-s-should-take-65000-syrian-refugees/>.

⁴⁰⁸ Tyler Lloyd, "Closing the Golden Door: The Potential Legality of Donald Trump's Ban on Muslim Immigration," *Geo. Immigr. LJ* 30 (2015): 400.

⁴⁰⁹ Ryan Teague Beckwith, "Read Donald Trump's Speech on the Orlando Shooting," Time Inc, <http://time.com/4367120/orlando-shooting-donald-trump-transcript/>; Deborah Amos, "For Refugees and Advocates, an Anxious Wait for Clarity on Trump's Policy", NPR, 15 November 2016, <http://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2016/11/15/502010346/for-refugees-and-advocates-an-anxious-wait-for-clarity-on-trumps-policy>.

⁴¹⁰ Fortune, " Donald Trump's Muslim Ban: A Timeline " .

⁴¹¹ BBC News, "Donald Trump Says US Should Take Syria Migrants," BBC, 9 September 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-34192834>

⁴¹² BBC News, "Donald Trump Says Us Should Take Syria Migrants," BBC, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-34192834> ``

remarked that asylum seekers and refugees were “living in hell” in Syria, given the conflict.⁴¹³ However, despite this earlier remark, Trump depicted refugees, most specifically those from Syria and other Middle Eastern countries, as security threats. The following is a summary of his policy proposals during the campaign.

3.3.1 Syrian refugees

A contentious issue during the elections was on what to do about Syrian refugees who were displaced following a brutal civil war. As previously mentioned, by 2016, there were more than 4 million refugees fleeing Syria. Trump expressed reluctance to admit the millions of refugees from Syria on the basis of national security concerns over radical Islam. In other words, a key argument as to why Syrians should be denied entry was that they could be affiliated with terrorist groups such as ISIS (The Islamic State). On 17 November 2015 Trump tweeted:

Refugees from Syria are now pouring into our great country. Who knows who they are – some could be ISIS. Is our president insane?⁴¹⁴

Later Trump expressed disdain after then-President Barack Obama announced that the US would resettle an additional 10 000 refugees from Syria for the fiscal year 2017. He also announced that the US would accept 110 000 refugees from other countries, for the fiscal year 2017, which was a more than 50% increase on the number of refugees that were resettled in 2016.⁴¹⁵ Trump further reiterated his stance that Syrian refugees could pose a national security risk at a New Hampshire rally in October 2015. In his speech, he questioned if the refugees from parts of the Middle East, many of them seeking refuge in Europe in 2015, were legitimate, by describing them as a “200 000-man army” and as “strong-looking guys” who “could be ISIS”.⁴¹⁶ His remarks at the rally speak volumes on how he characterises refugees as a potential threat or menace to American society.

⁴¹³ *ibid.*

⁴¹⁴ Donald Trump, “@Realdonaldtrump Tweet,” @realDonaldTrump, <https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/666615398574530560?lang=en>.

⁴¹⁵ Obama, “Presidential Determination -- Refugee Admissions for Fiscal Year 2017”.

⁴¹⁶ Donald Trump, “Trump on Refugee Crisis: 'I'd Love to Help, but We Have Our Own Problems',” FOX News Network, 9 September 2015, <http://insider.foxnews.com/2015/09/09/donald-trump-europes-refugee-crisis-we-have-our-own-problems-us>.

Similar imagery was also reflected in a CNN interview with Wolf Blitzer on 21 March 2016. Trump stated: “We can’t take the Syrian refugees. We don’t know where they come from. I mean, I don’t know where they come from. There’s no paperwork. Nobody knows. Are they ISIS? Are they ISIS-related?”⁴¹⁷ In addition, in November 2015, after the Paris attacks, Trump promised to establish a database of anyone from Syria and surveillance of “certain mosques” across the US.⁴¹⁸

As one can see above, Trump was characterising Syrian refugees as a potential national security threat long before he came into office. Trump used the words such as “ISIS” and the imagery of a “200 000-man army” and as “strong-looking guys” to describe Syrian refugees. It is evident that through the theoretical lens of Securitisation theory, Trump is transforming refugees into a security threat and then justify extraordinary measures.⁴¹⁹ Trump’s repetition of the word “ ISIS” when describing Syrian refugees justifies the need for extreme vetting procedures for refugees and asylum seekers, an example of how immigration is securitised.

3.3.2 Muslim ban

During the elections, Trump securitised Muslims in particular, in light of terror attacks inspired by radical Islam in Europe and the US. In December 2015, he infamously called for a total shutdown of Muslims entering the US, citing the threat of radical Islam after the 2015 San Bernardino attack in which 14 people were killed by a married couple of Pakistani descent.⁴²⁰ This also came after it was revealed by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) that the two Muslim American attackers were both “radicalized” and “had been for some time”.⁴²¹

Trump’s proposal would adversely affect refugees and asylum seekers of the Muslim faith. At a rally in Mount Pleasant, South Carolina, Trump read out a statement: “Donald J. Trump is

⁴¹⁷ CNN, "Donald Trump Interview with Cnn's Wolf Blitzer," in *America's Choice 2016* (Cable News Network: Turner Broadcasting System, 2016).

⁴¹⁸ Jenna Johnson, "Donald Trump Says He ‘Absolutely’ Wants a Database of Syrian Refugees," *The Washington Post*, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2015/11/21/donald-trump-says-he-absolutely-wants-a-database-of-syrian-refugees/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.92610a41df37.

⁴¹⁹ Buzan, "Rethinking Security after the Cold War."

⁴²⁰ Lloyd, "Closing the Golden Door: The Potential Legality of Donald Trump's Ban on Muslim Immigration."

⁴²¹ Dara Lind, "Donald Trump Proposes “Total and Complete Shutdown of Muslims Entering the United States”," *Vox Media*, 7 December 2015, <https://www.vox.com/2015/12/7/9867900/donald-trump-muslims>.

calling for a total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States until our country's representatives can figure out what the hell is going on” he said, adding the word “hell” for emphasis this time. In a statement, Trump is quoted as saying that: “Without looking at the various polling data, it is obvious to anybody the hatred is beyond comprehension.” In addition, he said:

Where this hatred comes from and why we will have to determine. Until we are able to determine and understand this problem and the dangerous threat it poses, our country cannot be the victims of horrendous attacks by people that believe only in Jihad, and have no sense of reason or respect for human life.⁴²²

In his call for a ban of Muslims entering the US, Trump is suggesting that Muslim foreign nationals pose an existential threat to the US and thus should be banned. Trump is implying that Muslim migrants are more likely to harbour hostile intentions than non-Muslims. If analysed through the framework of the Securitisation Theory, Trump is invoking the language of security through the use of words such as “dangerous threat” and “horrendous attacks”. Buzan writes, “The invocation of security has been the key to legitimising the use of force, but more generally it has opened the way for the state to mobilize, or to take special powers, to handle existential threats”.⁴²³ In this case the special powers would be banning a specific religious group, which legal experts and courts have argued is in violation of the American Constitution, which guarantees freedom of religion.

In an MSNBC interview on 8 December 2015, Trump went further by saying that people seeking entry into the country would have to verify that they are not Muslim:

Geist: Donald, a customs agent would then ask a person their religion?

Trump: That would be probably—they would say, “Are you Muslim?”

Geist: And if they said, “Yes,” they would not be allowed in the country?

Trump: That’s correct.⁴²⁴

⁴²² Rothwell, "Everything You Need to Know About Donald Trump's 'Muslim Ban' ".

⁴²³ Buzan et al., *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, 21.

⁴²⁴ MSNBC, "MSNBC: Donald Trump Calls in on Morning Joe - December 8, 2015," (MSNBC, 2015).

Trump defended the ban on several platforms, suggesting that it was temporary and not meant to discriminate against any religion but it was necessary to protect the country. In a Fox News interview in the same month he declared:

It's a temporary ban, not on everyone, but on many We're not insulting. This is about security. It's not about religion. This is about security. We can't allow people to come into this country that have horrible thoughts in their mind.⁴²⁵

The Obama administration responded to Trump's call by suggesting that his ban is "totally contrary to our values as Americans ... it's also contrary to our security."⁴²⁶

Trump's suggestions to ban Muslims were in part inspired by the highly publicised terror attacks that had taken place in Paris and in California,⁴²⁷ as discussed. Both attacks were carried out by foreign nationals, who were also Muslim or appeared to be operating under the premise of radical Islam.⁴²⁸ Trump's ban was heavily criticised, but it also received some support, as revealed in several polls. For example, a *Washington Post*/ABC Poll revealed that 36% of the respondents supported the ban,⁴²⁹ while a poll conducted by Fox News revealed that 55% of the respondents were in support of the ban.⁴³⁰

Lloyd argues that this hard-line restrictive attitude embodied by Trump was not a new phenomenon. America's immigration history has two faces, according to Lloyd.⁴³¹ On the one hand, it is a "welcoming visage" demonstrated in the US track record of resettling, of accepting more refugees than any other country in the world and its huge financial contribution to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR).⁴³² However, this friendly image has been overshadowed by "an uglier face",⁴³³ which has been characterised by bigotry,

⁴²⁵ David Bier, "A Dozen Times Trump Equated His Travel Ban with a Muslim Ban," Cato Institute, 14 August 2017, <https://www.cato.org/blog/dozen-times-trump-equated-travel-ban-muslim-ban>.

⁴²⁶ Tessa Berenson, "Donald Trump Calls for 'Complete Shutdown' of Muslim Entry to U.S.," *Time*, 7 December 2015, <http://time.com/4139476/donald-trump-shutdown-muslim-immigration/>.

⁴²⁷ Lloyd, "Closing the Golden Door: The Potential Legality of Donald Trump's Ban on Muslim Immigration," 399.

⁴²⁸ *ibid.*

⁴²⁹ Scott Clement, "Republicans Embrace Trump's Ban on Muslims While Most Others Reject It " *The Washington Post*, 14 December 2014, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/americans-reject-trumps-muslim-ban-but-republicans-embrace-it/2015/12/14/24fl/>.

⁴³⁰ Lloyd, "Closing the Golden Door: The Potential Legality of Donald Trump's Ban on Muslim Immigration."

⁴³¹ *ibid.*, 400.

⁴³² *ibid.*

⁴³³ *ibid.*, 401.

xenophobia, racism and fear around certain types of immigrants.⁴³⁴ For example, after the Orlando Nightclub shooting of June 2016, in which 49 people were killed, Trump continued to call for a ban which would “suspend immigration from areas of the world where there’s a proven history of terrorism against the United States, Europe or our allies”.⁴³⁵

As this study will show, some of Trump’s statements and promises during the campaign mirror his actions after his inauguration. For example, seven days into his presidency, on 27 January 2017, Trump issued executive order 13769 (Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States).⁴³⁶ This EO essentially sought to guard the American people from terrorist attacks that could be caused by immigrants being admitted into the country.⁴³⁷ However, he received criticism from European leaders such as German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who stated that it is “not justified to put people from a specific background or faith under general suspicion” to combat terrorism.⁴³⁸ Spokesman for the Chancellor Steffen Seibert added: “The Chancellor regrets the US government’s entry ban against refugees and citizens of certain countries”.⁴³⁹

On the other hand, organisations such as The Federation for American Immigration Reform have expressed views that could be seen as supportive of Trump’s stance. In a 2017 article, FAIR warned against the mass resettlement of refugees from countries with a track record of religious and political violence.⁴⁴⁰ They warned that terrorists could use legal and just means to enter the country, such as through the US Refugee Resettlement Programme, which they

⁴³⁴ *ibid.*

⁴³⁵ Ryan Teague Beckwith, "Read Donald Trump's Speech on the Orlando Shooting," Time Inc, <http://time.com/4367120/orlando-shooting-donald-trump-transcript/>

⁴³⁶ Trump, "Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States, Executive Order No. 13769."

⁴³⁷ Rothwell, "Everything You Need to Know About Donald Trump's 'Muslim Ban' ".

⁴³⁸ Will Worley, "Germany’s Angela Merkel Attacks Donald Trump for Targeting ‘People from Specific Background or Faith’," *Independent*, 29 January 2017, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/donald-trump-muslim-ban-germany-angela-merkel-immigration-refugee-executive-order-a7551641.html>.

⁴³⁹ Will Worley, "Germany’s Angela Merkel Attacks Donald Trump for Targeting ‘People from Specific Background or Faith’," *Independent*, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/donald-trump-muslim-ban-germany-angela-merkel-immigration-refugee-executive-order-a7551641.html>.

⁴⁴⁰ FAIR, "National Security and Refugee Resettlement from "High Risk" Countries," Federation for American Immigration Reform <http://www.fairus.org/issue/national-security/national-security-and-refugee-resettlement-high-risk-countries>.

believe does not have rigorous vetting procedures.⁴⁴¹ It recommends that they take seriously the threat terrorists will have and warn that the failure to assimilate refugees into the “economic and cultural mainstream” of American society could prove to be “lethal”.⁴⁴² The use of this graphic imagery such as “lethal” and using the images of terrorists coming to cause havoc in the country is in many ways similar to Trump’s remarks on how ISIS could be among the thousands of refugees coming into the US.

3.4 Other candidates

The following is a brief overview of the positions expressed by other presidential candidates from a number of political parties, on the campaign trail in 2016, on pertinent immigration issues, namely the Syrian refugees and whether or not to accept Muslim refugees into the country. The political parties or organisations covered are the two main political parties, namely the Democratic Party and the Republican Party but also briefly includes the views of candidates from other smaller parties, namely the Libertarian Party and the Green Party of the United States and Evan McMullin, who ran as an independent candidate. This overview serves to showcase how the different candidates from different political parties or affiliations thought and characterised asylum seekers and refugees in order to ascertain if their views were consistent with those of Trump.

3.4.1 Religious test for Syrian refugees

After the November 2015 Paris attacks that resulted in the deaths of over 100 people, the then-Republican candidate, Ted Cruz, declared repeatedly that he did not believe the US should be resettling Muslim refugees and that preference should be given to Christian refugees from Syria, who were being persecuted. In a November 2015 interview with CNN News, Cruz described then-President Barack Obama’s plan and opponent Hillary Clinton’s plans to bring in more Syrian Muslim refugees as “lunacy”.⁴⁴³ Cruz asserted:

⁴⁴¹ FAIR, "National Security and Refugee Resettlement from "High Risk" Countries," Federation for American Immigration Reform <http://www.fairus.org/issue/national-security/national-security-and-refugee-resettlement-high-risk-countries>.

⁴⁴² *ibid.*

⁴⁴³ Theodore Schleifer, "Ted Cruz: Obama Terror Response 'Shameful'," Cable News Network, 16 November 2015, <https://edition.cnn.com/2015/11/16/politics/ted-cruz-refugees-obama/>.

What Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton are proposing is that we bring to this country tens of thousands of Syrian Muslim refugees ... I have to say, particularly in light of what happened in Paris, that's nothing short of lunacy.⁴⁴⁴

He said that Muslim refugees should be sent to Muslim-majority countries and Christians should be given priority, as in his view, they are less likely to commit acts of terror.

On 15 November 2015, Cruz claimed:

There is no meaningful risk of Christians committing acts of terror. If there were a group of radical Christians pledging to murder anyone who had a different religious view than they, we would have a different national security situation.⁴⁴⁵

In this statement Cruz is securitising Islam: Radical Islam is being depicted as a national security threat, and by extension, Muslim refugees pose a higher national security threat to the US than other refugees of other faiths.⁴⁴⁶ It is built on the perception that Muslims could harbour radical ideologies that run contrary to the national security interests of the country.⁴⁴⁷ This is evident in his repeated statements that Christian refugees should be prioritised.

Cruz also accused the Obama administration of treating Christian refugees unfairly by favouring Muslims over them.⁴⁴⁸ This is not very different to Trump's assertion that Christians should be assisted by the US and that the Obama administration favoured Muslim refugees over Christians when granting refugee status.⁴⁴⁹

Republican Jeb Bush also argued that the US should prioritise admitting Christian Syrian refugees instead of Muslims. After the November 2015 attacks in Paris, he said in an interview with CNN's "State of the Union": "We should focus our efforts as it relates to refugees on the

⁴⁴⁴ Theodore Schleifer, "Ted Cruz: Obama Terror Response 'Shameful,'" Cable News Network <https://edition.cnn.com/2015/11/16/politics/ted-cruz-refugees-obama/>.

⁴⁴⁵ Katie Zezima, "Cruz: 'No Meaningful Risk' of Christians Committing Terrorism," *The Washington Post*, 15 November 2015, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2015/11/15/cruz-no-meaningful-risk-of-christians-committing-terrorism/?utm_term=.6d7cebc556ee.

⁴⁴⁶ Katie Zezima, "Cruz: 'No Meaningful Risk' of Christians Committing Terrorism," *The Washington Post*, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2015/11/15/cruz-no-meaningful-risk-of-christians-committing-terrorism/?utm_term=.6d7cebc556ee.

⁴⁴⁷ *ibid.*

⁴⁴⁸ Amy Davidson Sorkin, "Ted Cruz's Religious Test for Syrian Refugees," *Condé Nast*, 16 November, 2015, <https://www.newyorker.com/news/amy-davidson/ted-cruzs-religious-test-for-syrian-refugees>.

⁴⁴⁹ Daniel Burke, "Trump Says Us Will Prioritize Christian Refugees," Cable News Network, <https://edition.cnn.com/2017/01/27/politics/trump-christian-refugees/index.html>.

Christians that are being slaughtered.”⁴⁵⁰ He claimed, like Cruz, that Christians are less likely than Muslims to be terrorists, saying: “There are no Christian terrorists in the Middle East. They’re persecuted, they’re religious minorities. We’ve had a duty as we’ve always had, and it’s a noble one, to be able to provide support across the world. The United States has done this and we’ve done it effectively, and we can do it in this regard.”⁴⁵¹

Cruz and Bush implied that Christian refugees are more likely to be victims, whilst Muslim refugees are more likely to be aggressors and thus pose a danger to the national security of the US. If analysed through the Social Identity Theory, one can see that these candidates is created a barrier between Christian refugees and Muslim refugees. They created an “us” vs “them” narrative of “the menacing other” which is the Muslim refugees vs the “them”, which is the Christian refugees.

Republican candidates Marco Rubio and Ben Carson shared similar views when it came to Syrian refugees and refugees from other Middle Eastern countries. Rubio suggested that the US should not take in more refugees after the Paris attacks 2015. Previously, he had called for more openness, provided the refugees were thoroughly vetted to ensure that they were not part of a terrorist group.⁴⁵² However, following the Paris attacks, like Trump, Rubio remarked that it was too much of a risk to accept Syrian refugees. Like Trump, he said:

You can have a thousand people come in and 999 of them are just poor people fleeing oppression and violence ... But one of them is an Isis fighter – if that’s the case, you have a problem.⁴⁵³

⁴⁵⁰ Ed O’Keefe, "Jeb Bush: U.S. Assistance for Refugees Should Focus on Christians," *The Washington Post*, 13 November 2015, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2015/11/15/jeb-bush-u-s-assistance-for-refugees-should-focus-on-christians/?utm_term=.e4ea82a21f14.

⁴⁵¹ Ashley Parker, "Jeb Bush Urges Caution on Accepting Syrian Refugees," The New York Times Company, <https://www.nytimes.com/politics/first-draft/2015/11/17/jeb-bush-urges-caution-on-accepting-syrian-refugees/>.

⁴⁵² Sabrina Siddiqui, "Marco Rubio: Us Should Not Take in More Syrian Refugees after Paris Attacks," Guardian News and Media Limited, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/nov/15/marco-rubio-syrian-refugees-paris-terror-attacks>.

⁴⁵³ *ibid.*

Ben Carson also warned that bringing in Syrian refugees would be risky as “there are those out there who have a thirst for innocent blood in an attempt to spread their philosophy and their will across this globe”.⁴⁵⁴

In summary, then, these Republican candidates used the threat of terrorism and radical Islam to justify restricting Syrian refugees. The statements made by Trump’s fellow Republicans suggest that Trump is being consistent with Republican thinking, given that the majority of Republican governors announced their intentions to deny Syrian refugees entry into their states, following former President Obama’s announcement of admitting more refugees. Nagel argues that in the lead-up to the 2016 elections, there was a rising anti-refugee sentiment, particularly among white conservative voters, due to the perceived threats of Islamic terrorism.⁴⁵⁵ This suggests that Trump was leveraging on the ideology of Republican lawmakers and officials and voters, particularly in the South.⁴⁵⁶ Nagel goes as far as to say that since the 9/11 attacks: “anti-Muslim hysteria has gripped the country”. The opposition to Obama’s refugee actions among conservative sectors of the Republican Party hints of Islamophobia, and Trump is playing on that sentiment.

While Republican candidates expressed a more cautious approach to the refugee situation, Democratic candidates Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders were more open to the idea of assisting refugees. After the Paris attacks, Sanders urged that the US should not abandon the refugees while still working to fight ISIS. He urged for the US to keep accepting refugees from the Middle East, even after the Paris attacks.⁴⁵⁷ At a campaign rally in November 2015, he said despite terrorism and the fear “we will not turn our backs on the refugees who are fleeing Syria

⁴⁵⁴ Ed O’Keefe, “Ben Carson: U.S. Should Block Middle Eastern Refugees after Paris Attacks,” *The Washington Post*, 15 November 2015, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2015/11/13/ben-carson-u-s-should-block-middle-eastern-refugees-after-paris-attacks/?utm_term=.3c453126114b.

⁴⁵⁵ Caroline Nagel, “Southern Hospitality?: Islamophobia and the Politicization of Refugees in South Carolina During the 2016 Election Season,” *Southeastern Geographer* 56, no. 3 (2016): 283.

⁴⁵⁶ *ibid.*

⁴⁵⁷ PBS News Hour, “Sanders: Turning Our Backs on Refugees Destroys the Idea of America,” NewsHour Productions, 17 November 2015, <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/sanders-turning-our-backs-on-refugees-destroys-the-idea-of-america>

and Afghanistan. We will do what we do best and that is be Americans – fighting racism, fighting xenophobia, fighting fear.”⁴⁵⁸

Hillary Clinton also believed in admitting more refugees, even more than then President Barack Obama suggested. In an interview with CBS she said she would like the country to “move from what is a good start with 10 000 to 65 000” and put in adequate measures to vet those resettled.⁴⁵⁹ She also called for more refugees to be accommodated from persecuted groups such as the Yazidis.⁴⁶⁰ She stressed that America had a humanitarian obligation and would not be intimidated by those seeking to strike fear among the public.

Aside from the two major political parties that participated in the 2016 elections, namely the Democrats and the Republicans, other minor political parties and independent candidates also weighed in on the subject of Syrian refugees. The Libertarian party’s Gary Johnson, who was the party’s presidential nominee, was in favour of the US admitting its “fair share” of Syrian refugees. In a November 2015 interview with *Reason* magazine he stated that:

We need to take our share, and I'm not sure what that share should be. I'd like to come up with a formula based on our coalition partners. I wouldn't say zero, but I don't know if 65 000 puts us in the category of 'our fair share'.⁴⁶¹

In this statement Johnson is suggesting that the US has a humanitarian obligation to accommodate or assist Syrian refugees and it has the capacity to do its “fair share”. This view is similar to what Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders held.

A similar view regarding the US’s obligation to take in enough refugees was expressed by another smaller party candidate from the Green Party of the United States. In a November 3 2015 with teleSUR presidential nominee, Jill Stein, also stressed that the US had an obligation to take in as many Syrian refugees as they could. She said, “We need to pitch-in proportional to our ability to do so. We need to do our part for emergency relief and we need to accept our

⁴⁵⁸ Bernie Sanders, "Sanders: Eliminate Islamic State, Don't Turn Our Backs on Refugees," Friends of Bernie Sanders, <https://berniesanders.com/press-release/sanders-eliminate-islamic-state-dont-turn-our-backs-on-refugees/>.

⁴⁵⁹ Rebecca Kaplan, "Hillary Clinton: U.S. Should Take 65,000 Syrian Refugees," CBS Interactive Inc., <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/hillary-clinton-u-s-should-take-65000-syrian-refugees/>.

⁴⁶⁰ *ibid.*

⁴⁶¹ Anthony Fisher, "Exclusive: Gary Johnson Talks Isis, Refugees, Black Lives Matter and Marijuana Leglization," Reason Foundation, 19 November 2015, <https://reason.com/2015/11/19/gary-johnson-isis-refugees-syria-terror>.

portion of the refugees.”⁴⁶² Stein also affirmed that a good starting figure would be 100 000 Syrians. In her words she stated that: “There are refugee associations calling on the U.S. to accept, I believe, 100 000 (Syrians) and that’s the figure we need to be talking about.”⁴⁶³

Independent candidate Evan McMullin also believed that the US should continue to accept Syrian refugees and Muslims.⁴⁶⁴ He also denounced the argument put forth by several Republican candidates that terrorists would enter the country through the refugee resettlement programme. In an interview on Fox News’ “Special Report” he said that entering the US through the refugee resettlement programme would be “the worst possible way” due to the “year and a half to two years of vetting”.⁴⁶⁵ He said that terrorists are “much better off just coming through the Visa Waiver Program from Europe or just walking across the border in Mexico.”⁴⁶⁶

In summary, it can be deduced that the candidates from all three parties, the Libertarian party (Gary Johnson) and the Green Party (Jill Stein) and independent candidate (Evan McMullin) all agreed that the US should continue to admit Syrian refugees despite the fears expressed by Republican candidates. Gary Johnson from the Libertarian Party and Jill Stein from the Green Party also stressed the humanitarian obligation that the US has towards these refugees, similar to what Democratic candidates Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders did in late 2015, as discussed above. In essence, all three candidates expressed a more welcoming attitude towards refugees, unlike the Republican candidates such as Jeb Bush and Ted Cruz. This ultimately suggests that policies towards refugee resettlement differ along partisan lines. In essence, this suggests that Republicans in general were cautious and had more hard-line approaches than Democrats and other minor political parties examined in this chapter.

⁴⁶² Ballotpedia, "Jill Stein Presidential Campaign, 2016/Syrian Refugees," Ballotpedia, https://ballotpedia.org/Jill_Stein_presidential_campaign,_2016/Syrian_refugees.

⁴⁶³ *ibid.*

⁴⁶⁴ "Evan McMullin on Immigration," On the Issues, http://www.ontheissues.org/2016/Evan_McMullin_Immigration.htm.

⁴⁶⁵ Fox News, "Evan McMullin on His Independent Presidential Bid," (Fox News Network, 2016).

⁴⁶⁶ *ibid.*

3.5 Public opinion

A number of public opinion polls were conducted during the elections on crucial topics raised during Trump's campaign. A key aspect of this study is the examination of the securitisation of refugees and asylum seekers by US President Donald Trump in the face of concerns and fears about terrorism. For effective securitisation to take place, the "actor" needs to convince an "audience" that an existential threat out there exists.⁴⁶⁷ One of the ways in which one can ascertain the views of the audience (in this case, the general public) is through public opinion polls. The following is an overview of US public opinion on pertinent issues relating to immigration.

3.5.1 Syrian refugees

After the November 2015 Paris attacks, a Bloomberg poll conducted on 16 November 2015 among 628 adults, found that the majority of Americans opposed the resettling of Syrian refugees into America, citing fears of national security.⁴⁶⁸ More than half of American adults – 53% – did not want Syrian refugees resettled in the country,⁴⁶⁹ while 28% said that Obama's plans of accepting an additional 10,000 refugees should continue. Only 11% said that only Christians should be assisted. The Bloomberg poll found that the opposition to resettling Syrians was higher among Republicans, with 69% of Republicans calling for it to discontinue, while 12% said it should continue.⁴⁷⁰ With Democrats, 46% said the Syrian refugee resettlement programme should continue as is, while 36% wanted it to stop. This is interesting that public opinion matches what Republican voters were saying. Trump's proposals were therefore popular with the majority of Americans that took part in the survey. Although 628 adults are not representative of the entire US population, Nagel argues that Trump's rhetoric resonated with a large amount of Republican voters, especially in the South. Again, this suggests that Trump's rhetoric has a receptive audience that is likely to accept his attempts at securitising refugees and asylum seekers. As evidence for this argument, Nagel points out that in the 2016 South Carolina Republican Primary most voters felt terrorism was associated with

⁴⁶⁷ Buzan, Wæver, and De Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*.

⁴⁶⁸ Bradner, "Poll: Americans Oppose Syrian Refugees in U.S."

⁴⁶⁹ *ibid.*

⁴⁷⁰ *ibid.*

Islam. Seventy-four percent of the voters supported a ban on Muslims. The perception that America was existentially threatened by Jihad was popular in the South.⁴⁷¹

3.5.2 Muslim ban

In December 2015, another poll was conducted by ABC News and the Washington Post after Trump proposed a temporary ban on Muslims after the San Bernadino attacks.⁴⁷² Out of a random national sample of 1002 adults, the results found that 36% of adults supported the ban, while 60% said it was the wrong thing to do. Again, the opinions differed along party lines: Republicans were more likely than Democrats to support the ban. Of the Republicans who voted, 59% supported the ban while 38% did not. Regarding Democrats, 15% supported it while an overwhelming 82% rejected the proposals. The poll found that people who supported the proposal and those who did not, had different views about Islam. The beliefs that people hold therefore shape their support of certain policies. Those who supported the ban believed that Islam is a religion that promotes violence towards non-Muslims and that Muslims are not victims of discrimination because of their religion. Those who supported Trump's proposals, were therefore more likely to be concerned about illegal immigration and terrorism. The same ABC poll found that 28% of adults believe that mainstream Islam is inherently violent towards non-Muslims, while 54% believe it is religion of peace.⁴⁷³ This poll was conducted between 10 and 13 December 2015.

This suggests that Trump's policy proposals to ban Muslims resonated with only a minority of those Americans who were surveyed. However those who did support Trump's policies regarding Muslim migrants were more likely to be Republicans than Democrats, suggesting that Trump's policy proposals and rhetoric still had a receptive audience within his own party even when they were unpopular in the country as a whole.

⁴⁷¹ Nagel, "Southern Hospitality?: Islamophobia and the Politicization of Refugees in South Carolina During the 2016 Election Season." *Southeastern Geographer* 56, no. 3 (2016): 283-90.

⁴⁷² Langer Research Associates, "ABC News/Washington Post Poll: Trump and Muslims," Langer Research Associates, 14 December 2015, <https://www.langerresearch.com/wp-content/uploads/1174a1TrumpandMuslims.pdf>.

⁴⁷³ Langer Research Associates, "Abc News/Washington Post Poll: Trump and Muslims," Langer Research Associates, <https://www.langerresearch.com/wp-content/uploads/1174a1TrumpandMuslims.pdf>.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter has given a general overview of a number of public remarks Donald Trump has made about asylum seekers and refugees in order to ascertain his collective characterisation of this group of migrants during the 2016 US presidential elections. What is evident is that Trump's campaign rhetoric was at times informed by a restrictionist agenda influenced by national security concerns based on the perceived threat refugees and asylum seekers would have on American society, particularly Muslims. Asylum seekers and refugees, mainly Muslims, were collectively identified as a potential security threat through the use of vivid imagery and metaphors. This was heightened following major terror attacks on US soil, such as the 2015 San Bernardino attacks. This chapter also briefly examined how other candidates from other political parties characterised pertinent immigration issues, namely the US's obligation towards Syrian refugees and Muslim refugees amidst growing concerns about national security and radical Islam. In essence this overview found that Republican candidates such as Ted Cruz were overwhelmingly in opposition to admitting more Syrian or Muslim refugees, citing security concerns consistent with the campaign rhetoric of Trump. However, candidates from the Democratic Party and other minor parties were more in support of the US continuing its acceptance of Syrian refugees and honouring their humanitarian obligations. This could suggest that support for admitting more refugees was a partisan issue, with Democrats and other minor parties examined in this chapter being more accommodating to the idea. This chapter also gave a brief overview of public opinion polls that were conducted during the elections on crucial topics raised during Trump's campaign. This analysis found that Trump's policy proposals to ban Syrian refugees and Muslim migrants resonated more among fellow Republicans than Democrats. The next chapter will examine the actual collected and analysed research, which is essentially the content analysis done on Trump's recorded statements and executive orders (EOs) during his first 100 days in office.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH FINDINGS – SECURITISING ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES BY PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP

4.1 Introduction and contextual background

The chapter seeks to present and discuss the research findings and analysis that were collected during the investigation of President Trump’s collective characterisation of asylum seekers and refugees, during his first 100 days in office. A qualitative content and discourse analysis of Trump’s statements on refugees and asylum seekers was conducted using the theoretical framework of Securitisation Theory and the Social Identity Theory. This chapter first briefly outlines the context in which President Trump’s rhetoric is located, namely the political and social climate of several humanitarian crises that have prompted a massive exodus of displaced peoples to North America, in tandem with rising anti-refugee sentiment across the West due to perceptions that refugees could pose a potential national security threat. The contextual background also includes an overview of executive order 13769, titled: “Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States” that Trump issued on 27 January 2017, seven days into his presidency. The order, famously known as the “travel ban” or “Muslim ban”, outlined a series of immigration restrictions in order to protect American citizens from terrorism. Finally, the chapter shows the results of the content analysis using Trump’s rhetoric from four different platforms, namely his Twitter account, interviews with the media, and speeches and remarks.

As noted previously, content analysis and discourse analysis in this study is guided by two theoretical foundations – Securitisation Theory proposed by the Copenhagen School of Security Studies and the Social Identity Theory. This section will answer the key research questions or objectives, which were as follows:

- How has President Donald Trump collectively characterised asylum seekers and refugees during the first 100 days of his term in office?
- What are the main themes/concerns in Donald Trump’s rhetoric when it comes to asylum seekers and refugees?

- How, if at all, does Donald Trump’s characterisation of asylum seekers and refugees contribute to the construction of an “us vs. them” narrative?
- How, if at all, have asylum seekers and refugees been securitised by Donald Trump?

4.1.1 Contextual background

In order to analyse Trump’s rhetoric during his first 100 days in office, it is crucial to provide a brief overview of the context in which this discourse is located, as according to Balzacq, “an effective securitisation is highly context-dependent.”⁴⁷⁴ This goes beyond the “speech act” framework proposed by the Copenhagen School.⁴⁷⁵ In other words, securitisation depends on context as well as the audience and power dynamics between the securitising actor and the audience (the public who receives the security utterances). Karl-Gerhard Lille also suggests that context is important to consider as it indicates what kind of securitising actions or speech acts will gain the most traction among an audience.⁴⁷⁶

For example, the EO issued by Trump on 27 January 2017 banned the resettling of Syrian refugees indefinitely, citing that to admit these refugees would not be in the best security interests of the US.⁴⁷⁷ In the EO, Syria is designated as a country with terrorist activity, and it is implied that resettling Syrian refugees in the US would carry profound risks, as terrorists posing as refugees could enter the country. This opposition to resettling refugees from Syria on the grounds of national security concerns is a sentiment echoed in a public opinion poll conducted by Bloomberg in 2015.⁴⁷⁸ The study found that more than half of American adults - 53%- were against the resettling of Syrian refugees in the US. This opposition was higher among Republicans, whom Trump represented; 69% of the Republicans who were surveyed wanted a discontinuation of the Syrian refugee resettlement programme.⁴⁷⁹

⁴⁷⁴ *ibid*

⁴⁷⁵ *ibid*

⁴⁷⁶ Lille, Karl-Gerhard and Tartu Ülikool "Securitization of Immigration under the Trump Administration: Reconceptualizing the Functional Actor through the Judiciary and the Media.", 12 June 2018, <http://dspace.ut.ee/handle/10062/60589?show=full>, 2018..

⁴⁷⁷ Trump, "Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States, Executive Order No. 13769."

⁴⁷⁸ Bradner, "Poll: Americans Oppose Syrian Refugees in U.S."

⁴⁷⁹ *ibid*.

The securitisation of immigration in the US under Trump has been documented by Karl-Gerhard Lille. Lille's research suggests that Trump securitised immigration through two mechanisms during his first 100 days in office.⁴⁸⁰ The first one was through his policy proposals to protect the economic, political and societal security of the US by securing the border from undocumented Latin American immigrants illegally crossing the border.⁴⁸¹ This securitisation found expression through his campaign and post-campaign promise to tackle illegal immigration. These promises were carried out through the passing of two EOs on 25 January 2017: "Enhancing Public Safety in the Interior of the United States" and "Border Security and Immigration Enforcement Improvements".⁴⁸² The latter EO was presumably Trump's attempt to implement his campaign promise to build a wall along the US border with Mexico to prevent the flood of illegal immigrants and to tackle drug trafficking and other criminal activities associated with immigration.⁴⁸³ Trump argued that illegal immigration from Mexico cost US taxpayers billions of dollars in health, housing, education, and welfare, and had a "disastrous" impact on unemployed Americans.⁴⁸⁴

As noted above, Trump's rhetoric is analysed within the context of growing humanitarian crises such as the Syrian refugee crisis as well as a climate in the West in which policy debates around immigration have drawn attention to national security concerns in response to radical Islamic terrorism.⁴⁸⁵ Mr. Trump has been accused of securitising migrants by pointing to several threats specifically as radical Islamic terrorism, as indicated in research done by Lille.⁴⁸⁶ He has been accused of conflating immigration with criminal activities and terrorist activities.⁴⁸⁷ Furthermore, he has been accused of "othering" minorities such as Muslims, Mexican immigrants and other marginalised groups.⁴⁸⁸ This was evident when he pledged to ban the

⁴⁸⁰ Karl-Gerhard Lille, "Securitization of Immigration under the Trump Administration: Reconceptualizing the Functional Actor through the Judiciary and the Media" (Tartu Ülikool, 2018), 60; *ibid.*

⁴⁸¹ *ibid.*

⁴⁸² Executive Order, "Enhancing Public Safety in the Interior of the United States (2017)," *The White House* (2017).

⁴⁸³ Trump, "Immigration Reform That Will Make America Great Again."

⁴⁸⁴ *ibid.*

⁴⁸⁵ Mittelstadt et al., "Through the Prism of National Security: Major Immigration Policy and Program Changes in the Decade since 9/11."

⁴⁸⁶ Lille, "Securitization of Immigration under the Trump Administration: Reconceptualizing the Functional Actor through the Judiciary and the Media," 60.

⁴⁸⁷ Cherkaoui, "Part 2: The Mediatized Islamophobia in America: What Is Beyond Othering Muslims?," 2.

⁴⁸⁸ *ibid.*; Carlson, "I'm Not Racist, I Love Those People: How Trump's Language Reveals His Bigotry."

entry of Muslims into US territory, following the San Bernardino Massacre in which a US couple of Pakistani descent murdered 14 people, many whom were confirmed to be American citizens, on 2 December 2015.⁴⁸⁹ This campaign promise found expression during Trump's first 100 days in the presidential office, with the signing of a controversial EO – popularly referred to as a “Muslim ban”. The original EO, titled “Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States”, is underpinned by national security concerns in “protect[ing] the American people from terrorist attacks.”⁴⁹⁰ The EO originally barred the entry of citizens from seven Muslim-majority countries, namely Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen, for 90 days.⁴⁹¹ It also halted the official US Refugee Resettlement Programme for 120 days.⁴⁹² Trump contended that the measures were designed to “keep radical Islamic terrorists out of the US.”⁴⁹³

The travel ban faced a series of legal challenges and opposition from civil society organisations and courts across the country. On 3 February 2017 Seattle Federal District Court Judge James Robart issued a nationwide restraining order, which halted the implementation of the ban in the country.⁴⁹⁴ After the Trump administration appealed the ruling, the US Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit continued the blocking of the ban, saying that it was a violation of the due process rights of foreign nationals and there was not enough evidence to justify the ban.⁴⁹⁵ However, on 6 March, Trump issued a revised ban with minor changes, including only banning six countries instead of seven, but it was also blocked. Eventually, the third version of the ban was approved by the Supreme Court, in June 2018. Civil society groups and members of the public expressed their discontent. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Washington described the order as “discriminatory” and a violation of the Constitution. The non-profit

Karimi, "San Bernardino Shooting: Who Were the Victims?[Online]".

⁴⁹⁰ Trump, "Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States, Executive Order No. 13769."

⁴⁹¹ *ibid.*

⁴⁹² Rothwell, "Everything You Need to Know About Donald Trump's 'Muslim Ban' "; Trump, "Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States, Executive Order No. 13769."

⁴⁹³ Rothwell, "Everything You Need to Know About Donald Trump's 'Muslim Ban' ".

⁴⁹⁴ Steve Almsyand Darran Simon, "A Timeline of President Trump's Travel Bans," Cable News Network, 10 February 2017, <https://edition.cnn.com/2017/02/10/us/trump-travel-ban-timeline/index.html>.

⁴⁹⁵ Steve Almsy;Darran Simon, "A Timeline of President Trump's Travel Bans," Cable News Network, <https://edition.cnn.com/2017/02/10/us/trump-travel-ban-timeline/index.html>; Donald J. Trump, "Executive Order 13780: Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States," ed. U.S. Department of Homeland Security (Washington, D.C: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2017).

organisation went on to file a lawsuit against the Trump administration.⁴⁹⁶ In addition, thousands of protesters held demonstrations across US airports when the ban was first announced in January 2017.⁴⁹⁷

Lille argues that this EO is an example of Trump's securitisation of immigration.⁴⁹⁸ By issuing the order, Trump suggested explicitly that America was "existentially threatened" by radical Islamic terrorism and as such, radical action needed to be taken to protect the country. Lille suggests that issuing an EO would be considered "extraordinary action" as it is issued without Congressional approval. EOs by their nature are presidential directives, which do not follow the conventional process of law-making.⁴⁹⁹ As Mayer describes: "An executive order is a presidential directive that requires or authorizes some action within the executive branch."⁵⁰⁰ Throughout US history, EOs have been used by presidents to "establish policy, reorganize executive branch agencies, alter administrative and regulatory processes, affect how legislation is interpreted and implemented, and take whatever action is permitted within the boundaries of their constitutional or statutory authority".⁵⁰¹ What makes them different to laws is that the president is able to act unilaterally, without approval and consultation from Congress.

This is in line with the principles of Securitisation Theory, as through this act of securitising an issue, any unusual or extraordinary measures to tackle the perceived problem are justified.⁵⁰² In essence, the securitising actor makes an issue a security issue by labelling it as such and convincing an audience that this issue is an "existential threat" to a referent object, which therefore justifies extraordinary measures that fall outside the realm of normal politics.⁵⁰³

⁴⁹⁶ Cody Wofsy. "The Supreme Court Ignores the Reality of President Trump's Discriminatory Muslim Ban." American Civil Liberties Union, 26 June 2018, <https://www.aclu.org/blog/immigrants-rights/supreme-court-ignores-reality-president-trumps-discriminatory-muslim-ban>.

⁴⁹⁷ Rothwell, "Everything You Need to Know About Donald Trump's 'Muslim Ban'".

⁴⁹⁸ Lille, "Securitization of Immigration under the Trump Administration: Reconceptualizing the Functional Actor through the Judiciary and the Media."

⁴⁹⁹ *ibid.*, 69.

⁵⁰⁰ Kenneth R Mayer, "Executive Orders and Presidential Power," *The Journal of Politics* 61, no. 2 (1999): 445.

⁵⁰¹ *ibid.*

⁵⁰² Buzan, "Rethinking Security after the Cold War."

⁵⁰³ *ibid.*

4.1.1.1 Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States (13769)

On the 27th January 2017, seven days into his presidency, Trump issued EO 13769 (“Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States”).⁵⁰⁴ This EO essentially sought to guard the American people from terrorist attacks that could be caused by immigrants admitted into the country. It issued a number of travel restrictions, such as barring the entry of citizens of seven countries for 90 days and halting the US Refugee Assistance Programme for 120 days.⁵⁰⁵ This was done in a bid to give the relevant agencies an opportunity to review visa-issuance procedures to figure out the best way to ensure that foreign nationals are sufficiently screened and vetted, and not terrorists.

The construction of the travel ban has been linked to a number of people, namely White House advisor Stephen Miller, former White House Chief Strategist Stephen Bannon and former New York City Mayor, Rudy Giuliani. One can trace the roots of the travel ban to before Trump was elected into office.⁵⁰⁶ In January 2017, after Trump issued the EO, former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani came forward and claimed on Fox News that he had given Trump legal advice back in 2016 on how to implement such a ban, should he become president.⁵⁰⁷ Giuliani put a commission together that consisted of legal experts including Homeland Security Committee Chairman Michael McCaul, former Attorney General Michael Mukasey and Rep. Peter King.⁵⁰⁸ After the commission convened, they advised Trump to not focus on religion, as that could be unconstitutional. Giuliani claims: “I put a commission together ... and what we did was we focused on, instead of religion, danger. The areas of the world that create danger for us.”⁵⁰⁹ However, in 22 May 2017 Giuliani retracted his claims that he had any involvement

⁵⁰⁴ Trump, "Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States, Executive Order No. 13769."

⁵⁰⁵ *ibid.*

⁵⁰⁶ Ryan Lovelace, "Giuliani Denies Role in Crafting Trump's Travel Ban," *Washington Examiner*, 4 May 2017, <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/giuliani-denies-role-in-crafting-trumps-travel-ban>.

⁵⁰⁷ FOX News, "Giuliani: Immigration Ban Is Based on Danger, Not Religion," FOX News Network, 29 January 2017, <https://video.foxnews.com/v/5301869519001/?#sp=show-clips>.

⁵⁰⁸ Rebecca Savransky, "Giuliani: Trump Asked Me How to Do a Muslim Ban 'Legally'," Capitol Hill Publishing Corp, <https://thehill.com/homenews/administration/316726-giuliani-trump-asked-me-how-to-do-a-muslim-ban-legally>.

⁵⁰⁹ FOX News, "Giuliani: Immigration Ban Is Based on Danger, Not Religion".

in the construction of the ban, despite his previous remarks in January.⁵¹⁰ In an affidavit he said:

In particular I have not served on any Trump administration commission relating to the so-called Muslim Ban Executive Orders ... For clarity, I have not participated in writing any of the executive orders on that subject issued by the Trump administration.⁵¹¹

A key figure in the construction of the travel ban was White House advisor Stephen Miller and former White House Strategist Stephen Bannon, who is also the former Breitbart News CEO.⁵¹² Miller has been named as the “driving force behind the Muslim ban” and other hard-line policies on immigration, including a zero-tolerance policy towards undocumented border crossings, which was announced in May 2018 by then attorney general Jeff Sessions.⁵¹³ Sessions warned that undocumented immigrants who are caught “smuggling: children” will have their children taken away from them, while they face criminal prosecution.⁵¹⁴ He has long held and expressed views that were anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim. He has been affiliated with anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim groups, notably, the David Horowitz Freedom Centre and the CIS – both of which have been classified as hate groups by the Southern Poverty Law Centre for their rhetoric that is said to demonise immigrants and minorities.⁵¹⁵

What follows is a brief overview of sections of the EO that are relevant in this investigation to provide the reader with a contextual background of Trump’s administration. This is crucial because many of Trump’s statements on public forums, such as his Twitter profile or speeches, can be viewed in tandem with the content of his EOs. His statements were analysed within a context of policies that sought to reform the US immigration system and safeguard national security.

⁵¹⁰ Ryan Lovelace, "Giuliani Denies Role in Crafting Trump's Travel Ban," Washington Examiner, <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/giuliani-denies-role-in-crafting-trumps-travel-ban>.

⁵¹¹ *ibid.*

⁵¹² Hatewatch Staff. "Stephen Miller: A Driving Force Behind the Muslim Ban and Family Separation Policy," The Southern Law Poverty Centre, 21 June 2018, <https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2018/06/21/stephen-miller-driving-force-behind-muslim-ban-and-family-separation-policy>.

⁵¹³ Dan Merica, "Travel Ban Architect Writing Trump's Speech on Islam," Cable News Network, <https://edition.cnn.com/2017/05/19/politics/stephen-miller-islam-travel-ban-speech-writing/index.html>; "Stephen Miller: A Driving Force Behind the Muslim Ban and Family Separation Policy," The Southern Law Poverty Centre, <https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2018/06/21/stephen-miller-driving-force-behind-muslim-ban-and-family-separation-policy>.

⁵¹⁴ "Stephen Miller: A Driving Force Behind the Muslim Ban and Family Separation Policy".

⁵¹⁵ "Travel Ban Architect Writing Trump's Speech on Islam".

Section 1: Purpose

The EO reaffirms its commitment to protect Americans from terrorists by ensuring that people admitted into the country “do not bear hostile attitudes toward it and its founding principles”.⁵¹⁶ It acknowledged that the current visa-issuance process in place had a history of admitting foreign nationals affiliated with terrorism. It also cites the 11 September 2001 attacks in which “19 foreign nationals ... went on to murder nearly 3 000 Americans”.⁵¹⁷ In other words, it argues that with the current structures in place, the USA was vulnerable to attack. In the words of the order itself:

Numerous foreign-born individuals have been convicted or implicated in terrorism-related crimes since September 11, 2001, including foreign nationals who entered the United States after receiving visitor, student, or employment visas, or who entered through the United States Refugee Resettlement Program. Deteriorating conditions in certain countries due to war, strife, disaster, and civil unrest increase the likelihood that terrorists will use any means possible to enter the United States. The United States must be vigilant during the visa-issuance process to ensure that those approved for admission do not intend to harm Americans and that they have no ties to terrorism.⁵¹⁸

It suggests that the country needs to exercise more vigilance to ensure that those who enter do not have affiliations to terrorisms or plans to do harm on the nation’s citizens. The order is a precautionary measure.

Section 3: Suspension of Issuance of Visas and Other Immigration Benefits to Nationals of Countries of Particular Concern

This section states that the Secretary of Homeland Security, Secretary of State and the Director of National Intelligence shall conduct a review to “determine the information needed from any country to adjudicate any visa, admission, or other benefit under the INA (adjudications) in order to determine that the individual seeking the benefit is who the individual claims to be and is not a security or public-safety threat”.⁵¹⁹ In order to alleviate the administrative work during this period, foreign nations from the seven designated countries were temporarily suspended for 90 days, except nationals holding certain visas such as diplomatic visas. The order argues

⁵¹⁶ Trump, "Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States, Executive Order No. 13769."

⁵¹⁷ *ibid.*

⁵¹⁸ *ibid.*

⁵¹⁹ *ibid.*

that these people would be “detrimental to the interests of the United States”. This highlights that the EO, and therefore Trump’s immigration policy, was driven by national interests: to secure US borders.

However, the US is not the only country in the past few years to restrict the resettlement of refugees for national security reasons. In 2015, the conservative Law and Justice party became the ruling government in Poland after securing a victory in the parliamentary elections.⁵²⁰ Since they have come into power, they have carried out policies contrary to the previously liberal Civic Platform party. This includes the new government’s refusal to resettle refugees that have landed in Italy and Greece.⁵²¹ They have rejected the EU refugee quota system which seeks to redistribute hundreds and thousands of migrants to ease the burden on Italy and Greece. The Polish government argues that the refugee distribution arrangement is a threat to their national interests.⁵²² In January 2018, the Polish Prime Minister stated: “We are consistently of the belief, formulated by Law and Justice ahead of the elections of 2015, that we will not be allowing migrants from the Middle East and Northern Africa to enter Poland.”⁵²³

Section 5: Realignment of the US Refugee Admissions Program for Fiscal Year 2017

The EO also makes provision for the temporary suspension of the US Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) for 120 days. During this period, the Secretary of State along with other agencies would review the refugee application and granting process to assess what steps need to be taken to ensure that refugees approved do not threaten the national security of the country. Basically, the review period is to assess current procedures and determine how they can best serve the national interests of the state, which is to keep American people safe from terrorist activity. However, here is a clause in section e that gives the Secretaries of State and Homeland Security the authority to “admit individuals to the United States as refugees on a case-by-case

⁵²⁰ Matt Broomfield, "Poland Refuses to Take a Single Refugee Because of 'Security' Fears," *Independent*, 9 May 2016, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/poland-refuses-to-take-a-single-refugee-because-of-security-fears-a7020076.html>.

⁵²¹ Piotr Cap, "From ‘Cultural Unbelonging’ to ‘Terrorist Risk’: Communicating Threat in the Polish Anti-Immigration Discourse," *Critical Discourse Studies* 15, no. 3 (2018): 286.

⁵²² *ibid.*

⁵²³ *The New Arab*, "'No Refugee from the Middle East Can Enter Poland,' Says PM," *The New Arab*, 5 January 2018, <https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2018/1/5/poland-will-not-take-refugees-from-the-middle-east>.

basis” so long as they have determined that they would be in the national interest and not pose a security threat.⁵²⁴ The following circumstances where the state agencies would exercise that exception include; when the individual is a religious minority in his home country and is facing religious persecution, when admitting the person would honour an already-existing international agreement or “when the person is already in transit and denying admission would cause undue hardship – and it would not pose a risk to the security or welfare of the United States”.

This section also barred the entry of Syrian refugees until a time the president sees fit:

(c) I hereby proclaim that the entry of nationals of Syria as refugees is detrimental to the interests of the United States and thus suspend any such entry until such time as I have determined that sufficient changes have been made to the USRAP to ensure that admission of Syrian refugees is consistent with the national interest.

It also stated that no more than 50 000 refugees would be admitted into the country for the fiscal year 2017 as this was not in the best interests of the state.⁵²⁵

On 6 March 2017, Trump issued a revised version of the travel restrictions, after the initial order was struck down by the courts (see section 4.1.1) The purpose behind the order is similar to the first; however, in this order Trump made a number of changes, such as removing Iraq from the list of seven countries banned, and not affecting current visa holders or residents of the US.

4.2 Overview of the findings

In order to answer the research question the researcher collected Trump’s statements from the following platforms: social media sites, Twitter, media interviews broadcast on television and on online news websites, and transcripts of speeches and remarks/comments he made on the topic of this investigation. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Trump is notorious for his use of the social media site, Twitter, to express his views on a variety of topics, including immigration, foreign policy and world events. To answer the research question, the researcher

⁵²⁴ Trump, "Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States, Executive Order No. 13769."

⁵²⁵ *ibid.*

collected all the relevant tweets published by Trump on the subject matter. This was done through accessing tweets on the databases Factbase and Trump Twitter Archive, which are available on the internet. The specific tweets were retrieved through search engines using relevant keywords such as “refugees”, “migrants”, “asylum seekers” and so on. A total of 14 relevant tweets were retrieved and subsequently studied. An analysis by the Associated Press and media analytics organisation, Cortico, found that during his first 100 days, Trump tweeted 495 times from his personal account, @realDonaldTrump.⁵²⁶ An analysis by the Washington Post found that most of his tweets during this time period were on the media and “fake news”, official government business, the economy, foreign policy and the Democratic Party.⁵²⁷ It appears that Trump did not tweet much about immigration during this period: his attention was more focused on issues other than immigration. The tweets were then coded several times to see which categories and themes emerged from the data. This study reached data saturation as the researcher found very early on that Trump was consistent in his viewpoints. From the onset, Trump has been very consistent in his characterisation of asylum seekers, refugees and his plans to secure US borders from terrorism.

A similar method was used to collect the data from Mr Trump’s media interviews with journalists, and speeches and remarks. All of the five interviews that were analysed in this study were retrieved in the form of transcripts from Factbase using the relevant keywords for this study. Below is a list of the interviews:

- ABC News (Broadcast TV): 25 January 2017 (Broadcast TV);
- Christian Broadcast Network (CBN): 26 January 2017 (Broadcast TV);
- Fox News with Sean Hannity: 26 January 2017 (Broadcast TV);
- Fox News: 27 February 2017 (Broadcast TV); and
- Associated Press: 23 April 2017 (Online article).

The majority of the interviews were on television news shows, while only one was for an online website published by the Associated Press in April 2017. During the interviews, a number of

⁵²⁶ Jessica Marmor Shaw, "This Was Trump’s Top Tweet of His First 100 Days as President," MarketWatch, Inc, 29 April 2017, <https://www.marketwatch.com/story/this-was-trumps-top-tweet-of-his-first-100-days-as-president-2017-04-29>.

⁵²⁷ Danielle Rindler, "100 Days of @Realdonaldtrump," *The Washington Post*, 1 May 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/politics/100-days-of-trump-tweets/?utm_term=.593423d0f2da.

topics were covered, but for the purposes of this study, specific passages were analysed in order to answer the research questions. In four out of the five interviews, Trump depicted Muslim asylum seekers and refugees as national security threats, except for Christian refugees, in his CBN interview.⁵²⁸ He depicted Christian refugees as being victims of terrorist groups and an immigration system that favours Muslims. The main theme in his conversations across all platforms is that taking in asylum seekers and refugees from said Muslim countries would be a “gamble”.⁵²⁹ This draws on the perception that Muslim refugees were more likely to be terrorists. It would be risky to admit refugees from certain countries with a record of radical Islam, as terrorists could enter the US through the US Refugee Resettlement Programme.

Finally, this study also examined Trump’s speeches and remarks (informal comments he made that were recorded), which touched on some of the issues this study examined. A search on the database Factbase yielded three speeches and remarks that spoke on issues pertaining to immigration, national security as well as his controversial EOs. It also touched on his administration’s plans to reform the immigration system and secure America’s borders through measures such as increased screening and vetting of migrants from certain regions. In his recorded speeches, Trump remained consistent in his characterisation of asylum seekers and refugees as potential threats to the US. They continued to be depicted in menacing ways as national security threats due to possible affiliations with terrorist organisations through the repeated use of phrases such as “bad people” with “wrong intentions”. The following section answers the research sub-questions by presenting the research findings from each platform.

4.2.1 How has Donald Trump collectively characterised asylum seekers and refugees during the first 100 days of his term in office?

The research indicates that overall, Trump characterised asylum seekers and refugees as people who could potentially pose a **national security threat, across all platforms**, due to his perception that some of the foreign nationals admitted, would be affiliated to radical Islamic terrorist groups such as ISIS.

⁵²⁸ Factbase, "Cbn: Interview David Brody and Donald Trump - January 26, 2017," (Christian Broadcast Network, 2017).

⁵²⁹ Fox News, *Hannity: Interview with Sean Hannity and Donald Trump - January 26, 2017* (Youtube: Fox News, 2017).

When using the Securitisation Theory, one can identify a tendency by Trump to use the language of threat and danger when speaking about asylum seekers and refugees, particularly of Muslim refugees. There are an overwhelming number of examples in which Trump depicts Muslim immigrants including refugees as a potential security risk while Christian refugees are depicted as a victims of terrorism and an unjust immigration system that favours Muslim refugee applications (more on this below). There is also an overwhelming amount of evidence that Trump pits asylum seekers and refugees against Americans – creating a boundary between “us” and “them”. This is also done among refugees, as Muslim refugees are pitted as adversaries to Christian refugees.

Previous research conducted by Lille in 2018 also found that Trump heavily securitised immigration through his speech acts or use of language to construct a story of a threat.⁵³⁰ As cited by Buzan et al., speech acts are the use of language to construct a narrative that must “follow the security form, the grammar of security, and construct a *plot* that includes an existential threat, point of no return and a *possible way out*”.⁵³¹

This study found that Trump did not often differentiate between the different categories of migrants: for instance, he does not explicitly refer to foreign nationals as “asylum seekers” and “refugees”. However, given the socio-political context at the time and the subject matter, it can be reasonably deduced to whom he is referring. The context is the legal battle over the multiple iterations of his EOs, famously dubbed “the Muslim ban” and “the Muslim ban 2.0”. The following are key descriptions or characterisations that emerged from the data analysis:

4.2.1.1 Immigrants (asylum seekers and refugees) as “the bad”

In a large number of statements, Trump used the adjective “bad” to describe the potential social-ills or “bad people” that could enter the country under the US visa-issuance programme, if the country failed to take radical action to secure its immigration system. In fact, “bad” appeared in five of the 14 tweets being studied. An example would be the following tweet that came days after the travel ban EO was announced:

⁵³⁰ Lille, "Securitization of Immigration under the Trump Administration: Reconceptualizing the Functional Actor through the Judiciary and the Media," 58.

⁵³¹ Buzan et al., *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*.

Jan 30, 2017 08:31:00 AM: If the ban were announced with a one-week notice, the “bad” would rush into our country during that week. A lot of bad “dudes” out there! [Twitter for Android] ⁵³²

In this tweet Trump was referring to the legal backlash that he received following the signing of the first travel ban. He is arguing that without immediate implementation of the ban, “the bad”, referring to potential terrorists using the immigration system - including the refugee programme to gain access in the country, would “rush into our country”. This inference is supported by previous statements throughout his presidential campaign that expressed his concern over terrorism:

Nov 17, 2015 08:54:30 AM Refugees from Syria are now pouring into our great country. Who knows who they are – some could be ISIS. Is our president insane? [Twitter for Android].⁵³³

It appears that he was saying that the terrorists or people “with bad intentions” are among the asylum claimants and as such should be prevented from entering the country by any means necessary. This is a key example of how an issue (foreign nationals) can be securitised through the use of language (“the bad” and other descriptions) by a political actor (Trump) to an audience (his Twitter followers or anyone reading). Trump is playing the role of a securitising actor by identifying and trying to persuade an audience that this issue is an “existential threat” to a referent object (the state), which therefore justifies extraordinary measures that fall outside the realm of normal politics.⁵³⁴ The extraordinary measures are actions such as the executive ban he repeatedly alluded to in his tweets, which would temporarily deny visas to millions of foreign nationals, many of whom are in desperate situations. As noted above, EOs by nature do not fall under the realm of “normal politics”: EOs, unlike laws, do not go through the normal legislative processes.⁵³⁵ In addition, the use of the word “bad” and other adjectives also creates an identity in opposition to Americans: it creates the impression that foreign nationals from

⁵³² Donald Trump, Twitter, https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor.

⁵³³ *ibid.*

⁵³⁴ Buzan, "Rethinking Security after the Cold War."

⁵³⁵ Mayer, "Executive Orders and Presidential Power," 445.

certain countries are “bad”, therefore they are not like “us” or not “good”. It is implied that “they” do not share “our” values.

In another tweet, Trump used the same “bad” imagery to describe the migrants:

Feb 4, 2017 04:44:49 PM: Because the ban was lifted by a judge, many very bad and dangerous people may be pouring into our country. A terrible decision [Twitter for Android]⁵³⁶

This tweet followed the court’s decision to lift the “Muslim ban”. Trump is unhappy about this decision and expresses his concern that the US is vulnerable to “many very bad and dangerous people”. Again, the use of the word “bad” to collectively refer to a group of people serves to reinforce a stereotype that all the people that come into the US are bad. Trump does nothing to distinguish between the different categories of migrants with legitimate claims to asylum or migrants who have varied interests. This tweet creates the impression that immigration from the Muslim-majority countries would bring destruction to the US.

A similar use of the word “bad” was found in an interview with Fox and Friends on 27 February 2017. When asked about his plans, Trump stated that border security would feature on his agenda as his administration is committed to:

[G]etting the bad ones out. The bad people, gang members, drug lords, and in some cases murderers.⁵³⁷

This above is an example of the strong and visual imagery that Trump brings in his characterisation of immigrants. The repetition of the word “bad” suggests the generalisation of migrants in Trump’s discourse. When he uses the word “bad” he is referring to undocumented migrants who might try cross the border unlawfully and commit crime.

Finally, Trump warned against “bad” elements in his speeches and remarks. He uses the adjective “bad”, as seen in previous tweets and interviews, to refer to migrants coming into the

⁵³⁶ Donald J. Trump, "Twitter Post," Twitter, <https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/827996357252243456?lang=en>.

⁵³⁷ Factbase, "Fox News: Interview with Fox & Friends and Donald Trump - February 27, 2017(Transcript)," Factbase, <https://factba.se/transcript/donald-trump-interview-fox-friends-february-27-2017>.

US. In a February roundtable with County Sheriffs in Washington, D.C. he claimed that there were:

A lot of bad people out there.⁵³⁸

Even when it is not explicitly said, he is fond of using descriptions that characterise foreign nationals as “people who want to oppress, hurt or kill innocent Americans” or “foreign terrorists”.⁵³⁹

Under the theoretical framework of the Social Identity Theory, it is evident through these texts that Trump was creating an illusion of group-based conflict between two groups: the US or “innocent Americans” and “bad people”, who could be posing as terrorists.⁵⁴⁰ Trump creates the impression that the in-group (Americans) perceives the “out-group” (asylum seekers/refugees) as a threat or nemesis.⁵⁴¹

4.2.1.2 Asylum seekers and refugees as “terrorists”

Another common image Trump promoted was the depiction of migrants, some from Muslim-majority countries, as menacing in different ways. He often published tweets that implied that foreign nationals entering the country could potentially be terrorists, and therefore an existential threat to the US. Through this, it appears that he is suggesting that terrorists or people with links to radical Islam will use the refugee programme to enter the country and cause havoc. The characterisation of this group of people as terrorists is not only implied in all the tweets; it is also explicitly stated:

Jan 30, 2017 07:27:05 AM: There is nothing nice about searching for terrorists before they can enter our country. This was a big part of my campaign. Study the world!

⁵³⁸ Donald J. Trump, "Remarks by President Trump in Roundtable with County Sheriffs," The White House, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-roundtable-county-sheriffs/>; Factbase, "Speech: Donald Trump Holds a Political Rally in Nashville, Tennessee - March 15, 2017(Transcript)," Factbase, <https://factba.se/transcript/donald-trump-speech-nashville-march-15-2017>.

⁵³⁹ Speech: Donald Trump Holds a Political Rally in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania - April 29, 2017 (Factbase: Factbase, 2017), Video; "Speech: Donald Trump Holds a Political Rally in Nashville, Tennessee - March 15, 2017(Transcript)".

⁵⁴⁰ Tajfel, "Social Identity and Intergroup Behaviour," 16.

⁵⁴¹ *ibid.*

[Twitter for Android]542

Feb 4, 2017 07:48:12 PM: The judge opens up our country to potential terrorists and others that do not have our best interests at heart. Bad people are very happy! [Twitter for Android] ⁵⁴³

Trump often uses the word “terrorists” when justifying the need for extreme vetting procedures for refugees and asylum seekers, an example of how immigration is securitised. In essence, what Trump was saying was that the US needed actions such as his EO to avert the danger of potential terrorists coming into the country – even if this means denying people who may have legitimate humanitarian concerns. This is where the Securitisation Theory comes into play: it is when an actor uses language to transform something into a security threat, and then justify extraordinary measures. ⁵⁴⁴ In this case, the threat was the migrants (from Muslim countries), and the extraordinary measures were denying them entry through a legal process that could discriminate against them based on their religion.

In order to reinforce the terrorist imagery, Trump evoked images of recent terror attacks in countries such as France and the UK:

Feb 3, 2017 07:51:58 AM: A new radical Islamic terrorist has just attacked in Louvre Museum in Paris. Tourists were locked down. France on edge again. GET SMART U.S. [Twitter for Android]⁵⁴⁵

This would seem to suggest that the US would meet the same fate, as witnessed in countries such as France, if no action was taken.

In the assessment of his characterisation of asylum seekers and refugees in media interviews, Trump was consistent, as he continued his characterisation of migrants from Muslim countries as “terrorists” or people with “ill intentions” and dishonest claims to asylum. Once again this is a continuation of the securitisation of mainly Muslim migrants through the use of generalisations to justify why they should be denied entry into the country.

⁵⁴² Trump, "Twitter Post".

⁵⁴³ "Twitter Post".

⁵⁴⁴ Buzan, "Rethinking Security after the Cold War."

⁵⁴⁵ Trump.

It is also evident that the refugees and asylum seekers that Trump referred to, were Muslim. This ignores the complexity of a migrant crisis in which foreign nationals are fleeing from several regions across the world, such as Latin America, Africa and Europe. In his first interview with ABC News with David Muir, days before he signed the initial EO, Trump was asked about the “Muslim ban”. He denied that the EO was discriminating against anyone on the basis of their religion. Trump said:

[I]t’s not the Muslim ban, but it’s countries that have tremendous terror. And its countries that people are going to come in and cause us tremendous problems.⁵⁴⁶

According to Trump, the travel restrictions are set up to prevent entry of people from certain countries because there is an increased chance that they would be among a group that would cause the US “tremendous problems” (i.e. a national security risk). Furthermore, he characterised foreign nationals as:

[P]eople... with evil intentions. They’re ISIS⁵⁴⁷

In a Fox News interview with Sean Hannity, Trump characterised them as “gamblers”. He declared:

We don’t want to have gamblers ... We don’t need another difficulty”.⁵⁴⁸

Trump was using a metaphor of gambling to illustrate the risk that taking in certain migrants might have. He was asserting that for the sake of the security of the country, he was not prepared to do that. In gambling, one often risks losing or gaining it all. This implies that according to Trump’s viewpoint, migration requires certain sacrifices to be made (such as peace of mind), in order to produce a favourable result. However, on the flip side, gambling is a risky endeavour: one could also lose one’s wealth and security. This illustrates to some extent that Trump recognises the potential benefits that migration has for a country, but in his view the odds are really not in anyone’s favour: the risks and losses are too much. It is a very one-

⁵⁴⁶ Factbase, "Abc News: Interview with David Muir and Donald Trump - January 25, 2017(Transcript)," Factbase, <https://factba.se/transcript/donald-trump-interview-washington-dc-january-25-2017>.

⁵⁴⁷ ibid.

⁵⁴⁸ FOX News, "Cable Exclusive: President Trump Sits Down with Sean Hannity at White House," FOX News Network, <https://www.foxnews.com/transcript/cable-exclusive-president-trump-sits-down-with-sean-hannity-at-white-house>.

dimensional, and arguably dehumanising way of characterising people. This dehumanisation actually justifies the actions: if people can be reduced to a simple thing or object, it can justify not treating them as fully human. Securitisation theory looks at the imminent threat that justifies things that fall outside normal politics. The US has prided itself on taking in victims of war and other humanitarian disasters but in this case, they appeared to be abandoning their history of being the largest host of refugees.

In all three speeches and remarks, Trump suggests that asylum seekers and refugees coming into the country could harbour ill intentions. He did this through repeatedly using the same “terrorist” and “radical Islamic terrorist” descriptors.

One striking example is an address on 15 March 2017 in Nashville Tennessee, which coincided with the day that the 9th Circuit Court overturned travel ban 2.0. Trump dedicated a huge portion of the speech to express his disdain at the court’s decision, as well his view on the necessity of the ban:

We’re also working, night and day, to keep our nation safe from terrorism ... I issued an executive order to temporarily suspend immigration from places where it cannot safely occur.⁵⁴⁹

He describes the “hundreds of refugees under federal investigation for terrorism and related reasons” and evokes images of 9/11, Boston and San Bernardino as a means to justify tougher measures.⁵⁵⁰ He goes on to describe them as a “danger” and “radical Islamic terrorists” who plan on “attacking our country”.⁵⁵¹ At a February address to county sheriffs Trump vowed to “stop terrorist attacks” through his immigration policies, once again implying that migrants (meaning Muslims) could be terrorists and a danger to the US.⁵⁵² Again Trump is consistent with his association of foreign nationals with danger and destruction. He works to convince his audience of the existential threat that the foreign nationals could pose and uses of images and historical stories to reinforce the point. By using evidence he is able to convince the audience that foreign nationals have done bad things to the country and to its citizens; and as

⁵⁴⁹ Factbase, "Speech: Donald Trump Holds a Political Rally in Nashville, Tennessee - March 15, 2017(Transcript)".

⁵⁵⁰ *ibid.*

⁵⁵¹ *ibid.*

⁵⁵² Trump, "Remarks by President Trump in Roundtable with County Sheriffs".

such are capable of causing the same amount of destruction as witnessed by terror attacks such as 9/11 and San Bernadino. The September attacks are highly emotive as thousands of Americans died.

If analysed through the Social Identity Theory, Trump is creating a barrier between US residents and foreign nationals who could be terrorists. It is implying that the “other” is a threat to the well-being of the society. He is creating an “us” vs “them” narrative of “the menacing other” vs the “them”, which is American citizens. He presents immigrants and Americans in contrasting terms.

4.2.1.3 Asylum seekers and refugees as coming from dangerous countries

A narrative that Trump pushes forward in his public utterances is the idea that asylum seekers and refugees come from dangerous countries. This is already demonstrated in the executive orders in which travellers from designated countries are barred from entering the country for national security reasons. It is further reinforced by claims made by both Trump and his allies after the executive orders were passed. In the first iteration of the travel ban, nationals from Syria, Iraq, Somalia, Iran, Sudan, Libya and Yemen were denied visas for a period of 90 days even if they had previously been granted diplomatic visas. It also suspended the refugee resettlement programme for a period of 120 days, and banned Syrian refugees indefinitely.

For instance, in the following tweet, he decries the “broken” legal system after his travel ban EO was struck down by judges across the country. A sense of panic is encapsulated in this tweet:

Feb 11, 2017 07:12:51 AM Our legal system is broken! “77% of refugees allowed into U.S. since travel reprieve hail from seven suspect countries.” (WT) SO DANGEROUS! [Twitter for Android].⁵⁵³

Trump and his administration implied that immigration from those “seven suspect countries” could not safely occur; there was a risk that terrorists could enter the US through the immigration system. Hence, by suspending the refugee programme, the Trump administration implied that terrorists could use the refugee programme to enter the country. It also reinforces

⁵⁵³ "Twitter Post".

the notion that these asylum seekers and refugees do not belong here as they do not share American values. On 30 January 2017, Trump defended the ban by declaring that the ban was “not about religion” as had been claimed by opponents but instead it was about keeping the country safe from terror.⁵⁵⁴ Trump claimed that in 2011, former President Barack Obama banned visas for Iraqi refugees for six months for national security concerns and identified certain countries as areas of concern – the same countries that were banned in his EO. Trump claimed that what he did with the ban was similar to what Obama did in 2011:

My policy is similar to what President Obama did in 2011 when he banned visas for refugees from Iraq for six months. The seven countries named in the executive order are the same countries previously identified by the Obama administration as sources of terror. To be clear, this is not a Muslim ban, as the media is falsely reporting.⁵⁵⁵

However, the claims have been debunked by Jon Finan, a former Obama advisor on national security issues. Finan argues that the comparisons between Trump and his predecessor are in no way the same. First of all, Finan argues that Obama’s “ban” was narrower than Trump’s and it was justified.⁵⁵⁶ In 2011, the Obama administration conducted a review of vetting procedures of citizens of Iraq and refugees and applicants of the Special Immigrant Visas (granted to Iraqis and later Afghans who support the US during the war). This was not a ban as Trump claimed, but instead a review in order to find more secure vetting procedures to protect the US, according to Finan. In fact, during this review period, Iraqi refugees were still being admitted into the US, albeit at a slower rate than before.⁵⁵⁷ Trump’s ban was broader and applied to all migrants, including those who held visas and refugees fleeing humanitarian disasters. Finan also points out that the 2011 review was in response to a specific threat after the arrest of two Iraqi nationals in Kentucky on federal terrorism charges, in May 2011.⁵⁵⁸ On the contrary, Finan asserts that “the Trump administration has provided no evidence, nor even asserted, that any specific information or intelligence led to its draconian order”.⁵⁵⁹

⁵⁵⁴ "Twitter Post".

⁵⁵⁵ Donald Trump, "Statement Regarding Recent Executive Order Concerning Extreme Vetting," Facebook.

⁵⁵⁶ Jon Finan, "Sorry, Mr. President: The Obama Administration Did Nothing Similar to Your Immigration Ban," Foreign Policy, 30 January 2017, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2017/01/30/sorry-mr-president-the-obama-administration-did-nothing-similar-to-your-immigration-ban/>.

⁵⁵⁷ Jon Finan, "Sorry, Mr. President: The Obama Administration Did Nothing Similar to Your Immigration Ban," Foreign Policy, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2017/01/30/sorry-mr-president-the-obama-administration-did-nothing-similar-to-your-immigration-ban/>.

⁵⁵⁸ *ibid.*

⁵⁵⁹ *ibid.*

The fact that the factual validity of Trump's EO was called into question demonstrates the subjective nature of "security" and threats. Threats are constructed and staged by an actor – they may not be grounded in reality. A comprehensive study published in 2016 by the Cato Institute's Centre for Global Liberty and Prosperity found that of the more than three million refugees that were resettled into the country between 1975 and 2015, only 20 have attempted or carried out a terrorist attack while only three refugees have killed three people. These were Cubans in the 1970s – prior to the Refugee Act of 1980 that introduced more secure refugee vetting procedures.⁵⁶⁰

This study drew data from a number of sources such as comprehensive books on terrorism, databases compiled on terrorism from the Global Terrorism Database, the 2013 Congressional research report "American Jihadist Terrorism: Combatting a complex threat" and the RAND Database of Worldwide Terrorism Incidents which covers acts of terror dating as far back as 1968⁵⁶¹. From 1975 to 2015, no-one from the seven countries had killed an American in a terror attack.⁵⁶² He also stresses that no Americans have been killed by Syrian refugees in the US, and the chance of an American being killed in a terror attack by a refugee, was 1 in 3.6 billion.⁵⁶³ A key architect of this study, Alex Nowrasteh, states that based on this research the premise of the ban was based on a "phantom menace" as there is no evidence that supports Trump's claim of danger.⁵⁶⁴ In fact, Americans have a higher probability (over 200 times) of being murdered by someone other than a foreign national who is a terrorist.

Therefore, according to Nowrasteh, "the measures taken here will have virtually no effect on improving U.S. national security."⁵⁶⁵ This highlights how security is a contested terrain. It can be conceptualised in a number of ways in international relations, depending on the time and place.⁵⁶⁶ By using speech acts, Trump was able to construct an "intersubjective understanding" of an issue by using information to back up his claims.⁵⁶⁷ This suggests that the threat might

⁵⁶⁰ Alex Nowrasteh, "Terrorism and Immigration: A Risk Analysis," (2016): 13.

⁵⁶¹ *ibid.*, 4.

⁵⁶² "Little National Security Benefit to Trump's Executive Order on Immigration," Cato Institute, <https://www.cato.org/blog/little-national-security-benefit-trumps-executive-order-immigration>.

⁵⁶³ "Terrorism and Immigration: A Risk Analysis[Online]," Cato Institute, <https://www.cato.org/publications/policy-analysis/terrorism-immigration-risk-analysis>

⁵⁶⁴ "Little National Security Benefit to Trump's Executive Order on Immigration".

⁵⁶⁵ *ibid.*

⁵⁶⁶ Williams and McDonald, *Security Studies : An Introduction*, 2.

⁵⁶⁷ Buzan, Wæver, and De Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*.

not have been grounded in reality (i.e. they were subjective phenomena) but instead on an interpretation of reality.

Anything can be presented as a threat through a combination of factors such as the authority of the securitising actor and the willingness of an audience to accept the claims.⁵⁶⁸ Trump did not only securitise this group with his choice of words, but also the way he used capital letters and punctuation marks. On the internet and in “netiquette”, capital letters are actually the equivalent of shouting.⁵⁶⁹ Robb writes in the *New Republic* that capital letters are widely accepted by internet users as conveying irritation, anger or rudeness. Professor Paul Luna, director of the department of typography and graphic communication at the University of Reading states that all CAPS communicate feelings of “grandeur”, “pomposity”, and “aesthetic seriousness”.⁵⁷⁰ Luna states that for thousands of years, capital letters have been used to convey importance. This is evidenced by how Roman Emperors would have monuments with their achievements engraved in all caps.⁵⁷¹ Luna argues: “All-capitals provide visibility—maximum size within a given area”. In other words, they are intended to take up space and draw attention to the word, over all other words. Therefore, Trump’s use of capital letters in the abovementioned tweet placed an emphasis on his words – it created a sense of alarm and urgency. Another example is in this tweet:

Feb 12, 2017 06:55:10 AM 72% of refugees admitted into U.S. (2/3 -2/11) during COURT BREAKDOWN are from 7 countries: SYRIA, IRAQ, SOMALIA, IRAN, SUDAN, LIBYA & YEMEN [Twitter for Android] ⁵⁷²

The capitalisation of COURT BREAKDOWN suggests that there a rupture or disruption in the system that made America vulnerable. Capital letters essentially bring about a heightened sense of alarm. This can also be deduced from the following tweet:

⁵⁶⁸ Balzacq, "The Three Faces of Securitization: Political Agency, Audience and Context."

⁵⁶⁹ Alice Robb, "How Capital Letters Became Internet Code for Yelling: And Why We Should Lay Off the All-Caps Key," *The New Republic*, <https://newrepublic.com/article/117390/netiquette-capitalization-how-caps-became-code-yelling>

⁵⁷⁰ Alice Robb, "How Capital Letters Became Internet Code for Yelling: And Why We Should Lay Off the All-Caps Key," *The New Republic*,

<https://newrepublic.com/article/117390/netiquette-capitalization-how-caps-became-code-yelling>

⁵⁷¹ *ibid.*

⁵⁷² Donald J. Trump, "Twitter Post," *Twitter*, <https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/830747067379232769>.

Feb 9, 2017 06:35:49 PM SEE YOU IN COURT, THE SECURITY OF OUR NATION IS AT STAKE! [Twitter for Android] ⁵⁷³

Here Trump appears to be shouting at the legal system about an eminent danger or threat out there that sought to disrupt the nation.

4.2.1.4 Christian refugees as victims

In four out of the five media interviews analysed, Trump painted asylum seekers and refugees from Muslim countries as potential threats through his repeated use of phrases such as radical Islamic terrorism, when speaking about immigration policies. However, he portrayed refugees as victims, not threats, in only one interview. In an interview that was broadcast on the Christian Broadcasting Network with David Brody, on 26 January 2017, Trump vowed to do all he could to assist Christian refugees who were being victimised by terror groups in their countries. According to Trump:

They've been horribly treated. Do you know if you were a Christian in Syria it was impossible, at least very tough to get into the United States? If you were a Muslim you could come in, but if you were a Christian, it was almost impossible and the reason that was so unfair, is that the – everybody was persecuted in all fairness, but they were chopping off the heads of everybody but more so the Christians. And I thought it was very, very unfair. So, we are going to help them.⁵⁷⁴

A number of things can be deduced from this extract from the interview. First of all, Trump argues that Christian refugees are victims of an asylum system that favoured Muslims more than Christians. By pointing out the differential treatment of Muslim refugees and Christian refugees, Trump was creating an “us vs them” narrative and suggesting intergroup conflict over resources. This scenario can be viewed through the lens of the Social Identity Theory proposed by psychologists Henri Tajfel and John Turner to explain intergroup conflict. Todd Scriber argues that Trump’s rhetoric regarding immigration and refugee resettlement, is reflective of the CoC paradigm posited by Samuel Huntington.⁵⁷⁵ Scribner argues that the CoC paradigm is a useful lens to understand Trump’s rhetoric regarding international relations issues such as

⁵⁷³ "Twitter Post."

⁵⁷⁴ Factbase, "Cbn: Interview David Brody and Donald Trump - January 26, 2017."

⁵⁷⁵ Scribner, "You Are Not Welcome Here Anymore: Restoring Support for Refugee Resettlement in the Age of Trump."

migration. The main argument behind this paradigm is that in a post-Cold War world, culture, as opposed to political ideology, is useful in understanding international conflict.⁵⁷⁶

4.2.1.5 Asylum seekers and refugees as “snakes” and threats to American people

In 29 April 2017, in Harrisburg, PA, Trump addressed a crowd of people at a political rally. One of the topics that came up, unsurprisingly, was the necessity to secure the US’s borders. He addressed the necessity of a wall to secure the border with Mexico and increased screening and vetting of migrants. He also reaffirmed his promise to protect the country from terrorism. Directly after he announced: “We are going to keep radical Islamic terrorists the hell out of our country!” He recited a song called “The Snake” performed by Al Wilson and published in 1968.⁵⁷⁷ The song is a retelling of a version of the Aesopian fable, “The Farmer and the Snake” (or the Farmer and the Viper).⁵⁷⁸ According to Professor Katherina Stevens,

Fables are fictional narratives in which a particular plot is used to present a general, but tightly circumscribed aspect of human experience, often a kind of behaviour, attitude or world-view and its consequence.⁵⁷⁹

Hence, in Trump’s case, the fable highlights the consequences of benevolence. He claimed to dedicate this rendition of the poem to General Kelly, the border patrol and “ICE agents for doing such an incredible job”. He also said the song was “having to do with our borders”.

In Trump’s version of the song, he describes a “tender-hearted woman” who encounters a “poor half-frozen snake” with “pretty coloured skin” that is “frosted with dew”.⁵⁸⁰ She feels sorry for the snake, so she takes him in and vows to take care of him. Trump said the “vicious snake” begs the woman to take him in.⁵⁸¹ According to Trump, the woman’s home is representative of

⁵⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁷ Eli Rosenberg, “‘The Snake’: How Trump Appropriated a Radical Black Singer’s Lyrics for Immigration Fearmongering,” *The Washington Post*, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/politics/wp/2018/02/24/the-snake-how-trump-appropriated-a-radical-black-singers-lyrics-for-refugee-fearmongering/?utm_term=.16c896811505; “Al Wilson: The Snake,” All Music, <https://www.allmusic.com/song/the-snake-mt0027766823>.

⁵⁷⁸ Factbase, *Speech: Donald Trump Holds a Political Rally in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania - April 29, 2017* (Factbase: Factbase, 2017), Video; Aesop, “The Farmer and the Snake(Online),” Lit2Go ed., *Aesop’s Fables* (Lit2Go, 1867), <https://etc.usf.edu/lit2go/35/aesops-fables/387/the-farmer-and-the-snake/>.

⁵⁷⁹ Katharina Stevens, “Trump, Snakes and the Power of Fables,” *Informal Logic* 38, no. 1 (2018): 56.

⁵⁸⁰ Factbase, *Speech: Donald Trump Holds a Political Rally in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania - April 29, 2017*.

⁵⁸¹ *ibid.*

“the border” and the “vicious snake” who is “frozen” is immigrants who appear like victims in need of assistance, but instead they carry ulterior motives.

The woman invites the snake inside her home and nurses him back to health. Her hospitality is the finest: she wraps the creature “all cosy in a comforter of silk”. This is symbolic, as silk is associated with luxury, comfort and royalty. The snake is laid by a fireplace and fed “honey and some milk”. This is also symbolic because honey and milk are associated with goodness, hospitality and luxury. This also alludes to the saying that a country is “the land of milk and honey”. By telling this story, Trump is suggesting that to outsiders, America is seen as the land of milk and honey, and because of this perception, the country is vulnerable to being taken advantage of. As the story progresses, the snake is nursed back to health, yet shows no appreciation for her selfless hospitality. The song’s lyrics read:

She stroked his pretty skin again and kissed him and held him tight. But instead of saying thank you, that snake gave her a vicious bite! Take me in, oh tender woman. Take me in, sighed the vicious snake. I have saved you, cried the women and you bit me, heavens why? You know your bite is poisonous, and now I am going to die.⁵⁸²

This passage illustrates how ungrateful and evil the snake really is, and how the woman’s kindness has ultimately been taken advantage of. The bite is also poisonous, and it is suggested that the woman will die. In relation to the US, the country could face a similar fate if not too careful: be bitten and face destruction.

Throughout various cultures and mythologies around the world, snakes are associated with various character traits: from destruction to mystery. This is evident in Norse mythology where serpents are associated with death, destruction and deception.⁵⁸³ Trump also uses the words of the snake to describe the naivety of the woman:

Oh, shut up, silly woman, said the reptile with a grin. You knew damn well I was a snake before you took me in. (This is followed by an applause by the audience).⁵⁸⁴

⁵⁸² *ibid.*

⁵⁸³ Gro Mandt, "Fragments of Ancient Beliefs: The Snake as a Multivocal Symbol in Nordic Mythology," *ReVision* 23, no. 1 (2000): 19.

⁵⁸⁴ Factbase, Speech: Donald Trump Holds a Political Rally in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania - April 29, 2017.

This is the punchline: Americans would be silly to take in danger. Trump ended off the tale by saying:

Does that explain it, folks? Keeping America safe also means rebuilding our defences!⁵⁸⁵

Katherina Stevens argues that Trump used the above fable as an argumentative device to justify his views on immigration.⁵⁸⁶ The fable serves as an analogy of the immigration situation in America. Trump was promoting an idea that immigrants were a threat to US citizens and thus the borders needed to be more secure and immigrants needed to be thoroughly vetted and screened.⁵⁸⁷ Essentially, the fable also influenced the audience's understanding of immigration and what needed to be done to protect the country. Using this fable allowed Trump to gain support for any policies that sought to mitigate the perceived risks associated with migration.⁵⁸⁸ In addition, the use of rhetorical devices such as metaphors and vivid imagery to further securitise foreign nationals by creating a visual imagery through words of the potential consequences that could result if immigration is left unchecked. In addition, by using the metaphor of a violent snake to represent immigrants and a helpless women to represent Americans, he is further the "us" vs "them" narrative that has been prevalent in this previous statements: immigrants are snakes, therefore not human and not worthy of being inside the country.

4.2.1.6 Asylum seekers and refugees as "dishonest and mysterious"

In his depiction of asylum seekers and refugees, Trump expressed the possibility of some of them being dishonest and concealing their evil intentions when make asylum claims to get into the country. His viewpoint was expressed in two out of the four interviews analysed. This ties into the perception that terrorists or people with links to radical Islam will use the refugee programme to enter the country and cause havoc. In an ABC News interview, he continued to stress that people might have "evil intentions" and come under "false pretence" and undermine

⁵⁸⁵ Factbase, *Speech: Donald Trump Holds a Political Rally in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania - April 29, 2017*.

⁵⁸⁶ Stevens, "Trump, Snakes and the Power of Fables," 53.

⁵⁸⁷ *ibid.*, 55.

⁵⁸⁸ *ibid.*

the safety of the country⁵⁸⁹ Migrants coming into the country are perceived to be shrouded in mystery, as “we have no idea who they are”.⁵⁹⁰ This again reinforces the notion that asylum seekers and refugees might not share similar values and are threatening to the social fabric of the country.

4.2.2 What are the main themes/concerns in Donald Trump’s rhetoric when it comes to asylum seekers and refugees?

In the assessment of Trump’s utterances, the overarching theme that emerged was national security, most specifically, the potential threat that asylum seekers and refugees could have on the national security of the country and its people. This was done in several ways, using key terms associated with risk, such as terrorism, radical Islam and danger.

In two speeches, Trump also pushed the idea that migrants came from countries where immigration “cannot safely occur”.⁵⁹¹ In other words, they come from dangerous countries plagued by terrorism and bloodshed. This is highlighted a number of times:

We have seen bloodshed overseas.⁵⁹²

We have entire regions of the world destabilised by terrorism and ISIS.⁵⁹³

This suggests that Trump only considered refugees to be coming from terrorism-ridden countries: it is as if he ignored a whole other pool of countries that face humanitarian crises, and which are not as violent as the Middle East. Refugees do not only flee from ISIS, they also flee insecurity caused by other factors such as climate change, natural disasters, discrimination on the grounds of their ethnicity, sexual orientation, poverty and so forth.

⁵⁸⁹ Factbase, "Abc News: Interview with David Muir and Donald Trump - January 25, 2017(Transcript)".

⁵⁹⁰ Associated Press, "Transcript of AP Interview with Trump," Associated Press, 24 April 2017, <https://apnews.com/c810d7de280a47e88848b0ac74690c83>.

⁵⁹¹ Factbase, "Speech: Donald Trump Holds a Political Rally in Nashville, Tennessee - March 15, 2017(Transcript)".

⁵⁹² Speech: Donald Trump Holds a Political Rally in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania - April 29, 2017.

⁵⁹³ "Speech: Donald Trump Holds a Political Rally in Nashville, Tennessee - March 15, 2017(Transcript)".

4.2.2.1 National Security and anti-terrorism efforts

Trump used the threat of terrorist attacks on US soil and abroad to justify his EO banning migrants from seven Muslim-majority countries such as Somalia, Syria, Libya and Yemen. This is in line with the tenets of the Securitisation Theory, which contends that through the act of securitising an issue, any unusual or extraordinary measures to tackle a problem are justified.⁵⁹⁴ In essence, the securitising actor makes an issue a security issue by labelling it as such and convincing an audience that this issue is an “existential threat” to a referent object, which therefore justifies extraordinary measures that fall outside the realm of normal politics.⁵⁹⁵

In his tweets, Trump repeatedly pointed out that US needed to get tough on immigration of migrants from Muslim majorities, as the country did not have adequate structures to properly vet and screen them for links or affiliations with terrorist organisations such as ISIS. In other words, in alarming terms, Trump put forth that if the US let anyone in, these incomers could plan the next 9/11 attack. It is dangerous and risky, so in order to avert the risk, one must exercise extreme caution by denying entry of all foreign nationals from the abovementioned countries.

The theme of national security and the risk of admitting refugees into the country is apparent from Trump’s tweets. The Securitisation Theory contends that through speech acts, actors transform issues into security concerns. First this connects “refugees” with “danger”, and secondly, the use of all caps serves to highlight further the existential threat that these developments may have. In this tweet the countries banned were in capital letters (as highlighted above), also emphasising or highlighting where the threat might originate from. In relation to terrorism, another theme that came up was his unhappiness over the legal opposition his EO has garnered. The following tweet is in all caps, highlighting the imminent threat if action is not taken.

Feb 9, 2017 06:35:49 PM SEE YOU IN COURT, THE SECURITY OF OUR

⁵⁹⁴ Buzan, "Rethinking Security after the Cold War."

⁵⁹⁵ *ibid.*

NATION IS AT STAKE! [Twitter for Android] ⁵⁹⁶

In a 30 January 2017 tweet he stated: “There is nothing nice about searching for terrorists before they can enter our country”.⁵⁹⁷ Trump used documented terrorist activity abroad committed by people identifying as Muslim to justify his strict EOs, as exemplified in these tweets:

Feb 3, 2017 07:51:58 AM A new radical Islamic terrorist has just attacked in Louvre Museum in Paris. Tourists were locked down. France on edge again. GET SMART U.S. [Twitter for Android].⁵⁹⁸

Feb 4, 2017 07:48:12 PM The judge opens up our country to potential terrorists and others that do not have our best interests at heart. Bad people are very happy! [Twitter for Android] ⁵⁹⁹

What is apparent is that Trump did not differentiate between asylum seekers and refugees with legitimate claims to asylum from terrorists who may use the immigration system to enter the country. Immigration was presented as a threat and was racialized, which is consistent with previous literature on the subject by scholars such as Ibrahim and Van Dijk.⁶⁰⁰ One of the reasons for this securitisation of immigration is rooted in the perception that immigrants or diasporic communities could have links with and support terrorist groups or insurgencies.⁶⁰¹ It is striking that Trump made no mention of non-Muslim refugees from countries where Islam was not the majority religion. This could suggest that Trump’s rhetoric had a racial bias or was Islamophobic. Islamophobia has been prevalent in the Western world for a very long time, including most recently in Trump’s rhetoric surround Muslims.⁶⁰² One aspect that comes across in previous literature and in the representation of Muslims in Trump’s discourse is the

⁵⁹⁶ Trump, "Twitter Post".

⁵⁹⁷ *ibid.*

⁵⁹⁸ "Twitter Post".

⁵⁹⁹ "Twitter Post".

⁶⁰⁰ Van Dijk, "New(s) Racism: A Discourse Analytical Approach."; Ibrahim, "The Securitization of Migration: A Racial Discourse1."

⁶⁰¹ Ibrahim, "The Securitization of Migration: A Racial Discourse1," 173.

⁶⁰² Christian Hillegas, "Trump’s Islamophobia: The Persistence of Orientalism in Western Rhetoric and Media," *CounterPunch*, 25 May 2017, <https://www.counterpunch.org/2017/05/25/trumps-islamophobia-the-persistence-of-orientalism-in-western-rhetoric-and-media/>

association of terrorism with Islam.⁶⁰³ In fact, it is common practice in the Western discourse around Muslims or Arabs. This is done using terms such “radical Islam”, which conflates Islam, the religion, with terrorist attacks. Trump was consistent in articulating the same theme in his interviews: the national security threat that allowing Muslim refugees and asylum seekers into the USA could generate. He continuously reaffirmed the need to protect the US’s borders from people who might have bad intentions or intend to do harm on US soil. He also talked about people who are being investigated by the FBI for terrorism charges.

In an ABC News interview on 25 January 2017 he claimed:

The FBI is now investigating more people than ever before having to do with terror. They – and it’s from the group of people that came in.⁶⁰⁴

The following day he repeated those sentiments by saying:

Right now, the FBI has over 1,000 investigations going, 1000...⁶⁰⁵

It is evident that Trump stressed the enormity of the situation, that the threat was no longer some far-off idea, but it a reality. It was on the shores of the US. This is amplified when he repeated “1,000”. It is also evident that he did not differentiate between refugees coming from different countries or regions, such as Latin America, where a refugee crisis was also going on.⁶⁰⁶ His focus was on Muslim refugees who were more likely to be a challenge.

Similarly, in all three speeches that were studied. Trump was concerned about the following points:

- Terrorism (most specifically, the threat of terrorist attacks should the USA fail to adequately secure its borders. This was done through using examples of past events, as well as attacks abroad).

⁶⁰³ Lawrence Pintak, "Framing the Other: Worldview, Rhetoric and Media Dissonance since 9/11," in *Muslims and the News Media*, ed. Elizabeth Poole and John E. Richardson (New York: I.B Tauris & Co Ltd, 2006), 194.

⁶⁰⁴ Factbase, "Abc News: Interview with David Muir and Donald Trump - January 25, 2017(Transcript)".

⁶⁰⁵ Fox News, *Hannity: Interview with Sean Hannity and Donald Trump - January 26, 2017* (Youtube: Fox News, 2017).

⁶⁰⁶ Karen Musalo and Eunice Lee, "Seeking a Rational Approach to a Regional Refugee Crisis: Lessons from the Summer 2014 Surge of Central American Women and Children at the Us-Mexico Border," *Journal. on Migration & Human. Security*. 5 (2017).

- The vulnerability of the US and its people: Trump expressed that due to actions of the past administration, and actions of the judges who opposed his ban, the US and its people were in danger.

The danger is clear, the law is clear, the need for my executive order is clear. I was elected to change our broken and dangerous system and thinking in government that has weakened and endangered our country and left our people defenceless. [Applause] And I will not stop fighting for the safety of you and your families, believe me. Not today, not ever. We're going to win it. We're going to win it.⁶⁰⁷

This speech Nashville, Tennessee, on 15 March 2017 implied that Washington had not done enough in protecting American borders. The speech was in response to the ruling of a federal judge in Hawaii, who opposed the revised version of the order. He painted the judge as the enemy and himself as the guardian of people, as the person who had American citizen's best interests at heart (a paternal figure). The enemy was therefore not just the immigrants, but also people within the state. He described it as "bad" news and "the bad, sad news" and them as the "most dishonest people in the world". This is a strong statement against judges, who are mandated to carry out justice. Under normal circumstances, the president and judges should be respected, but here Trump undermined the position of the judge. This is a major indictment, which he made repeatedly: in fact, the system was seen as an obstacle to securing borders. For example, in a February 2017 address to country sheriffs, Trump stated: "they want to take our powers".⁶⁰⁸ This statement was in reference to the judges' decision to block his EO and the public legal opposition that the travel ban had received. The statement was also accusatory in tone through the use of "they". "They" are impersonal reference to the judges, Democrats or presumably anyone who might get in the way. This statement of "take" and "powers" implies that their law-given rights to decide who comes in the country were being undermined. In contrast, the use of the pronoun "our" to describe the EO suggests a sense of solidarity and community.

⁶⁰⁷ Factbase, "Speech: Donald Trump Holds a Political Rally in Nashville, Tennessee - March 15, 2017(Transcript)".

⁶⁰⁸ Trump, "Remarks by President Trump in Roundtable with County Sheriffs".

Another theme was Trump's plans to fix the country:

We are operating on a very simple principle that our immigration system should put the needs of American workers, American families, American companies and American citizens first.⁶⁰⁹

4.2.3 How, if at all, does Donald Trump's characterisation of asylum seekers and refugees contribute to the construction of an "us vs them" narrative?

It is apparent through the examination of Trump's statements across the different platforms that he portrays asylum seekers and refugees in opposition to Americans. Asylum seekers and refugees were depicted as aggressors, or "potential terrorists"; the "other"; while the American people, "us", were depicted as victims and under threat or vulnerable. This is consistent with the Social Identity Theory, which ultimately suggests that people derive a sense of self by identifying with a particular social group and in opposition to each other.⁶¹⁰ In the context of this research, Trump used rhetoric to describe asylum seekers (out-group) and refugees as a threat or nemesis to Americans (in-group).⁶¹¹

4.2.3.1 *America as vulnerable*

Americans were depicted as vulnerable to terror attacks carried out by potential terrorists who entered the country through formal immigration channels. Trump also alluded to a "broken legal system" that had not done enough to secure the nation's borders, most specifically with the overturning of the travel ban EOs twice during his first 100 days as president. This is highlighted through the repeated use of pronouns such as "our":

Feb 9, 2017 06:35:49 PM SEE YOU IN COURT, THE SECURITY OF OUR NATION IS AT STAKE! [Twitter for Android] ⁶¹²

Feb 4, 2017 04:44:49 PM Because the ban was lifted by a judge, many very bad and dangerous people may be pouring into our country. A terrible decision [Twitter for

⁶⁰⁹ Factbase, Speech: Donald Trump Holds a Political Rally in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania - April 29, 2017.

⁶¹⁰ Tajfel, "Social Identity and Intergroup Behaviour," 16.

⁶¹¹ *ibid.*

⁶¹² Trump, "Twitter Post".

Android] ⁶¹³

The two tweets above illustrate his overarching message: the US is vulnerable without a travel ban and faces an imminent threat if not dealt with urgently. The use of the specific “our” pronoun creates a sense of ownership/possession, which should be protected at all costs by outsiders who seek to undermine it.

Trump created a distinction between Americans and others through repeated use of pronouns such as “our” to reflect the vulnerability of America. American stood to lose something that they valued – their safety and security.

“**We** have seen the devastation from 9/11 to Boston...” ⁶¹⁴

“**our** country”

“And sometimes we need it very badly for security – security of our country”

“The danger is clear, the law is clear, the need for my executive order is clear. I was elected to change **our** broken and dangerous system and thinking in government that has weakened and endangered our country and left our people defenceless. [Applause] And I will not stop fighting for the safety of you and your families, believe me. Not today, not ever. We’re going to win it. We’re going to win it. [Applause]”⁶¹⁵

4.2.3.2 *Asylum seekers and refugees as the “other”*

Asylum seekers and refugees were depicted as the “other” and a threat, in opposition to Americans, who were depicted by Trump as vulnerable to an onslaught by terrorists. This is done through the use of pronouns repeatedly, such as “they” and “the bad ones”, “gambles” in juxtaposition to words such as “our country”. This creates an impression that the US was at war with outsiders who sought to cause destruction. What is interesting is that he displayed sympathy and empathy towards Christian refugees. By him saying “we are going to help them”

⁶¹³ "Twitter Post".

⁶¹⁴ Factbase, "Speech: Donald Trump Holds a Political Rally in Nashville, Tennessee - March 15, 2017(Transcript)".

⁶¹⁵ *ibid.*

(the Christians), implies that America, as Christian country, has a duty to take in other Christian brothers and sisters.

Several scholars have argued that historically Muslims and Arabs have been portrayed in menacing terms. Muslims have been Othered by the media and in political discourse by politicians who are set on promoting political objectives.⁶¹⁶ Muslims are portrayed in Orientalist terms, according to Hillegas, which is done through the reproduction of stereotypes and generalisations in the media and political discourse. In other words, “othering” refers to the way one social group distances itself from another group, making that group appear different. Said suggests that people construct an identity in opposition to something different”.⁶¹⁷ This is consistent with other sections in this study, where asylum seekers and refugees are depicted as a threat to the national security of the country.

4.3 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the research findings and analysis that were collected during the investigation of Donald Trump’s collective characterisation of asylum seekers and refugees, during his first 100 days in office. A qualitative content analysis (and discourse analysis) was conducted using the theoretical framework of securitisation, espoused by the Copenhagen School of Security Studies, in order to ascertain how this group of migrants were securitised. This is in the face of humanitarian crises that have promoted a massive exodus of displaced peoples to North America, as well as the perceived threat of Islamic terrorism and national security concerns. Overall, the research found that Trump depicted foreign nationals, some of whom are displaced peoples, as potential security threats. This was based on the perceived threat that refugees and asylum seekers would have on American society, particularly Muslims. Asylum seekers and refugees, mainly Muslims, were collectively identified as a potential security threat through the use of vivid imagery and metaphors, while Christian refugees and asylum seekers were portrayed as victims and in need of assistance from the US. The next

⁶¹⁶ Christian Hillegas, "Trump's Islamophobia: The Persistence of Orientalism in Western Rhetoric and Media," CounterPunch, <https://www.counterpunch.org/2017/05/25/trumps-islamophobia-the-persistence-of-orientalism-in-western-rhetoric-and-media/>

⁶¹⁷ Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*.

chapter concludes the research study, with reference to the key research questions and aims. It also suggests areas for future research.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, RESEARCH FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction and overview of the study

The main aim of this study was to examine the collective characterisation of asylum seekers and refugees by US President Donald Trump during his first 100 days in office, that is, from 20 January 2017 to 29 April 2017. A content and discourse analysis of Trump's utterances on this matter, across different platforms, namely Twitter, speeches and media interviews, was conducted. Throughout this study of Trump's utterances, the researcher wanted to determine if, at all, Trump was securitising asylum seekers and refugees through his discourse. The main research question of this study therefore was: How, if at all, has Donald Trump collectively characterised asylum seekers and refugees during the first 100 days of his term in office? This research also sought to determine:

- What are the main themes/concerns in Donald Trump's rhetoric when it comes to asylum seekers and refugees?
- How, if at all, does Donald Trump's characterisation of asylum seekers and refugees contribute to the construction of an "us vs them" narrative?

The subsequent chapters examined the background to the research problem, theoretical framework and a review of key literature in this area, to lay the theoretical and conceptual framework before carrying out this study. This can be summarised as followed:

Chapter One outlined the study's contextual background; research problem, methodology and key research aims. Chapter Two presented a historical overview of immigration in the US from the colonial era up to the present day (2018). It unpacked the different waves of mass immigration, and how the policies of the US have evolved over time. In addition, it outlined the refugee resettlement programme of the country, which is the focus of this study. This historical background allowed the reader to determine if Trump's statements and characterisation of asylum seekers and refugees during the first 100 days of his presidency, were consistent with previous administrations. Chapter Three provided a contextual overview of Trump's characterisation of asylum seekers and refugees during the 2016 US election

campaign. This included a brief overview and dissection of Trump's notable utterances on immigration, disseminated on a number of platforms, namely recorded speeches, statements, media interviews as well as things he has published himself on Twitter. Trump's pre-victory rhetoric gave the reader insight into the evolution or roots of his policy actions. Secondly, the elections gave the reader an insight into the external context in which Trump's utterances operate: an American society that is anxious about security amidst perceived threats of Islamic-inspired terrorism, given the number of terror attacks that occurred during the election campaign. Chapter Four dealt with the research findings and analysis of the content that was retrieved from Trump's utterances on Twitter, broadcast interviews and speeches between 20 January 2017 and 29 April 2017, which were sourced from websites, Factbase.org and Trump Twitter Archive.

The subsequent sections will outline the major findings of the study, limitation and recommendations for further study.

5.2 Major findings of the study

Overall, this study found that Trump characterised all migrants, including asylum seekers and refugees, from Middle Eastern countries such as Syria, as potential national security threats across all platforms. Through the use of language in speech acts or rhetoric, Trump promoted the idea that asylum seekers and refugees, many of whom were from Muslim-majority countries, could be individuals affiliated to radical Islamic terrorist groups such as ISIS. His speech acts created a narrative that immigration is an "existential threat" to "a valued referent object" and as such, urgent and emergency measures are required to deal with the threat.⁶¹⁸ In this case, the danger being presented is: immigrants, including refugees and asylum seekers, from Muslim-majority countries that could potentially bring destructive elements and endanger Americans (borrowing Buzan's terminology, the "valued referent object"). In the Securitisation Theory, Trump's speech acts can be characterised as "securitising moves". As noted, a securitising move is when an actor presents an issue as an existential threat through the use of

⁶¹⁸ Holger Stritzel, "Towards a Theory of Securitization: Copenhagen and Beyond," *European journal of international relations* 13, no. 3 (2007).

rhetoric that conjures up ideas of danger, destruction, survival and the urgent need to tackle the danger or face destruction.⁶¹⁹

As cited by *Buzan et al.*, speech acts are the use of language to construct a narrative that must “follow the security form, the grammar of security and construct a *plot* that includes an existential threat, point of no return and a *possible way out*”.⁶²⁰ This research study found that Trump performed several speech acts that reinforced the narrative that migrants, including asylum seekers and refugees, from predominately Muslim countries were a security risk. Trump repeatedly warned that if extreme measures were not taken to counter this “existential threat” then the US and its people would face dire consequences.

As has been shown by previous research, Trump has repeatedly leveraged on the fears of the American public by pitting the migrants and American society in oppositional terms or as adversaries. In order to emphasise his point across platforms Trump used words, rhetorical devices such as fables, metaphors and analogies that conjured up images of a threat. An example of the threat narrative was demonstrated throughout his repeated use of negative adjectives such as “bad” to describe migrants.

Using the lens of Social Identity Theory one can observe that Trump’s tendency to designate a group of people as “bad” or any other adjectives creates a separate identity that is in opposition to Americans: it creates the impression that foreign nationals from certain countries are “bad”, therefore they are not like “us” or not “good”. It is implied that “they” do not share “our” values thus created an “us” vs “them” narrative. The use of these menacing terms also suggests that Trump pushed a narrative that people seeking asylum into the US could be bad people seeking to take advantage of the US hospitality, in order to later do harm on US soil and to American people. Out of the data analysed, the use of the word “bad” suggests that the threat was not on the refugees but rather what bad could come to US society. Similarly, Trump suggests that migrants could be potential terrorists, affiliated with ISIS and other terror organisations that have wreaked havoc domestically and abroad. The language of security and threat is used to

⁶¹⁹ Buzan, Wæver, and De Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, 25-26.

⁶²⁰ Buzan et al., *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*.

justify extreme measures to deny people entry into the US – this is demonstrated when he states that his administration is “working hard to keep the country safe from terrorism”.⁶²¹

Trump also used metaphors and analogies to securitise migrants as demonstrated at a speech he delivered in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania on 29 April 2017 (previously discussed in Chapter Four). In the speech he recited a famous song that is based on a fable, called “The Snake” song. The fable/song describes a “tender-hearted woman” who encounters a “poor half-frozen snake” with “pretty coloured skin” that is “frosted with dew”.⁶²² In the story, the woman feels sorry for the snake so she takes him into her home and nurses him back to health. However, “the vicious snake” later bites the woman despite her hospitality. The story, according to Trump, is an analogy of the US border and migrants: the woman’s home is representative of “the border” and the “vicious snake” who is “frozen” represents immigrants who appear like victims in need of assistance, but instead carry ulterior motives. Trump used this fable to warn Americans that their lives would be threatened if they were to take in certain foreign nationals.

In all of Trump’s speech acts that securitised asylum seekers and refugees, he also portrayed them in opposition to Americans. Using the theoretical framework of the Social Identity Theory one can see how Trump’s speech acts created an “us” vs “them” narrative. This theory posits that people derive a sense of self by identifying with a particular social group and in opposition to each other.⁶²³ In the context of this research, Trump used rhetoric to describe asylum seekers (out-group) and refugees as a threat or nemesis to Americans (in-group).⁶²⁴ Asylum seekers and refugees were depicted as aggressors, or “potential terrorists”; the “other”; while the American people; “us” were depicted as victims and under threat or vulnerable. In the “Snake” story Trump is created a barrier between US residents and foreign nationals who, in his view, could be terrorists. He implied that immigrants represent the “other” – like the snake in the story – and are therefore a threat to the well-being of the society. In only one instance did Trump depict refugees as victims, when he was interviewed on the Christian Broadcasting Network in January 2017. In the interview he described Christian refugees in Syria has a group

⁶²¹ Factbase, "Speech: Donald Trump Holds a Political Rally in Nashville, Tennessee - March 15, 2017(Transcript)".

⁶²² Rosenberg, "'The Snake': How Trump Appropriated a Radical Black Singer's Lyrics for Immigration Fearmongering".

⁶²³ Tajfel, "Social Identity and Intergroup Behaviour," 16.

⁶²⁴ *ibid.*

that has “horribly treated” and a victim of an unfair immigration system that favours Muslim refugees over Christians.⁶²⁵ This finding suggests that Muslims are heavily securitised due to the perception that there could be terrorists among them affiliated with radical Islam.

Trump also securitised Muslim migrants using other techniques such as the use of capital letters and punctuation in his tweets. As previously argued by Robb, the use of capital letters communicates feelings of “grandeur”, “pomposity”, and “aesthetic seriousness”.⁶²⁶ Therefore, Trump’s use of capital letters created a sense of alarm and urgency heightening the “plot” that danger was imminent unless immediate action was taken.

Moreover, the repeated use of the specific “our” pronoun creates a sense of ownership/possession, which should be protected at all costs by outsiders who seek to undermine it. The repeated use of pronouns such as “our” also suggested that Americans stood to lose something that they valued – their safety and security. When analysed through the Social Identity Theory, proposed by Henri Tajfel and John Turner, one can see how through this discourse, a stage was set for intergroup conflict between the in-group (Americans) and the out-group (foreign nationals including asylum seekers and refugees).

The main themes that were uncovered in this study were national security and the need to take radical action, through extreme vetting, to avert the danger of Islamic radicalism, or terrorism. It is also apparent through the examination of Trump’s statements across the different platforms, that he portrayed asylum seekers and refugees in opposition to Americans. Asylum seekers and refugees were depicted as aggressors, or “potential terrorists”; the “other”; while the American people; “us” were depicted as victims and under threat or vulnerable. This is consistent with the Social Identity Theory, which suggests that people derive a sense of self by identifying with a particular social group and in opposition to each other.⁶²⁷ In the context of this research, Trump used rhetoric to describe asylum seekers (out-group) and refugees as a threat or nemesis to Americans (the in-group).⁶²⁸ He did not only pit Americans and non-

⁶²⁵ Factbase, "CBN: Interview David Brody and Donald Trump - January 26, 2017."

⁶²⁶ Robb, "How Capital Letters Became Internet Code for Yelling: And Why We Should Lay Off the All-Caps Key".

⁶²⁷ Tajfel, "Social Identity and Intergroup Behaviour," 16.

⁶²⁸ *ibid.*

Americans against each other, however; he also did it with religion in his depiction of Christian refugees as victims of a refugee system that, in his view, favoured Muslim refugees.

This study confirms previous research conducted by Lille in 2018, which also found that Trump heavily securitised immigration through his speech acts or use of language to construct a story of a threat.⁶²⁹ Trump did not differentiate often between the different categories of migrants: for instance, he did not explicitly refer to foreign nationals as “asylum seekers” and “refugees”. However, given the socio-political context at the time and the subject matter, it can be reasonably deduced to whom he is referring. The context is the legal battle over his EOs, famously dubbed “the Muslim ban” and “the Muslim ban 2.0”. For example, the EO issued by Trump on 27 January 2017, banned the resettling of Syrian refugees indefinitely, citing that they were not in the best interest of the US. In the EO, Syria was designated as a country with terrorist activity, and it was implied that resettling Syrian refugees into the US would carry profound risks, as terrorists posing as refugees could enter the country. This opposition to resettling refugees from Syria on the grounds of national security concerns was a sentiment echoed in a public opinion poll conducted by Bloomberg in 2015. The study found that more than half of American adults (53%) were against the resettling of Syrian refugees in the US. This suggests again that Trump’s attempts at securitising refugees and asylum seekers were located within a receptive audience.

Overall, this study broadens our understanding of the securitisation of asylum seekers and refugees at a time when there are millions of people that have been displaced across the world. This is taking place in tandem with what appears to be a climate of nationalist politics that is wary of Islamic extremism. This study is unique as the researcher undertook a content analysis of not only speeches, and press conferences but also of Trump’s social media page. This is especially important given that social media is becoming an increasingly viable political tool for those in power to ‘create’ an us versus them narrative and, in so doing, to potentially foster greater feelings of anger and non-acceptance of refugees and asylum seekers.

⁶²⁹ Lille, "Securitization of Immigration under the Trump Administration: Reconceptualizing the Functional Actor through the Judiciary and the Media," 58.

5.3 Recommendations

In future studies it would be worth exploring the securitisation of asylum seekers and refugees in the US over a longer period, as this study only looks at the first 100 days of Trump's term in office, even though the US has a long history of resettling refugees and granting asylum to people fleeing danger. In future studies, one could also study the securitisation of immigration historically in order to compare the past to the present day. In addition, the US-Mexico border wall debacle has been a key feature of Trump's immigration ambitions, such as his insistence that he will build a "great big wall" to stem the tide of unsavoury elements, despite opposition. It would be interesting to study that discussion, examining the border wall and the ways in which Trump and other officials have securitised the issue. As has been established by scholars such as Phillippe Bourbeau, other actors besides presidents can be securitising actors: foreign ministers, and the media, for example. Therefore, a study exploring the securitising of refugees by other actors such as the media would contribute significantly to the body of knowledge on securitisation.

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