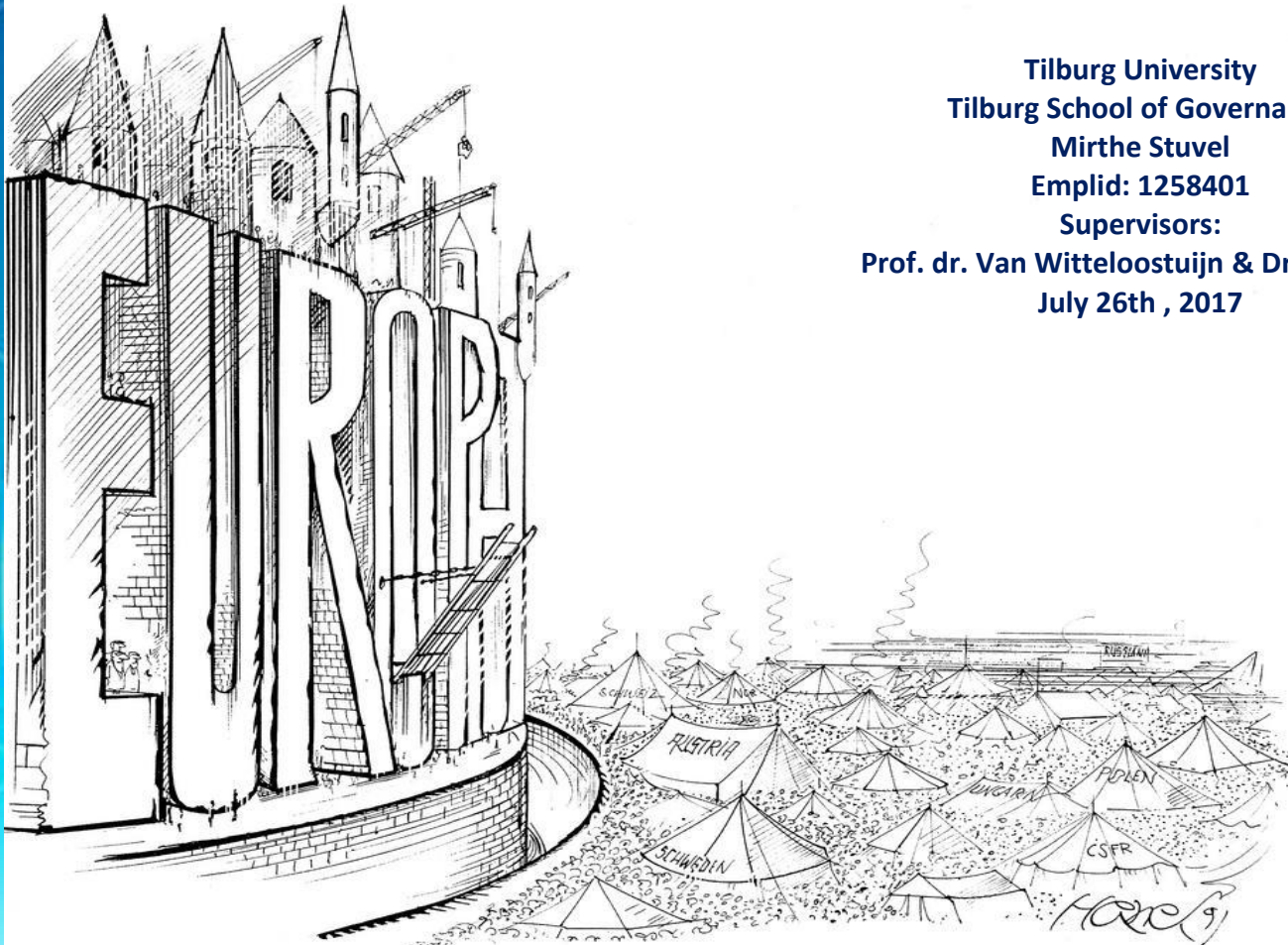# COLORED GLASSES IN FORTRESS EUROPE

- European threat-perceptions in relation to immigrants on Facebook

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Image 1.
Hanel. W. (1991, November). *Fortress Europe*. [Drawing]. Retrieved at July 20, 2017 from:
https://www.cvce.eu/en/obj/cartoon_by_hanel_on_fortress_europe_november_1991-en-30915ba9-84de-4450-b703-
ed942f40c480.html

SUMMARY

Over the past decades, the concept of 'security' has been broadened. Whereas the term traditionally related to the absence of military threat, it now refers to perceived political, economic, environmental and societal security. The concept 'securitization' relates to this trend; it entails the inclusion of new areas of politics in the security realm. Immigration is an important area that has been securitized. Studies show that securitization of migration is present in politics and policies in the European Union. Through political rhetoric and policy implementation, the securitization of migration leads to immigrants being framed as a threat. The culture, economy, public order and political stability of the host country are four areas that can be considered threatened by immigrants. Karyotis (2007) describes these areas as the four axes around which threat evolves: the societal, economic, criminological and political axis. This study examines whether the securitization frame and the axes are also applicable to the European electorate: both are expected to be prominently present among citizens.

Former studies suggest that demographic characteristics influence anti-immigrant attitudes. It is expected that the frames through which European citizens perceive immigrants relates to these attitudes. Therefore, it is tested whether the usage of the frame can be explained by the demographic factors 'region of origin' and 'gender'. Previous studies suggest that citizens can experience both cultural as well as economic competition from immigrants. Therefore, two different regional categories are introduced: one based on cultural differences and the other one based on economic differences.

To examine whether the securitization frame and axes are applied by European citizens and can be explained by the demographic factors, comments posted by citizens during online political communication with the European Parliament on Facebook are analyzed. The comments are used to reveal the frames through which the respondents perceive immigrants. All immigrant-related pictures posted in March 2016 up to and including March 2017 that received over one hundred comments, were selected and pooled. This led to the collection of 643 respondents and 895 comments. The data was categorized and coded, using content analysis. A respondent could either reveal the securitization frame, a positive frame or no frame in relation to immigrants. If respondents provided arguments on why they perceived immigrants as a threat, they could also be placed within an axis. The demographic characteristics of the respondents were extracted from their Facebook accounts.

Using a quantitative method, significant gender differences and regional differences were found in the usage of the securitization frame. Respondents from Eastern Europe are most likely to perceive immigrants as a threat, followed by respondents from Northern and Western Europe while respondents from Southern Europe are least likely to do so. Male respondents are also more likely to apply the securitization frame than female respondents. Based upon the results, voting behavior and support for right-wing populism are the best indicators to predict the relationship between the demographic factors and the likelihood to perceive immigrants as a threat. Therefore, it can be concluded that the general securitization frame is applicable to the European electorate and that region of origin and gender explain the usage of the frame. Nevertheless, the securitization frame is not as prominently present among the respondents as expected. A majority of the respondents did not reveal a frame in relation to immigrants at all.

Lastly, based upon the results, there is no relationship between the societal, economic, criminological and political arguments provided by the respondents and their demographic characteristics. It is important to note that this finding is based on a relatively small number of observations.

Dear reader,

In front of you lies my thesis: the closing piece that leads to the complementation of the master program Public Governance at Tilburg University. Therefore, this also brings a definite end to the last four years. It has been the combination of a societal and legal focus that continuously motivated me to learn about public governance. During the bachelor and the master phase, I have learned a lot on both a personal and educational level. I am very grateful to the department for the pleasant learning environment they created, in which the personal approach is a central and valuable aspect.

The idea to study European threat-perceptions in relation to immigrants during online political communication has developed with great help of drs. Alexiou and prof. dr. Van Witteloostuijn, who continued to supervise me throughout the process. Therefore, special gratitude goes to both of them. I would like to thank drs. Alexiou for her pleasant and intensive guidance. Her research topics were an inspirational source for my master thesis. Her great eye for detail and punctuality and continuous effort and dedication have been indispensable. She provided me with relevant input and critical feedback that was often challenging to process but also contributed to a steep learning curve.

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Furthermore, I would like to thank my Australian friends for the grammar-check. Finally, I would like to thank all those close to me, especially my parents, sister and boyfriend. Writing my thesis has been very intensive and challenging, especially because of my lack of experience with quantitative methods. Understanding these methods required a considerable amount of self-study and persistence. Nevertheless, my family, boyfriend and friends were always there to support me. I am very grateful for their patience and their relativizing ability. In particular, I would like to express my eternal gratitude to my parents, who gave me the opportunity to go to university and stood by me every step along the way.

Mirthe Stuvel
Leende, July 2017

"We don't see things as they are; we see them as we are."

- A. Nin, 1961

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Motivation & Problem statement

> *"Across the Continent, Europeans find themselves increasingly caught up in a debate over the treatment of migrants as rising hostility to newcomers clashes with long-held values of tolerance and openness. Many governments are restricting their welcome to strangers. Sweden tightened immigration rules last year. Britain is leaving the European Union in large part to stem the flow of foreigners. Italy has embarked on a plan to train Libyans to scoop up migrant boats off their shore. Hungary sees the shift against migration as affirming the "correctness" of its decision to build its own wall to seal its border"* (Smale, 2017, para. 3).

This quote from an article in The New York Times summarizes current developments surrounding the European migration crisis. Immigration to the European Union has become a matter that is considered problematic by most developed nations (Rustenbach, 2010). It is a central issue in both national and international politics (Karyotis, 2007). The crisis divided the member states and has become one of the determinants of the future of the Union (Lehne, 2016). Moreover, the majority of European countries are confronted with rising anti-immigrant sentiments (Rustenbach, 2010). These sentiments are also reflected in results of the standard Eurobarometer (11/2016), which show that immigration of people from outside the European Union evokes negative feelings for a majority of European citizens (European Commission, 2016, p. 29). Taken together, this illustrates the enormous impact of the migration crisis and the importance of gaining insights into specific concerns of citizens in relation to immigrants[1], as these could help to identify the cause(s) of anti-immigrant attitudes. This knowledge could help nations to integrate immigrants more effectively, thereby adding economic and cultural value (Rustenbach, 2010).

The literature describes the prominence of a negative perspective on immigrants who want to enter the European Union. Immigration to the European Union is securitized, which means that immigration has been included in the security realm. As Karyotis and Patrikios (2010, p. 43) state: "Migration is perceived by many as a threat to the identity, safety, economic development and, ultimately, the quality of life of citizens, who have been alarmed by the recent arrival of third-country nationals in the European area". The European migration policy tends to be approached from a security frame: immigrants are perceived as a threat to the host country (Kostakopoulou, 2000; Guiraudon, 2000; Huymans, 2000; Buonfino, 2004; Ibrahim, 2005; Lavenex & Kunz, 2008). Political rhetoric associates immigrants with criminality and the protection of welfare provisions and national identity (Huymans, 2000). "Migration has been increasingly presented as a danger to public order, cultural identity, and domestic and labour market stability; it has been securitized" (Huymans, 2000, p. 752). Related to these four areas, Karyotis (2007) describes four axes around which the threat, as perceived by the public, evolves: the criminological, societal, political and economic axis.

A social construct is created through which immigrants are perceived as a threat. According to Huymans (2000), this construct is the result of societal dynamics in which members of a society interact and influence each other. As such, securitization of migration creates a negative frame through which immigrants are perceived (from now on referred to as the 'securitization frame'). A frame entails the salience and selection of certain aspects in a perceived reality. "This promotes a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendations for the item described" (Entman, 1993, p. 52). The securitization of migration has only been studied in relation to European politicians (Buonfino, 2004; Huymans & Buonfino, 2008) and policy (Huymans, 2000; Ceyhan & Tsoukala, 2002), but not specifically for citizens. This study will reveal whether the securitization

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[1] Immigrant refers to all third-country nationals that enter the European Union, regardless their legal status (such as refugee, asylum seeker or status holder).

frame is applicable to the electorate by an analysis of online political communication on the Facebook page of the European Parliament.

The Parliament uses Facebook as a tool to engage with citizens and collect their input (European Parliament, n.d.). The Facebook page is used to post regular updates and to facilitate interaction between citizens and parliament members (European Parliament, n.d.). One of the benefits of Facebook is that it shows the 'human face' of politics (Dobek-Ostrowska & Garlicki, 2013). This means that it facilitates direct communication between politicians and citizens and reduces barriers that contribute to feelings of distance and estrangement. Enabling online communication between politicians and the electorate may lead to better and more direct information channels, as such reconnecting the elite to the people (Svensson, 2011). Politicians seem to have noticed this, as social media usage in the political context increases (Stieglitz, Brockmann & Dang-Xuan, 2012). Content on social networks is increasingly used to study political and societal issues (Stieglitz et al., 2012). It is interesting to study the way Facebook in particular is used as a communication tool, through which people can express their opinions and reinforce their attitudes towards a political case (Nowak, 2013). Hence, the Facebook page of the European Parliament offers a new source of data and an unique way to test the applicability of the securitization frame to European citizens. Immigration to the European Union is regularly discussed on the Facebook page; pictures are accompanied by information or a request for input from citizens. Respondents comment on these images to share their point of view and their comments in turn, reveal frames through which immigrants are perceived. The comments offer a rich base of unconstrained expressions that offer an unique insight into the frames that citizens apply when referring to immigrants, making it possible to study them in an organic setting (Chambers & Bichard, 2012). The Facebook page of the European Parliament has previously been used for research by Vesnic-Alujevic (2012) to assess political communication during elections of the European Parliament.

Results from the European Social Survey show that European citizens are not united in their attitudes towards immigrants (Heath et al., 2016). Moreover, former research has shown regional differences across Europe in attitudes towards immigrants (see Quillian, 1995; Coenders, Lubbers & Scheepers, 2005; Meuleman, Davidov & Billiet, 2009). It is probable that these attitudes relate to the frames that citizens apply. Therefore, it is expected that regional differences will be found in the applicability of the securitization frame. In addition, relations between gender and support for radical right-wing parties and gender differences in attitudes towards immigrants are established by former studies (see Givens, 2004; Valentova and Alieva, 2004; Bridges & Mateut, 2014). Therefore, it is expected that comments from male and female respondents differ in relation to the frames that are applied. Region of origin and gender will therefore be tested as explanatory factors for the usage of the securitization frame. This study will assess whether the securitization frame and the axes are applicable to the electorate and whether region of origin and gender explain the potential applicability. In order to do so, the comments on the pictures that the European Parliament posts and the demographic profiles of the respondents will be analyzed. The results will provide insights into the specific concerns in relation to immigration, as expressed online by men and women living in different areas of the European Union. The following questions flow from these aims:

1. *Is the securitization frame applicable to the electorate?*
2. *Do region of origin and gender explain the usage of the securitization frame?*

The analyses require the categorization of those comments that cannot be placed within the securitization frame. As alternative discourses regarding immigrants have emerged as well, particularly those emphasizing humanitarian aspects of migration (Karyotis, 2007), it is likely that positive comments will also be found. Therefore, three groups will be distinguished: respondents who reveal the securitization frame, respondents who reveal a positive frame in relation to immigrants and respondents who reveal no frame with regard to immigrants. If respondents reveal no frame, they will be excluded from the analyses.

1.2 Societal relevance

European citizens consider migration as the most important issue faced by the Union (European Commission, 2016, p. 4). This study examines the presence of the securitization frame and the axes among that part of the electorate that actively seeks contact with the European Parliament through Facebook. A clear overview will be provided which shows to what extent respondents perceive immigrants as a threat and which kinds of arguments are provided to support this negative frame. This overview will also show whether the origin and gender of the respondents affects the frames that they apply.

Obtained information can contribute to the understanding of anti-immigrant attitudes by political institutions. Moreover, if these attitudes are the result of perceived threat, European policy makers can address this and make an effort to change the construct. Regional and gender differences can be used to prioritize and to choose an optimal approach. Addressing the threat perceptions is important because anti-immigrant sentiments are a potential danger for Europe's unity. This was demonstrated by the major role that resistance against immigrants played in the Brexit (Inglehart & Norris, 2016). The fact that the European Union seemed unable to provide an united response to the migration crisis reinforced anti-Europe and anti-immigrant segments, to which nationalist populists responded (Inglehart & Norris, 2016). The Union wants to overcome these issues, partly by engaging more actively and directly with its citizens (Beckert et al., 2011). Therefore, political institutions have a growing need to analyze politically relevant information from social media to improve their political communication (Stieglitz & Dang-Xuan, 2013). The European Union could also benefit from the information that this study provides since addressing and acting upon citizens' concerns could diminish the democratic deficit (Abels, 2009).

1.3 Scientific relevance

The scientific contribution of this study is three-folded: it will empirically assess the applicability of the securitization frame and the axes to the European electorate (1), use an innovative approach (2) and test the effect of demographic factors on the usage of the frame and the axes (3).

This study will contribute to the body of literature on the securitization of the migration by testing the securitization frame in relation to citizens. So far, securitization of migration is only assessed with regard to politicians (Vuori, 2008; Huysmans, 2011) and policy documents (Huymans, 2000; Ceyhan & Tsoukala, 2002). Although the literature refers to the importance of public opinion in the development of the securitization of migration (Ceyhan & Tsoukala, 2002; Buonfino, 2004; Karyotis, 2007; Kehrberg, 2007), no research has empirically assessed whether the securitization frame applies to citizens. Including public opinion in this study meets the proposition of Karyotis and Patrikios (2012, p. 44) to "complement discourse analysis in studying securitization".

Former studies only focused on anti-immigration attitudes in general, but not specifically on the applicability of the securitization frame. This study will fill that niche by revealing to what extent the securitization frame through which immigrants are perceived as a threat, is applied during online political engagement by European citizens. Therefore, the study provides a new approach by on the one hand including public opinion and on the other hand by using a new source of data to study the securitization frame.

It is probable that anti-immigration attitudes relate to the frames that citizens apply. Results from studies on anti-immigrant sentiments in Europe show regional differences (Quillian, 1995; Coenders et al., 2005; Meuleman, et al., 2009; Heath et al., 2016) and gender differences (Givens, 2004; Bridges & Mateut, 2014). Because it is expected that frames that citizens apply relate to their attitudes, it will be examined whether these demographic characteristics also affect the usage of the securitization frame and the axes.

1.4 Outline

To answer the research questions, this thesis is structured by the following six chapters.

The next section provides a review of the relevant literature, thereby strengthening the theoretical foundation of this study. The most important concepts will be discussed: the securitization of migration, the axes, online political participation, the frame and region of origin. Background information and context on the concepts will be provided. Hypotheses are also formulated, on the basis of existing theories, in the last part of this chapter titled 'the relationship between the demographic profiles and the securitization frame'.

Chapter three is devoted to the operationalization of the most important concepts. It describes the aspect that indicate the presence of the securitization frame and the axes. In addition, the different steps in the analysis are discussed. This chapter connects the theory to the empiricism.

Chapter four addresses the strategy and methodologies that are applied in this research. It concerns a combination of content analysis and quantitative methods. The structure of this section is based on the steps in the analyses. It concludes by discussing the reliability and the validity of the study.

The paper then goes on to presenting the findings of the analyses. A distinction is made between the results of the bivariate and multivariate analyses.

After presenting the results, a reflection on the hypotheses is provided. This is followed by a discussion in which the results, the strengths and limitations of the study and recommendations for future research are described.

The final chapter answers the research questions and reflects on the societal and scientific contribution of the study.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Securitization of migration

2.1.1 Migration as a security threat

In the broadest sense, security refers to 'the absence of threats', thereby traditionally relating to military threats (Tallmeister, 2013). Buzan argued in 1983 that the concept of security was underdeveloped. This marked the beginning of a body of work that would become known as 'The Copenhagen School of Security Studies'. The Copenhagen School reasoned from a constructivist approach, thereby rejecting the objectivist approach that was common until then (Karyotis, 2007). The constructivist approach assumes that the conception of security is a social construct, determined by human perception. According to this approach, the central focus should lie on processes through which actors construct the threats to security. The Copenhagen School argued that the concept of security should be broadened by focusing on political, economic, environmental and societal security as well (Tallmeister, 2013). Rather than physical borders, non-material subjects such as identity, humanity and culture could be endangered. The concept of securitization was introduced by the Copenhagen School to explain the prioritization and inclusion of an issue in a security agenda (Karyotis, 2007). It entails the incorporation of an (at first sight) unrelated area of politics, like migration, in the security realm.

Migration used to be considered a topic within historical sociology or anthropology but due to thematic changes it is increasingly associated with the protection of domestic stability (Huymans, 2000). Since the 1980s, migration frequently became the subject of debates that address public safety and order. The central focus of these debates is the perception of migration as endangering domestic society (Huymans, 2000). Huymans (2000) argues that securitization of migration in the European Union and the member states is based on internal security, the crisis of the welfare state and cultural security. This results in immigrants being framed as a security problem. European policy has integrated migration into the security realm, thereby contributing to its securitization (Karyotis, 2007). Concrete migration policies feed negative politicization of immigrants (Huymans, 2000). Moreover, the Copenhagen School describes 'speech acts' as the explanatory mechanism for securitization of issues. Speech acts involve political linguistic rhetoric or verbal acts (Karyotis, 2007). Uncommon measures are justified by political rhetoric that refers to immigrants as a threat to the society (Huymans, 2000). Although speech acts influence the way the public perceives an issue, institutional developments are also able to do so. Bigo (2000), for example, argues that bureaucratic procedures, security technologies and profiling of groups lead to a division between the wanted and unwanted, thereby also contributing to the securitization of migration. Karyotis (2007) confirms that speech acts are catalysts for the social construct of the security discourse on migration. Nevertheless, he concludes that the process of securitization is also rooted in institutional developments.

Ceyhan and Tsoukala (2002) argue that, due to the restricted immigration policies, a politics of fear has been established in the European Union. The discourse of fear has been intertwined with references to scenarios involving chaos, clash of civilizations and disorder. The fear is directed towards 'the alien, the different or non-European'. In public debates, migration has been transformed into a threat to the welfare, political stability, security and identity of the host society (Ceyhan & Tsoukala, 2002). Related to that, perceived threats by European citizens are predominantly related to employment, internal security, cultural homogeneity and sovereignty (Tsoukala, 2005). Perceiving immigrants as a threat could reinforce internal cohesion of a community. The transformation of a minority into a social enemy is performed by highlighting features of members of a subpopulation and associating these features with social, economic or political problems. It infers that immigrants are triggering or causing these problems (Tsoukala, 2005).

Much of the literature suggests that the terrorist attacks of 9/11 functioned as an accelerator for the securitization of migration. Karyotis (2007) studied the link between security and migration and argues that the terrorist attacks of September 11ᵗʰ, 2001 reinforced the securitization of migration in the United States. In Europe, the terrorist attacks in London and Madrid highlighted the threat flowing from migration (Ceccorulli, 2009). As a reaction, fighting terrorism has justified intruding measures (Bermejo, 2009) and resulted in frequent emphasis on border closure (Ceccorulli, 2009). The notion of terrorism as an "immaterial and non-identifiable threat that could travel with persons and menace the security of the Western World directly" (Ceccorulli, 2009, p. 10) has influenced European strategic planning. Countries have also become more aware of the importance of preventing radicalization and recruitment on European soil (Berjemo, 2009). Bermejo (2009) argues that the European discourse, which links immigration to security, has focused more on the 'individualization of threats'. This means that the efforts were focused on improving surveillance at points of entrance and borders. The author argues that this is a positive change compared to the discourse that refers to a rather undefined but threatening flow of immigrants.

Although terrorist attacks in the last decades might accelerated the process of securitization, the first European manifestations of the securitization of migration originate from the 1970s. Intergovernmental organizations, such as the 'Trevi Framework', were created to cooperate and combat undesired effects of immigration (Ceccorulli, 2009). Security became a driving force for cooperation in European intergovernmental Justice and Homes Security affairs (Karyotis, 2007). International developments, such as the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Yugoslavian conflict, the Bosnia-Herzegovina war and the Kosovo war, stimulated European institutional and legislative cooperation to protect the internal security (Ceccorulli, 2009). The enlargement of the European Union caused security concerns; accepting new member states from Eastern Europe diminished the distance to 'troubled regions' such as the Caucasus (Ceccorulli, 2009). All these developments contributed to the current European prescriptive norms on migration, which are incorporated into a security framework (Karyotis, 2007). Migration is approached from a strategic angle in Europe: it can impact stability and security. From a security perspective, the influx of immigrants should be controlled. However, principles to which the member states committed, such as family reunification and free movement of persons made it harder to control who crossed the borders (Ceccorulli, 2009). Ceyhan and Tsoukala (2002) notice that the securitization discourse in the European Union is often associated with 'Europeanization'. The main argument for this link is that the free movement of persons may make it harder to control who crosses the national borders, thereby causing a 'security deficit'. Therefore, borders are strengthened and more restrictive policies are adopted (Ceccorulli, 2009). Oezel (2015) showed how securitization in the European Union is related to globalization. The process of globalization increases the aspiration of governments to establish an identifiable internal 'safe-zone' within their borders. A line is drawn between the 'internal zone' and the 'disorderly outside'. Migration however, challenges this clear distinction. Therefore, many member states aim to prevent immigration (Oezel, 2015).

In 2010, Karyotis and Patrikios provided a first step to overcome the theoretical gap between public threat perception and rhetorical constructions, using a quantitative method. The authors believe there is an overemphasis on politics and too little attention for religious actors such as priests, in explaining the securitization frame. The authors chose Greece as a case study to explore the effect of religious elites on public threat perceptions. The results reveal that exposure to religious elites stimulates the securitization discourse and immunizes citizens from the mitigating effect of politics (Karyotis & Patrikios, 2010).

Referring to threat as a social construct, raises the question to what extent the threat posed by immigrants is 'real'. Karyotis (2007) argues that the threat is constructed by rhetorical political arguments that are repeated and emphasized by the media. For instance, crimes committed by immigrants receive more media-attention. Huymans (2001) argues that the cultural identity of natives and immigrants usually evolves harmoniously. Indeed, considering the ageing European society and falling birth rate, immigrants will be evidential to support the social security systems (Karyotis, 2007).

2.1.2 Axes

Current debates describe immigrants as a threat to the host country's society, economy, political stability and public order. Karyotis (2007) describes four axes around which the threat, as perceived by the public, evolves: the societal, economic, political and criminological axis.

Firstly, the societal axis relates to situations in which societies perceive immigrants as a threat to their identity (Karyotis, 2007). Societal security refers to "the ways in which members of a state perceive their cultural, linguistic, religious or national identity to be threatened by immigrants" (Tallmeister, 2013, p. 2). According to Ibrahim (2005), the use of cultural differences as a starting point for exclusion is a racist discourse. Ceyhan and Tsoukala (2002) notice an increasing focus on the 'identitarian level' and societal factors. Migration, culture and identity are linked by the perception of an immigrant as the 'cultural other' which disturbs cultural homogeneity in Western countries. The developed rhetoric strongly relates to a 'clash of civilizations' due to non-assimilability of immigrants and the incompatibility of different ways of life (Ceyhan and Tsoukala, 2002). As a result, immigrants are accused of an unwillingness to integrate into their host country. Differences are emphasized by fixed cultural constructions. Thereby, the threat to societal security is subjective and depends on the dominant rhetoric in a country. Canada for example has a strong pro-multiculturalism policy while Germany seems to support assimilative policies (Tallmeister, 2013).

Secondly, within the economic axis immigrants are perceived as a threat to economic stability because they would lower wages and create unemployment while also driving up housing prices due to increased demand (Karyotis, 2007). In addition, immigrants constitute a threat to the welfare state because they form an additional burden on the social security system (Karyotis, 2007). Immigrants are perceived as strangers that drain state's resources (Yuval-Davis, Anthias & Kofman, 2006). This link between welfare entitlements and nationality is called 'welfare chauvinism', meaning that only natives are entitled to welfare provisions (Huymans, 2000, p. 161). Immigrants are believed to illegitimately exploit the welfare system. Among public opinion it is often believed that immigrants contribute to economic problems (Tallmeister, 2013). According to Tallmeister (2013), perceived economic and societal security are strongly related. Moreover, Hainmueller and Hopkins (2014) show that there is a primacy of immigration-related cultural concerns over economic concerns.

Thirdly, the political axis assumes that immigrants aim to represent the interests of their country of origin and want to influence the policy process in the host country (Karyotis, 2007). This could be stimulated by mobilizing efforts of the government of the country of origin. Immigrants are perceived as invaders that want to 'take-over' the host country. Extreme right-wing parties, characterized by racist and xenophobic discourses, have gained support in Europe (Karyotis, 2007). It has influenced other political parties that fear to lose a part of their electoral basis (Ceyhan & Tsoukala, 2002). Governments want to show that they safeguard the interests of their electorates to preserve and increase support. In order to do so, representatives have to prevent coming across as 'too soft' on immigration (Karyotis, 2007).

The last axis, the criminological axis, is strongly related to the 'criminal migrant thesis' according to which immigrants form a threat to public order, in its extreme as terrorists (Karyotis, 2007). Immigrants are associated with illegal activities such as organized crime and drug trafficking. Restrictive immigration policies could be an instrument to safeguard internal security (Stoffman, 2008). Huymans (2000) showed that in several European treaties, such as the Convention of Dublin and the Schengen Agreement, immigration has been incorporated in the counter-terrorism agenda. The association between terrorism and immigration has influenced public opinion through media and the political discourse (Tallmeister, 2013). Caution is directed against all that seem different (Yuval-Davis et al., 2005). The criminal migrant thesis relies primarily on commonsensical arguments and statistical data and is supported by media and politicians. The overrepresentation of foreigners in European criminal-involvement rates is an argument that is often put forward by supporters (Ceyhan & Tsoukala, 2002).

2.2 Online political participation

Alongside the introduction of new technologies, political communication has entered a new phase. Traditional media, characterized by top-down and one-way communication have made way for new media, characterized by two-way communication. New media platforms enable citizens to play an active role in politics (Dobek-Ostrowska & Garlicki, 2013). Defiant members of the public can be stimulated to participate in the public discourse by sharing opinions and ideas. New technologies enable real-time communication. Social networking sites make it possible for receivers to become senders (Dobek-Ostrowska & Garlicki, 2013). Livingstone noticed this in 2004 and suggested that the internet initiated a change in the role of users, as it shifted to a participatory role contributing to content creation. The notion of active citizenship is often related to interactivity. New media offer prospects for citizens to contribute to the dialogue and become active agents within the government (Gane & Beer, 2008).

New media, including social media, have shown a rapid growth of user counts over the past few years. This has stimulated academic interest. By now, a substantive body of literature on new media and political communication has developed (see for example Bennett & Iyengar, 2008; Gurevitch, Coleman & Blumler, 2009; Dobek-Ostrowska & Garlicki, 2013). Since the United States presidential campaign of 2008, social media have become increasingly important for political communication, due to their ability to enable online discussions with voters (Stieglitz & Dang-Xuan, 2013). Stieglitz and Dang-Xuan (2013) refer to 'e-participation' to capture the notion of the internet as an instrument to create dialogs between the electorate and the elected. Related to that, a new concept is introduced: 'politics 2.0', that uses the internet to create more participatory and interactive political institutions (Karpf, 2009).

"Online political participation refers to all forms of involvement in which citizens express their political opinion and/or convey that opinion to political decision-makers through online communication tools" (Vissers & Stolle, 2014, p. 937). The repertoire of online platforms is broadened by social network sites, such as Facebook, and challenges researchers to make a clear distinction between levels of participation (Vochocová, Štětka & Mazák, 2016). The term 'online political expression' has emerged in response to this challenge. This refers to the public expression of political orientations and also encompasses activities such as sharing politically relevant comments (Vochocová et al., 2016). The 'e-expressive mode of participation' was introduced by Gibson and Cantijoch (2013) to address the use of social media to promote one's political opinions. Kushin and Kitchener (2009), for example, explored the use of Facebook for political discussions by citizens. They conclude that Facebook is a legitimate platform for discussion of political issues.

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2.3 Frame

The classical definition of framing as developed by Entman (1993) will be applied. A frame is made up of salience and selection. Framing means that one selects certain aspects of a perceived reality and makes these more salient in a communicating text, "in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendations for the item described" (Entman, 1993, p. 52). Communicators make conscious or unconscious judgements while deciding what to say or write, guided by frames that determine their belief systems. The communicating text reveals those frames, which can be recognized by the absence or presence of certain key-words or stereotyped images that reinforce judgements (Entman, 1993). In this study, the communicators are the respondents who react to the selected pictures through comments. The text of these comments will be analyzed to reveal the frames that organize their belief systems in relation to immigrants.

Frames, however, do not evolve in a vacuum. Citizens are influenced by each other, media sources and political elites. Frames are important for political communication (Entman, 1993). As Kaufman, Elliot and Shmueli (2003, p. 8) indicate, they have the ability to limit the quality of information and the clarity of communication and to instigate escalatory processes. Emphasizing certain aspects of reality influences the audience and thereby the public opinion. Politicians and journalists compete with each other on framing because it is a usefull resource to exert power (Entman, 1993). Kaufman and others (2003) argue that frames also interact: they reinforce, complement or compete. Therefore, it is likely that different frames will be found during the study. Although it is expected that the securitization frame will be dominant, there are also alternative discourses in relation to immigrants (Karyotis, 2007). These discourses emphasize the humanitarian aspects of migration or the economic or cultural value of immigrants, thereby stimulating compassion and empathy.

2.4 Region of origin

It is expected that the origin of respondents affects the likelihood to apply the securitization frame and the axes. Research on anti-immigrant attitudes across Europe showed regional differences and it is probable that these attitudes relate to the frames that citizens apply. It is often argued that the size of minority groups explains anti-immigrant sentiments (Quillian, 1995; Kunovich, 2004; Lahav, 2004; Semyonov, Raijman & Gorodzeisky, 2006; Meuleman et al., 2009). These sentiments are based on competition for both cultural hegemony as well as for economic opportunities (Quillian, 1995). Therefore, it is chosen to test the effects of two different kinds of regional categories: one kind based on cultural differences and the other one on economic differences. Both categorizations are described and explained (see table 1. for an overview of the division of countries).

Firstly, the cultural categorization distinguishes between Northern, Southern, Eastern and Western Europe. This division is based on results of former studies: Meuleman and others (2009), for example, notice that there seems to be a clear regional division among Europe in anti-immigrant sentiments: while citizens from Eastern and Southern Europe show relatively negative attitudes towards immigrants, citizens from Northern Europe - particularly Scandinavian countries - are relatively open towards immigrants. This is confirmed by a study conducted by Coenders and others (2005), according to which resistance to immigrants from outside the European Union is shared among people living in Eastern and Mediterranean Europe while people in Nordic countries prefer to disassociate themselves. The regional categories as developed by the United Nations (2016) offer a good starting point for the categorization of the member states. However, as these UN categories are solely based on geographic characteristics, some adjustment is required. For example, in order to single out the Scandinavian countries, the Baltic states Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania are re-categorized as 'Eastern Europe' instead of 'Northern Europe'. After all, the Baltic states share a history of Sovietization with the countries in Eastern Europe. These states are more often categorized as Eastern

Europe: the United Nations classifies these countries as being part of Eastern Europe politically, which is exemplified by the categorization of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management (Mingxia, 2014). The Baltic states are also placed in Eastern Europe by the CIA World Factbook (2017). The second adjustment requires the re-categorization of France from Western Europe to Southern Europe. The exact division between Western and Southern Europe can be found in Southern France; where the Mediterranean influence becomes dominant and manifests itself culturally (Jordan, 2006). Southern Europe comprises of Catholic and essentially Roman lands with seafaring traditions and Latin languages (Jordan, 2006). As these characteristics are applicable to France, this country will be categorized as Southern Europe. Lastly, as this study is primarily focused on frames through which European citizens perceive immigrants, only the member states are selected from the regions as developed by the United Nations. The regional categorization based on cultural differences will be referred to as the 'adjusted UN categories'.

The second regional categorization is based on economic differences and distinguishes between the PIIGS region, an economically leading region and an economically lagging region. Economic competition is put forward as an explanation for anti-immigrant sentiments (Quillian, 1995). This entails that immigrants are perceived as competitors for scarce resources. Quillian (1995) found that public discussion about immigration in Europe is closely tied to the state of the economy. During less prosperous times, immigrants may be the immediate scapegoat for the shortage of work. This is supported by a study conducted in 2006 by Semyonov and others. The European financial crisis has led to less prosperous times. Therefore, the economic differences will be derived from the effects of the financial crisis. The impact of the European financial crisis is characterized by bailouts, unemployment, banking bubbles and faulty investments and has mostly affected Southern nations (Esposito, Chatzimarkakis, Tse & Dimitriou, 2014). Esposito and others (2014) discuss several reasons that explain why Southern nations have experienced the most severe effects of the financial crisis. First of all, the introduction of the considerably Keynesian common monetary policy of the European Central Bank caused problems for Southern nations that traditionally used inflation to influence their competitive position. Therefore, the single currency is put forward as an underlying cause for too little competitiveness (Das, 2016). Secondly, a big part of manufacturing jobs disappeared to Asian countries. This forced the Southern nations to focus predominantly on service industries such as tourism (Esposito et al., 2014). Countries in Southern Europe (Malta excepted) and Ireland are sorted in the 'PIIGS region', characterized by relatively high government debt, an inability to afford bailouts while also being confronted with strict European spending measures. Although PIIGS originally referred to Portugal, Ireland, Italy, Greece and Spain, the category 'PIIGS region' will from now on refer to all countries that experienced similar effects of the crisis. Cyprus for example, followed in 2013, when the country made an agreement with the European Union for a ten billion euro bailout (CNN, 2017). France is also confronted with structural problems causing slow economic growth, growing unemployment and poor public finances. The GDP growth needs to be doubled in order to stabilize or reduce the debts (Das, 2016).

While the common European monetary policy came with increasing sovereign debt in Southern Europe, it has been aligned with economic growth in Northern Europe. Debt bubbles in Southern Europe were financed by Northern Europe. The situation is strikingly described by Esposito and others (2014, p. 2): "The north blames the south for overspending, and the south balks at crippling austerity measures and never-ending debt." The economically leading region; 'the rich north that finances other countries in the Union', refers to all countries in Western and Northern Europe (Ireland excepted). These countries have already achieved pre-crisis levels of competitiveness and dominate the rankings in the Competitive Index (Galvan, 2015).

Lastly, the economically lagging region generally includes countries in Eastern Europe. This region is confronted with the lowest Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the European Union (Eurostat Statistics, 2016). Due to the poor economic situation, youngsters emigrate to other richer regions in a pursue of better working conditions and employment opportunities. In addition, the birth rates are low. As a result, social welfare and pensions of the older generations are endangered (The Economist, 2017).

Table 1.

Visual display of regional categories

Adjusted UN regions	Countries	*Regions based on European financial crisis*	Countries
Southern Europe	- Cyprus - France - Greece - Italy - Malta - Portugal - Spain	PIIGS region	- Cyprus - France - Greece - Ireland - Italy - Portugal - Spain
Western Europe	- Austria - Belgium - Germany - Ireland - Luxembourg - Netherlands - United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	LEADING region	- Austria - Belgium - Denmark - Finland - Germany - Luxembourg - Malta - Netherlands - United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland - Sweden
Eastern Europe	- Bulgaria - Croatia - Czech Republic - Estonia - Hungary - Latvia - Lithuania - Poland - Romania - Slovakia - Slovenia	LAGGING region	- Bulgaria - Croatia - Czech Republic - Estonia - Hungary - Latvia - Lithuania - Poland - Romania - Slovakia - Slovenia
Northern Europe	- Denmark - Finland - Sweden		

2.5 The relationship between the demographic profiles and the securitization frame

The securitization frame, based upon perceived threat, is related to the group-threat theory (Valentova & Alieva, 2004). According to this theory, the dominant group perceives the outside group as a threat to its prerogatives. It is linked to prejudice and based on a sense of social position that leads to resources that exclusively belong to the dominant group. Perceiving the outside group as a threat serves the preservation of a group's prerogatives, resources, status and culture. The intensity of competition is determinative for the attitudes of individuals (Valentova & Alieva, 2004). The group dynamic is so strong that even individuals not directly affected by the outside group are just as likely to express prejudice towards members of the outside group as those whose interests are directly threatened (Huymans, 2011). The securitization frame is present within the practice of European elected politicians (Vuori, 2008; Huysmans, 2011). It has also been proven that the 'migrant-as-a-threat frame' is very popular in the media and that media-framing affects public opinion (Cheng, Igartua, Palacios, Acosta & Palito, 2014; Horsti, 2013; Roggeband & Vliegenthart, 2007). As such, it is expected that the negative securitization frame will be more prominent than the positive frame among respondents.

H1: A majority of the respondents will perceive immigrants through the negative securitization frame.

People develop a sense of threat within their economic and cultural environment (Quillian, 1995). These environments have changed differently over time across the European Union. The results of the European Social Survey (2016) also indicate regional differences with regard to immigrant-related concerns. Europeans are not united in their attitudes towards immigrants. Several studies have shown that regional differences in attitudes towards immigrants are present in Europe (Quillian, 1995; Coenders et al., 2005; Meuleman et al., 2009). It is probable that the frames through which respondents perceive immigrants relate to their attitudes. The securitization frame and axes can be regarded as the dependent variables and the demographic characteristics as the independent variables (see figure 1 for a visual display of the relationship between the variables).

H2: Differences in the usage of the securitization frame can be explained by region of origin.
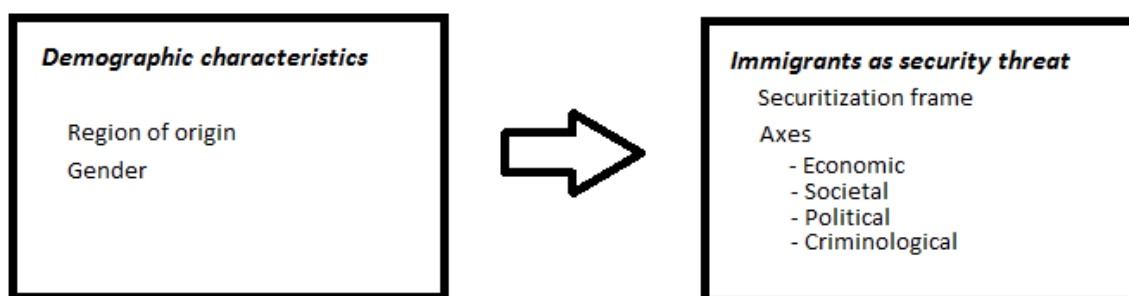
Figure 1. *Visual display of the relationship between the independent and the dependent variables*

Radical right-wing parties tend to be more attractive for male voters (Givens, 2004). Immigrant issues are focal points of radical right-wing parties (Givens, 2004). The presence of foreigners may trigger more votes for radical right parties. According to these parties, the cultural homogeneity and the job possibilities or wage levels of the natives living in the host country are threatened by immigrants (Givens, 2004). Since radical right parties are more attractive for male voters, it is expected that male respondents are more likely to apply the securitization frame than female respondents.

H3: Compared to female respondents, male respondents are more likely to use the securitization frame.

This is supported by the findings of Bridges and Mateut (2014), who demonstrate that European women are less likely to oppose to further immigration than men. Men are especially more opposed to immigrants of a different race while women are more concerned about the welfare provisions and jobs that immigrants might obtain (Dustmann & Preston, 2007). Valentova and Alieva (2004) suggest that these differences can be explained by the generally weaker position of women in the labor market and the related reliance on welfare provisions, compared to men. Based on the economic competition approach, women fear the impact of immigrants on these resources. Another potential explanation, suggested by Valentova and Alieva (2004), relates to the traditional role of women in families. As women generally dedicate more time to family responsibilities than men, women might be more focused on the security and safety of their children and families. This could result in more protectionist attitudes. Men are more concerned about the threat that the outside group poses to cultural homogeneity (Valentova & Alieva, 2004). Following this line of reasoning, it can be expected that:

H4: Compared to male respondents, female respondents are more likely to post comments that fit within the economic axis.

H5: Compared to female respondents, male respondents are more likely to post comments that fit within the societal axis.

Cultural marginality theory assumes that people are more likely to support anti-immigrant sentiments when it is difficult to relate to immigrants due to cultural, linguistic and historical differences (Paas & Halapuu, 2012). The group-threat theory assumes that members of a dominant group nurture prejudice towards a subordinate group, thereby contributing to a sense of group identity. This theory is strongly related to the societal axis. While reflecting upon cultural differences between immigrants and Europeans, some cultural manifestations could be perceived as restricting women's rights: the veil, for example, often worn by Muslim women, is considered an oppressive instrument by some feminists and non-feminists (Grech, 2014). This leads to the following expectation:

H6: Compared to male respondents, female respondents are more likely to post comments that fit within the societal axis.

The construction of a migration-related threat is built on policy, political and media discourses. The perception of a societal problem within a community is predominantly determined by political and public discourses (Ceyhan & Tsoukala, 2002). The way events are experienced depends on those discourses and turns political rhetoric into reality. The reality as presented by the media also influences public opinion (Ceyhan & Tsoukala, 2002). Based on the link between anti-immigration sentiments and right-wing political parties, it can be expected that regions in which these parties are rather popular, public opinion is influenced as well. The Populism Graph is a large, continuously updated database that tracks the popularity of populist parties in member states of the EU. It shows that the support for right-wing populism is the highest in Eastern Europe (see figure 1 in appendix A). In the extreme case of Hungary for example, the percentage of citizens supporting right-wing populism is up to 65 percent. In other countries in Eastern Europe such as Bulgaria, Estonia, Poland and Slovakia the support is also above average. Therefore, it can be expected that respondents from Eastern Europe will be more likely to use the securitization frame. In countries in Southern Europe on the contrary, France excepted, the support for right-wing populism is far below average. Cyprus, Malta, Portugal and Spain all score near to zero percent. It can therefore be expected that respondents from Southern Europe are less likely to use the securitization frame. These observations result in the following hypotheses:

H7: Compared to respondents from other regions, respondents from Southern Europe or the PIIGS region are less likely to use the securitization frame.

H8: Compared to respondents from other regions, respondents from Eastern Europe or the lagging region will be more likely to use the securitization frame.

Quillian (1995) was one of the first who conducted cross-comparative research within European countries to establish the reasons for anti-immigrant sentiments. He found that the perceived threat is caused by an increasing size of minority groups, as it stimulates feelings of competition for cultural hegemony. This is supported by studies conducted by Kunovich (2004), Lahav (2004) and Semyonov and others (2006). The results demonstrated the effect of the immigrant population size on prejudicial attitudes. Based upon the foreign-born population ratios (see table 1 in appendix B), as provided by Eurostat Statistics (2016a), one can tell that foreigners born in non-member states represent the highest percentages of the population in countries in Northern and Western Europe. Nevertheless, the major influx of immigrants at the Mediterranean shores could trigger anti-immigrant sentiments as well. Hammond (2015, p. 2) illustrates this influx by stating: "Given its geographic position as the hub between Europe, Africa, and Asia, the Mediterranean is particularly sensitive to the world's highest numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons since World War II." So, although most immigrants do not intent to stay in Southern Europe, they do arrive there (Hammond, 2015). Foreigners born in non-member states represent the lowest percentages of the population in countries in Eastern Europe. Therefore, it is expected that respondents from Northern, Western and Southern Europe will be more likely to post comments that fit within the societal axis than respondents from Eastern Europe.

H9: Compared to respondents from other regions, respondents from Eastern Europe or the lagging region are less likely to post comments that fit within the societal axis.

Economic competition provides another explanation for anti-immigrant attitudes (Quillian, 1995). Competing for scarce resources, such as jobs and welfare provisions, might trigger anti-immigrant sentiments. This is supported by studies done by Kunovich (2004) and Coenders and others (2004). Both Kunovich (2004) and Coenders and others (2004) found that economic conditions affect discriminatory attitudes in European countries, with prejudice and exclusionary attitudes being more widespread in areas with poor economic conditions. The GDP can indicate the presence of economic competition (Quillian, 1995). Individuals living in regions with a higher GDP are likely to be less anti-immigrant, as there are often more employment opportunities in these regions (Rustenbach, 2010). Based on the theory of economic competition, it is expected that respondents from the region with the lowest GDP have the most negative view on immigrants, whereas respondents from a region with the highest GDP will express themselves less negatively. Based upon the GDP at current market prices (see table 2 in appendix C) of countries in the European Union, as provided by Eurostat Statistics (2016), it can be expected that:

H10: Compared to respondents from other regions, respondents from Eastern Europe or the lagging region will be more likely to post comments that fit within the economic axis.

H11: Compared to respondents from other regions, respondents from Western Europe, Northern Europe or the leading region will be less likely to post comments that fit within the economic axis.

H12: Compared to respondents from Eastern Europe or the lagging region, respondents from Southern Europe or the PIIGS region will be more likely to post comments that fit within the economic axis.

Another theory, strongly related to the criminological axis, is the criminal migrant thesis. This proposition associates immigrants with criminal activities and has been encouraged by negative media attention and populist rhetoric (Karyotis, 2007). The strongest argument of supporters is related to the overrepresentation of foreigners in European crime involvement rates (Ceyhan & Tsoukala, 2002). Therefore, following Melossi (2003), the 'Space I' report of the European Council (2016) on annual penal statistics will be used, which shows the percentages of foreign inmates in member states of the European Union (see table 3 in appendix D). Both Western and Southern Europe have a relatively high percentage of foreigners in penal institutions. The average is 22.6% and both regions score close to 35.0%. In Eastern Europe, on the contrary, the percentage of foreign inmates is below average. This leads to the following expectations:

H13: Compared to respondents from other regions, respondents from Western and Southern Europe or the leading region and the PIIGS region will be more likely to post comments that fit within the criminological axis.

H14: Compared to respondents from other regions, respondents from Eastern Europe or the lagging region will be less likely to post comments that fit within the criminological axis.

Groenendijk (2008) studied the voting rights of non-nationals in Europe. In his paper, he covers 29 European states and discusses the allowed political participation of non-nationals. Most countries in Northern Europe allow non-nationals to vote in regional and national elections and to stand as candidates in municipal elections. Most countries in Southern Europe, on the contrary, do not allocate any voting rights (passive or active) to non-nationals (Groenendijk, 2008). Granting voting rights to non-nationals provides the opportunity to influence the political process. Therefore, there may be a risk that non-nationals represent the interests of their home country. Following this line of reasoning, the following hypotheses can be formulated:

H15: Compared to respondents from other regions, respondents from Northern Europe or the leading region will be more likely to post comments that fit within the political axis.

H16: Compared to respondents from other regions, respondents from Southern Europe or the PIIGS region will be less likely to post comments that fit within the political axis.

A statement regarding the applicability of the securitization frame and the axes to the respondents, necessitates some sort of categorization of the respondents to which these are not applicable. Therefore, all respondents that reveal a frame in relation to immigrants are either categorized as revealing a positive frame or as revealing the securitization frame. Including a positive category in the analyses enables more inclusive categorization and a richer description of the collected data. Some respondents might reveal no frame in relation to immigrants. This group will be coded as neutral and later be excluded from the analyses.

Therefore, three groups of respondents will be distinguished in the analyses: (1) respondents who perceive immigrants as a threat, (2) respondents who perceive immigrants through a positive frame and (3) respondents who do not reveal a frame in their comments. In addition, the demographic characteristics 'gender and region of origin' will be collected to see whether they explain the usage of the securitization frame and axes. The analyses contain of four steps:

1. Does the respondent reveal a frame in relation to immigrants?
2. Does the respondent reveal the securitization frame or a positive frame?
3. Can the respondent be placed within an axis?
4. Can the usage of the securitization frame and the axis be explained by the region of origin or gender of the respondent?

To extract region of origin and gender from the Facebook accounts of respondents, the following indicators will be important: the name of the respondent, the language in which the respondent writes, the sections 'intro' and 'info', the content that a person shares on his or hers timeline, reviews and Facebook groups he or she is part of[2]. In table 2, the indictors of both the broad securitization frame through which immigrants are perceived as a threat and the specific axes are summarized.

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[2] See the codebook for content analysis for a more detailed explanation.

Table 2.

Immigrants as a security threat, indicators in the comments

Immigrants as a security threat	Indicators in the comments
The general securitization frame	Respondents that express feelings of perceived threat, referring to immigrants as: • Unwanted • Threatening
Societal axis	Immigrants discussed in light of the host country's: • Identity • Culture • Religion
Economic axis	Immigrants discussed in light of the host country's: • Economic stability • Wages • Employment • Welfare state
Political axis	Immigrants discussed with regard to: • Representation of interests of the government of country of origin • Influence on the policy process in the host country • Invasion of the host country
Criminological axis	Immigrants discussed with regard to: • Criminality • The public order of the host country • Terrorism • Illegality

4.1 Desk study: content analysis & multinomial regression analysis

The applied research strategy is desk study, which involves research based on existing material. The comments posted on the Facebook page of the European Parliament are collected and analyzed. In this study, content analysis has been applied to establish the frames through which European citizens perceive immigrants (see the codebook for a more detailed description). In addition, multinomial logistic regressions are performed to show the different relations between the variables. Statistical analyses are performed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS version 21.0). All pictures with accompanying text, which related to European migration and received at least one hundred comments were selected and pooled. The aim has been to select the most recent comments; therefore images from up to one year ago are used (from March 2016 up to and including March 2017).

4.1.1 Content analysis

Based upon the selection criteria, seven pictures which received 895 comments from 643 respondents were collected. As this study aims to reveal the frames through which the respondents perceive immigrants, the analyses are person-based. This means that even though 20.4% of all European respondents posted more than one comment, only one frame per person is selected. The selected frame is based on the emphasize in the comments. If a respondent perceived immigrants through the securitization frame and gave arguments to support its view, he or she could also be placed within an axis. Again, each respondent can be placed within only one axis, which' selection is based on the emphasize in the comments. Studying the Facebook accounts of the respondents made it possible to code gender and region of origin. A respondent could be coded as revealing the securitization frame, revealing a positive discourse or as revealing no frame at all.

The respondents who were coded as perceiving immigrants through the securitization frame revealed 'threat perceptions' in their comments. This would be manifested in expressions in favour of more restrictive immigration policies, such as in Australia (which sets relatively high demands towards immigrants). Another recurring commentary entails the 'Europeans first' argument, which shows the perception that immigrants unjustly receive a preferential treatment. Expressions of negative attitudes towards immigrants have been used before as an indicator of the securitization frame (see Karyotis & Patrikios, 2010). On the contrary, the respondents who were coded as revealing a positive frame showed empathy towards immigrants. Respondents would, for example, express their preference for a more flexible immigration policy or discuss the suffering of immigrants. Another indication of empathy is the expression of disgust with regard to racist or xenophobic comments of other respondents. Neutral respondents did not reveal a clear frame through which immigrants are perceived. Because these respondents did not discuss immigrants or discussed them without revealing a frame, they are irrelevant for this study and excluded from the analyses.

If respondents provided arguments to support their negative perceptions in relation to immigrants, they were also coded on one of the four axes as described by Karyotis (2007). Economic arguments in relation to immigrants would often refer to 'stealing jobs or houses' or the 'the drainage of state resources'. Societal arguments revolved around cultural and religious differences. Political arguments would usually refer to immigrants as invaders who want to 'take-over' the host country. Lastly, criminological arguments referred to immigrants as criminals of any sort. People would refer to immigrants as fraudsters, rapists and terrorists.

Because it was noticed that many people expressed their discontent with the European Union in their comments, a category for 'EU-critics' among respondents was added. As mentioned when discussing the societal relevance, resistance against immigrants played a major role in the Brexit (Inglehart & Norris, 2016). Both positive and negative respondents often disagreed with the way the Union responds to the migration crisis or even blamed Europe for the crisis: they often discussed the

bombing by member states in the Middle East. Respondents felt like the Parliament did not listen to their needs. Another observation involves recurring allegations of corruption towards the Union.

4.1.2 Multinomial logistic regression

Multinomial logistic regression models will be used to test the effects of region of origin and gender on the usage of the securitization frame and the axes. To test if gender moderates the relationship of region of origin on the usage of the securitization frame, interaction terms are added. To control if other possible factors could influence the usage of the securitization frame, a control variable is included as well. The multinomial logistic regression model is applied multiple times. It will be used to determine the effect of the demographic factors on both the usage of the general securitization frame and the usage of the arguments that fit within the axes as described by Karyotis (2007). The regressions will be repeated for both the cultural and economic regional categorizations, to check whether this gives different results. All variables are described in table 3. Table 4 shows the analysis framework, that served as a guide during the multinomial regression analyses.

Dependent and independent variables
In the first series of regressions, 'the securitization frame' is the dependent variable that takes value 1 if a respondent revealed the securitization frame and 0 if a respondent applied the positive frame. In the second series, that involve the more fine-grid regressions, the 'axes' are the dependent variable. This variable takes value 1 till 4 for the different axes.

Gender is the first independent variable and takes value 0 for male and 1 for female. Prior studies indicate gender differences in attitudes towards immigrants (Bridges & Mateut, 2014; Dustmann & Preston, 2007). These differences are derived from voting behavior, economic competition and traditional roles (Valentova & Alieva, 2004). Therefore, it is expected that differences in the usage of the securitization frame and axes can be explained by gender.

Region of origin is the other independent and potential explanatory variable. The European Social Survey (2016) indicates regional differences in relation to concerns on immigrants. Several authors found regional differences in attitudes towards immigrants (Quillian, 1995; Coenders et al., 2005; Meuleman et al., 2009). Two kinds of regional categories will be tested: one based on potential cultural competition and the other one based on potential economic competition. During the literature review, several specific hypotheses are formulated based on potential indicators (support for political right-wing populism, the criminal migrant thesis, voting rights, etc.) for the usage of the axes. It is therefore expected that differences in the usage of the securitization frame and axes can be explained by region of origin.

Control variables
The variable Turkey_Image is the first control variable. It is coded 1, if the respondent posted a comment at this image. Although it is one of the pictures on the Facebook page of the European Parliament that meets the selection criteria, it is different from the other images. While all other pictures show immigrants, this one shows the flag of Turkey. Respondents who post comments on this picture are therefore expected to reveal the securitization frame less frequently than the respondents who comment on other pictures. In order to reveal a potential interaction effect, the variable 'Region_Gender' is also included. If significant results are found, interaction terms will be added in new models to control for the moderating effect of gender on region of origin. The empirical model that applies to the regression of the securitization frame is the following (in which region of origin can be either the UN_Regions or FC_Regions):

Negative = α + β_1Gender + β_2Regionoforigin + β_3Regionoforigin x Gender + β_4Turkey_Image + ε

Table 3.

Description of the variables

Variable	Description
Negative / Securitization frame	Describes the presence of the securitization frame. Dummy variable that is coded 1 if the respondent reveals the securitization frame and 0 if the respondent reveals the positive frame.
Axes	Describes whether respondents could be placed within the axes. Composite variable that takes 1 for the economic axis, 2 for the societal axis, 3 for the political axis, 4 the criminological axis.
Gender	Describes whether a respondent is male or female. Composite variable that takes value 0 if the respondent is male and 1 if the respondent is female.
UN_Regions	Describes from which region a respondent originates according to the adjusted UN regions. Composite variable that takes value 1 if the respondent is from Southern Europe, 2 for Eastern Europe, 3 for Northern Europe and 4 for Western Europe.
FC_Regions	Describes from which region a respondent originates according to the regions based on the effects of the financial crisis. Composite variable that takes value 1 if the respondent is from the PIIGS region, 2 for the lagging region and 3 for the leading region.
Control variables	
Turkey_Image	Describes whether a respondent commented on the image that showed the flag of Turkey. Dummy variable that takes 1 if the respondent did and 0 if the respondent did not.
Region_gender	Describes whether a respondent is from a specific region and is male. Dummy variable that takes 1 if the respondent is and 0 if not. The specific region depends on whether or not significant results are found.

Table 4.

Analysis framework

	Securitization frame	Axes
UN_Regions		
FC_Regions		
Gender		

4.2 Reliability and validity

The inter-coder reliability is assessed: a protocol is drafted in which definitions and rules applied during the coding are laid down. After a three-hours training based on the coding protocol, an independent coder has coded a sample of 10% of the collected data. The selected measurement coefficient is the Krippendorff's alpha. The results of the test have shown that the reliability scores of the variables are above the accepted standard: gender (α = 1), region of origin (α = 0.91), positive frame (α = 0.84), securitization frame (α = 0.88), critical towards the European Union (α = 0.87), neutral (a = 0.86), economic axis (α = 0.90), societal axis (α = 0.92), political axis (no result because the selected sample did not include respondents that could be placed within the political axis) and the criminological axis (α = 0.90). Furthermore, taking all different indicators (as summed up in chapter 3) into account to extract region of origin and gender has contributed to the accuracy of the results.

Considering the internal validity of the research, an image that could cause variability in the results has been incorporated in the form of a control variable. As such, the potential influence could be taken into account when interpreting the results. The comments on the Facebook page of the European Parliament are the right source to 'measure what should be measured', as they provide relatively unconstrained expressions of opinions that offer an unique insight into the frames through which European citizens perceive immigrants. In addition, the comments are placed by citizens from all over the European Union, which made it possible to test region of origin as an explanatory factor. Lastly, respondents commented on the immigration-related pictures because they wanted to share a specific item or concern, which made it very likely that frames were found.

5. RESULTS

5.1 Descriptive statistics

The dataset consists of 643 respondents: 163 female, 473 male and 7 whose gender remains unknown. An initial observation, based upon this distribution, is that men comment more often on the selected images than women. This infers that men are more likely to participate in online political communication with the European Parliament to share their point of view on immigration-related topics.

27.1% of the respondents originate from Southern Europe, 23.8% from Eastern Europe, 24.0% from Western Europe and 4.5% from Northern Europe. The small percentage of respondents from Northern Europe can be explained by the fact that this category consists of only three countries. When this distribution is translated to the regional categories that are based on the effects of the financial crisis, 28.3% of the respondents originate from the PIIGS region, 23.8% from the lagging region and 27.2% from the leading region. The small differences between the regional categories are resembled in the percentages. Aside from the respondents who are categorized as European, the origin of 4.2% of the respondents remains unknown and 16.5% of the respondents originate from countries outside the European Union (see figure 2 for a visual display of region of origin of both regional categories). Considering the intention of the European Parliament to interact online with European citizens and represent their interests, it is rather surprising that a considerable percentage of the respondents originate from non-European countries. 27.3% of these respondents also criticized the European Union. This is a relatively low percentage compared to critical Europeans (37.6%). Nevertheless, Europeans are directly affected by European policies and thereby seem more likely to express their (critical) thoughts while respondents from non-European countries seem more likely to have an indirect interest in European policy making.

Adjusted UN regions
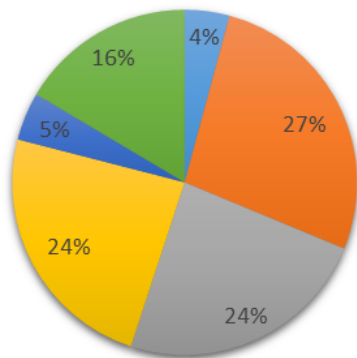
Regions based of the impact of the finan. crisis
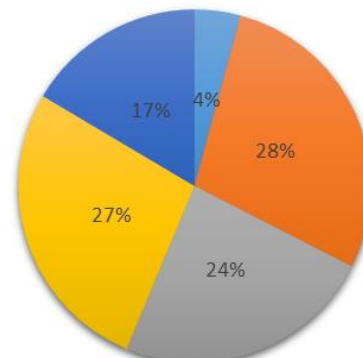
Figure 2. *Visual display of the distribution of the respondents according to region of origin*

Respondents could either perceive immigrants through the securitization frame or through a positive frame. All respondents who did not reveal a frame in their comments were categorized in a residual group. People in this residual group would either not relate to the topic or relate to the topic without revealing a clear frame in relation to immigrants. Therefore, the residual group includes all respondents who were irrelevant for the purpose of this study. Of all European respondents, 37.6% perceived immigrants through the securitization frame and 15.7% through a positive frame. The

remaining 46.7% of the European respondents revealed no frame at all. This shows that a majority of all respondents did not reveal the securitization frame in their comments. Instead, they gave suggestions, criticized the European Union, placed spam comments or referred to domestic politics in their comments. Because the majority of respondents did not reveal the securitization frame, H1 is not confirmed. Considering the results of the Eurobarometer (11/2016), as discussed in the introduction, this is an unexpected finding. However, the majority of the respondents who did reveal a frame in their comments, applied the securitization frame.

As discussed above, it was noted that a substantial number of the respondents expressed discontent with the European Union in their comments. Therefore, the category 'CritiqueEU' has been introduced. Overall, 37.6% of all European respondents criticized the European Union in their comments. Figure 3 depicts what percentage of the positive, negative and residual respondents were critical towards the European Union. One observation is that the respondents who perceived immigrants through a positive frame, were least often critical towards the European Union. Almost half of the respondents in the residual group were critical towards the European Union, which can be explained by the nature of their comments. It was observed during data collection that many people did not respond to the topic but solely used the communication tool to express their discontent with institutions of the European Union or the European Union in general.
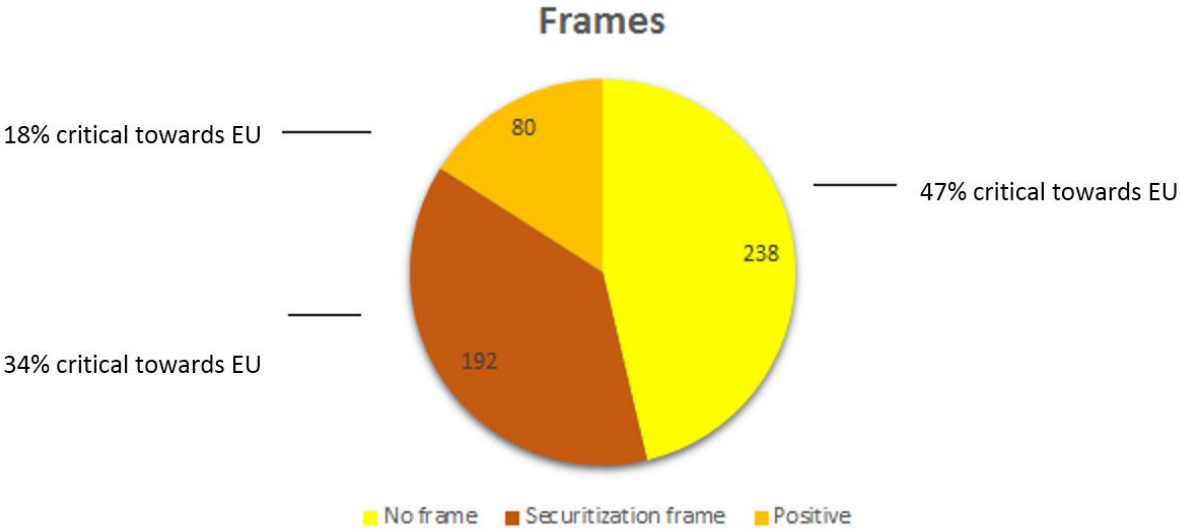
Figure 3. *Frame through which European respondents perceive immigrants and the percentage of critical respondents by category*

Out of the European respondents who perceived immigrants through the securitization frame, only 88 gave arguments in their comments that made it able to place them within the axes: 22 respondents could be placed on the economic axis, 29 on the societal axis, 5 on the political axis and 32 on the criminological axis. Therefore, another observation is that the people who perceived immigrants through the securitization frame, generally did not explain why. However, among those who did motivate their statements, the criminological arguments were most frequently used. The results also reflect the primacy of immigration-related cultural concerns over economic concerns, as described by Hainmueller and Hopkins (2014).

5.1.1 Gender differences

The descriptive statistics show the first gender differences. Of all European female respondents, 44.4% originated from Southern Europe (42.9% from the PIIGS region), 23.0% from Eastern Europe (same for the lagging region), 26.2% from Western Europe and 6.3% from Northern Europe (34.1% from the leading region). Moreover, 34.1% of the female respondents revealed the securitization frame, 23.8% revealed a positive frame and 32.5% criticized the European Union in their comments. Furthermore, a part of the female respondents could be placed within the axes; 4.0% could be placed on the economic axis, 4.0% on the societal axis, 0.8% on the political axis and 5.6% on the criminological axis.

Of all European male respondents, 30.7% originated from Southern Europe (33.3% from the PIIGS region), 32.3% from Eastern Europe (same for the lagging region), 31.5% from Western Europe and 5.5% from Northern Europe (34.4% from the leading region). Moreover, 38.8% of the male respondents revealed the securitization frame, 13.0% revealed a positive frame and 39.3% expressed criticism on the European Union. Furthermore, a part of the male respondents could be placed within the axes; 4.4% could be placed on the economic axis, 6.3% on the societal axis, 1.0% on the political axis and 6.5% on the criminological axis.

When comparing these percentages, some observations can be made. Whereas most of the female respondents are from Southern Europe or the PIIGS region, relatively most male respondents originate from Eastern Europe or the lagging region. Furthermore, relatively more men than women revealed the negative securitization frame but the difference is quite small. The two-proportions Z-test is appropriate to conclude whether these results differ significantly. The test is based on three assumptions: the samples must be independent, large enough and randomly selected (Nieuwenhuis, 2009). Because the categories of these variables are mutually exclusive, meaning that no male respondent can be categorized as a female respondent and no positive respondent as a negative respondent, the samples are independent. In addition, the samples are large enough (size of each sample × population proportion > 5). The last assumption is not met: because the respondents are self-selected, they do not represent a 'random sample of European citizens in general'. This has consequences for the generalizability of the result of the two-proportions Z-test: it represents the proportions of European citizens that actively engage with the European Parliament on Facebook on the topic of migration. The two proportions Z-test shows that there is a significant gender difference in the usage of the securitization frame among European respondents (Z = -2.56, p = 0.01). Male respondents are statistically significantly more likely to perceive immigrants through the securitization frame while female respondents are relatively more positive. Therefore, in accordance with the results of the study conducted by Bridges and Mateut (2014), H3 is confirmed. In addition, male respondents have expressed themselves critically towards the European Union slightly more often than female respondents. However, the two proportions Z-test shows there is no significant difference in the critical attitudes towards the European Union between male and female respondents (Z = -1.36, p = 0.17).

As the frequencies were too small to apply the two proportions Z-tests to the axes, the Fisher's exact test was applied. However, none of the gender differences between the proportions were statistically significant. Female respondents were most often placed within the criminological axis while male respondents were most often placed within the societal axis. Based upon this observation it seems reasonable to conclude that the societal and criminological axis were the most prominent among the axes. However, as the percentages indicate, the part of respondents who could be placed on any axis at all was relatively small.

5.1.2 Regional differences

The regional differences are summarized in table 5. The last row represents the percentages that concern the European Union overall. The individual regions can be compared to this baseline. While respondents from Northern and Western Europe show quite similar regional distributions compared to all European respondents, respondents from Eastern Europe or Southern Europe deviate on several aspects. The regional distribution based on the economic categories (PIIGS, lagging, leading) seems to have a moderating effect on these differences.

Firstly, while Northern Europe and Western Europe show quite similar gender ratios (when compared to the baseline), the ratios from the Southern and Eastern regions differ relatively much. Southern Europe or the PIIGS region represent a high percentage of female respondents, while Eastern Europe or the lagging region shows an overrepresentation of male respondents.

Secondly, whereas only 37.6% of all European respondents perceive immigrants through the negative securitization frame, 55.6% of the respondents from Eastern Europe or the lagging region applied this frame. On the contrary, only 21.8% - 24.2% of the respondents from Southern Europe or the PIIGS region perceived immigrants as a threat.

Thirdly, a notable observation is that Northern Europe has a relatively high percentage of respondents who are placed on the criminological axis (17.2%) and a low percentage of respondents who are placed on the political axis (0.0%). A relatively high percentage of the respondents from the PIIGS region however, are placed on the political axis (1.6%) and Southern Europe has a low percentage of respondents who are placed on the criminological axis (2.3%).

Lastly, while respondents from Eastern and Northern Europe revealed the positive frame least often, respondents from Southern Europe or the PIIGS region revealed it most frequently. Considering that the regions showed opposite results on the negative securitization frame, these results seem plausible. Respondents from Southern Europe or the PIIGS region criticized the European Union the most frequent, while respondents from Eastern Europe or the lagging region were relatively the least critical.

Table 5.
Regional distribution of the respondents on the frames and axes

	Female	Male	Secur.	Econ.	Soc.	Pol.	Crim.	Pos.	Critiq.
UN_Regions									
Southern	32.2%	67.8%	21.8%	2.9%	4.0%	1.1%	2.3%	23.6%	46.0%
Eastern	19.0%	81.0%	55.6%	5.2%	7.8%	1.3%	6.5%	4.6%	28.1%
Western	21.4%	78.6%	38.3%	5.2%	5.2%	0.6%	8.4%	20.1%	36.4%
Northern	27.6%	72.4%	34.5%	3.4%	6.9%	0.0%	17.2%	3.4%	44.8%
FC_Regions									
PIIGS	29.7%	70.3%	24.2%	3.3%	6.0%	1.6%	2.2%	23.1 %	44.0%
LEADING	24.6%	75.4%	36.0%	4.6%	3.4%	0.0%	10.3%	17.7%	39.4%
EU	24.7%	75.3%	37.6%	4.3%	5.7%	1.0%	6.3%	15.7%	37.6%

In this section, the correlations between the variables will be analyzed. Since all variables are nominal variables, Cramér's V is an appropriate association measure. However, Cramér's V is a number between 0 and 1 and, therefore, it only indicates the strength of the association and not the direction (positive or negative). Another association measure is Pearson's correlation coefficient. Although this coefficient is used to measure the relationship between variables at the interval or ratio level, it is also applicable to binary data (also referred to as the phi coefficient) (Kaltenhauser & Lee, 1976; Gravetter & Wallnau, 2013). The advantage of Pearson's correlation coefficient compared to Cramér's V, is that it shows both the direction and strength of the relationship between the variables. In the case of dummy variables, Cramér's V is just the absolute value of the Pearson's correlation coefficient. However, neither measure demonstrates a causal relationship (De Vocht, 2014).

5.2.1 Results adjusted UN regions

The correlation matrix that included the adjusted United Nations regions shows some significant correlations between the regions and the securitization frame and axes (see the results in table 6 & 7). Moreover, there is a negative correlation between the securitization frame and respondents from Southern Europe (p = 0.00). This implies that respondents from Southern Europe applied the securitization frame less frequently than respondents from other regions. On the contrary, there is a relatively strong positive correlation between the securitization frame and respondents from Eastern Europe (p = 0.00). This shows that the respondents from Eastern Europe perceived immigrants through the securitization frame more often than respondents from other regions. Considering the axes, there is a positive correlation between the criminological axis and respondents from Northern Europe (p = 0.01). Additionally, there is a negative correlation between the criminological axis and respondents from Southern Europe (p = 0.02).

Other correlations that relate to the different regions refer to the positive frame, the critique towards the European Union, the respondents who commented on the picture of the Turkish flag and gender.

Respondents from Southern Europe are positively correlated to the positive frame (p = 0.00) and critique on the European Union (p = 0.00). There is also a relatively weak positive correlation between respondents from Southern Europe and female respondents (p = 0.02). In addition, there is a weak positive correlation between female respondents and the positive frame (p = 0.00). These results can be interpreted, using the regional distributions, as described above. It is possible that because there are relatively more female respondents in Southern Europe, and women perceive immigrants generally more often through a positive frame, the region correlates positively with the positive frame.

On the contrary, respondents from Eastern Europe are negatively correlated to the positive frame (p = 0.00) and weakly negatively correlated to critique towards the European Union (p = 0.03). There is also a negative correlation between respondents from Eastern Europe and comments on the image of the Turkish flag (p = 0.00). In addition, respondents from Eastern Europe correlate positively to male respondents (p = 0.03). The same line of reasoning applies for this region: it is possible that because there are relatively more male respondents in Eastern Europe, and men perceive immigrants generally more often through the securitization frame, the region correlates negatively with the positive frame.

Moreover, there is a negative correlation between the respondents who placed comments on the image of the flag of Turkey and the securitization frame (p = 0.00). There is also a negative correlation between the positive frame and respondents who commented on that picture (p = 0.01). Nevertheless, the image of the flag correlates positively with respondents who criticized the European Union (p = 0.00). This indicates that respondents who commented on the image of the Turkish flag were less likely to reveal a frame. The image of the flag triggered more critical reactions towards the

European Union. Considering the widespread criticism that has been expressed on the Turkey deal as a solution to the European migration crisis (Tunali, 2015), these results are not surprising. Out of all axes, the positive correlations between the securitization frame and the societal (p = 0.00) and criminological axes (p = 0.00) are the strongest. This is not surprising as these axes were most popular among the respondents.

5.2.2 Results regions based on the effects of the financial crisis

This paragraph discusses the results of the separate correlation matrix that included the regions based on the effects of the financial crisis in the European Union (see the results in table 8 & 9).

The results show that respondents from the PIIGS region correlate negatively with the securitization frame (p = 0.00). There is also a negative correlation between the criminological axis and the respondents from the PIIGS region (p = 0.02). On the contrary, a positive correlation between the positive frame and the respondents from the PIIGS region is present (p = 0.00). There is also a positive correlation between the critical comments on the European Union and the respondents from the PIIGS region (p = 0.01). Lastly, a positive correlation between the criminological axis and the leading region was found (p = 0.00). The other correlations remained the same.

5.2.3 Comparison between the correlation results

Although most correlations remained the same, there were some differences present in the results of the two correlation matrixes.

First of all, the negative correlation between the securitization frame and the respondents from the PIIGS region is weaker than the correlation between the securitization frame and respondents from Southern Europe. On the contrary, the negative correlation between the criminological axis and the respondents from the PIIGS region is slightly stronger than the correlation between the criminological axis and the respondents from Southern Europe. The correlation between the respondents from the PIIGS region and the positive frame is slightly weaker than the correlation between respondents from Southern Europe and the positive frame. Furthermore, there is a significant correlation between gender and the respondents from Southern Europe, which was not found between gender and the PIIGS region. The correlation between the PIIGS region and the critical comments on the European Union is slightly weaker than the correlation between Southern Europe and the critical comments. These differences imply that the few countries that are different in these categories, such as Malta and Ireland, cause the correlation between gender and this region to be no longer significant. Therefore, the additional respondents must have been mainly men. Furthermore, the additional respondents must have perceived immigrants more often as a threat, thereby giving arguments that placed them on the criminological axis. The additional respondents, however, were less often critical towards the European Union, thereby weakening that correlation.

The results for the Eastern region/ the lagging region remained the same, as these categories consist of the same countries. Lastly, the correlation between the criminological axis and the leading region is slightly stronger than the correlation between Northern Europe and this axis. This indicates the small contribution that the respondents from Western Europe made to the correlation.

Based upon the descriptive statistics in general, it can be concluded that respondents from Eastern Europe/ the lagging region have applied the securitization frame most frequently, while the respondents from Southern Europe applied the positive frame most often. Furthermore, respondents from the leading region applied the criminological axis most frequently. In addition, gender seems to be a decisive factor in applying the positive frame and respondents that have commented on the image of the Turkish flag were relatively more likely to be critical towards the European Union and less likely to reveal a frame. Lastly, all potential interaction variables were included in a separate correlation matrix to control for multicollinearity problems. As R < 0.9 for all correlations, no multicollinearity problems were found (De Vocht, 2014).

Table 6.

Results correlation matrix based on the adjusted UN regions.

	Secur.	Eco.	Soc.	Pol.	Crim.	Male	S-EU	E-EU	N-EU
Secur.	1								
Eco.	0.28**	1							
Soc.	0.33**	-0.05	1						
Pol.	0.12**	-0.02	-0.02	1					
Crim.	0.33**	-0.05	-0.06	-0.02*	1				
Male	0.02	-0.02	0.04	0.01	0.01	1			
S-EU	- 0.16**	-0.04	-0.05	0.03	-0.09*	-0.9*	1		
E-EU	0.25**	0.03	0.05	0.03	0.02	0.09*	-0.35**	1	
N-EU	0.00	-0.00	0.01	-0.02	0.11**	-0.01	-0.13**	-0.12**	1
W-EU	0.05	0.03	-0.02	-0.01	0.07	0.05	-0.35**	-0.32*	-0.12**

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

Table 7.

Results correlation matrix based on the adjusted UN regions.

	Secur.	Pos.	Critiq.	Tur. flag	Male	S-EU	E-EU	N-EU
Secur.	1							
Pos.	-0.32**	1						
Critiq.	-0.02	-0.15**	1					
Tur.im	-0.15**	-0.10*	0.11**	1				
Male	0.02	-0.14**	0.03	0.02	1			
S-EU	-0.16**	0.13**	0.13**	0.06	-0.09*	1		
E-EU	0.25**	-0.18**	-0.09*	-0.13**	0.09*	-0.35**	1	
N-EU	-0.00	-0.08	0.04	0.05	-0.01	-0.13**	-0.12**	1
W-EU	0.05	0.06	0.01	-0.01	0.05	-0.35**	-0.32**	-0.12**

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

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Table 8.

Results correlation matrix based on the regions centered around the impact of the financial crisis.

	Secur.	Eco.	Soc.	Pol.	Crim.	Male	PIIGS	Lagg	Lead
Secur.	1								
Eco.	0.28**	1							
Soc.	0.33**	-0.05	1						
Pol.	0.12**	-0.02	-0.02	1					
Crim.	0.33**	-0.05	-0.06	-0.02*	1				
Male	0.02	-0.02	0.04	0.01	0.01	1			
PIIGS	-0.14**	-0.03	0.01	0.06	-0.10*	-0.06	1		
Lagg	0.25**	0.03	0.05	0.03	0.02	0.09*	-0.36**	1	
Lead	0.02	0.01	-0.06	-0.06	0.12**	0.02	-0.39**	-0.35**	1

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

Table 9.

Results correlation matrix based on the regions centered around the impact of the financial crisis.

	Secur.	Pos.	Critiq.	Tur. flag	Male	PIIGS	Lagging	Leading
Secur.	1							
Pos.	-0.32**	1						
Critiq.	-0.02	-0.15**	1					
Tur.im	-0.15**	-0.10*	0.11**	1				
Male	0.02	-0.14**	0.03	0.02	1			
PIIGS	-0.14**	0.12**	0.11**	0.07	-0.06	1		
Lagg	0.25**	-0.18**	-0.09*	-0.13**	0.09*	-0.36**	1	
Lead	0.02	0.03	0.05	0.00	0.02	-0.39**	0.35**	1

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

5.3 Multivariate results

The 'securitization frame' is a dichotomous variable, which excludes the possibility to use linear regression models (De Vocht, 2014). Instead, multinomial logistic regression models have been applied to test the chances that, based on the included predictors, respondents perceive immigrants through the negative securitization frame (model A, B, C & D) and use the axes (model A1 & B1). Another requirement of the logistic regression model is assumed causality; the dependent variables are expected to be influenced by the independent variables. In addition, there should not be multicollinearity between the variables (De Vocht, 2014). The correlation results have already proven this requirement to be met. Lastly, the assumption of independence requires that the cases of data are not related (Field, 2009). Because the categories of these variables are mutually exclusive, meaning that every respondent could either be categorized as male or female, originate from only one region and apply only one frame and one axis, the cases are independent.

Although binary logistic regression would be the most appropriate model to apply to a dichotomous dependent variable, the multinomial logistic regression model can be applied as well. One advantage of the multinomial logistic regression is that it provides a clear overview of the contributions of the factors of categorical variables without taking extra steps in SPSS. Another advantage is that it provides the unique possibility to correct the variance estimates, in the case of over-dispersion (IBM Corporation, 2012). Moreover, the results of both types of regressions remain the same for model A to D. Lastly, as the dependent variable 'axes' includes four categories, multinomial logistic regression is the most appropriate to apply in model A1 and B1.

Model A includes the securitization frame as the dependent variable, the adjusted United Nations regions and gender as the independent variables and the image of the Turkish flag as control variable. Model B expands model A with interaction variables. Model C includes the securitization frame as the dependent variable, the regions based on the effects of the financial crisis and gender as the independent variables and the image of the Turkish flag as control variable. Model D expands model C with interaction variables. As a consequence of the inclusion of interaction terms in models B and D, the main effects of the independent variables become simple effects. Model A1 includes the axes as the dependent variable, the adjusted United Nations regions and gender as the independent variables and the image of the Turkish flag as control variable. Model B1 includes the axes as the dependent variable, the regions based on the effects of the financial crisis and gender as the independent variables and the image of the Turkish flag as control variable.

In the output of every model, SPSS shows a warning stating there are four cells with zero frequencies. This relates to the number of possible combinations in the data. According to Fields (2009), empty cells are inevitable if the models include covariates. Therefore, it can be ignored. Furthermore, the output produces the case processing summary, model fitting information, goodness-of-fit of the model, Pseudo R-Square, results of the likelihood ratio tests and the parameter estimates. The case processing summary provides an overview of the distribution and percentages of the variables that are included in the regressions.

The model fitting information shows a comparison between the model that includes the predictors and the baseline model that only includes the intercept term. The log-likelihood represents the unexplained variability in the data. The difference in this value between the baseline model and the chosen model equals the χ^2 value and the p-value reveals whether the difference is significant. Therefore, if the log-likelihood decreases and $p \leq 0.05$, one can conclude that the chosen model is a better fit than the baseline model (Field, 2009).

The goodness-of-fit statistics (the Pearson χ^2 and Deviance χ^2) test whether the observed values differ significantly from the expected values. If these values do not significantly differ, the model provides a good fit for the data (Field, 2009). The values also enable the detection of over-dispersion. Over-dispersion is present if the observed variance is significantly larger than would be expected, based on the logistic model. It means a certain distribution of the data is assumed that is not applicable to the specific model. This could be the result of deviating variability in success probabilities or when the assumption of independence is not met (Field, 2009). Over-dispersion is undesirable because it

limits standard errors and leads to narrower confidence intervals in the parameter estimates of the predictors in the models (Field, 2009). The dispersion parameter can be calculated by dividing the Pearson χ^2 and Deviance χ^2 statistics by the degrees of freedom (øPearson and øDeviance). Over-dispersion becomes problematic if the ø ≥ 2 and p ≤ 0.05 (Field, 2009). In models A, C, A1 and B1 it has been examined whether over-dispersion is present.

The Pseudo R-Square provides the *Cox & Snell R^2* and the *Nagelkerke R^2* values. These statistics reveal the proportion of variability of the dependent variable that can be explained by the model as a whole. The values are also useful as effect sizes (Fied, 2009). Examining the relative contribution of the predictors to the R^2 values in multiple regressions is also the basis of dominance analysis (Azen & Budescu, 2003). Moreover, the contribution of each individual predictor to the R^2 values in the models A and C will be examined. Nevertheless, there is no general consensus on which value provides the effect sizes of individual predictors in logistic regression models. For example, the odds ratio is often put forward as an effect size (Coe, 2002; Field, 2009; Chen, Cohen & Chen, 2010) but the Wald statistic could also indicate the contribution of the predictors (Fields, 2009). The results section will discuss both the *Wald* statistic as well as the OR and the contribution of the predictors to the R^2 values.

The likelihood ratio tests are similar to the tests under model fitting information but the values refer to the predictors instead of to the complete model.

Lastly, and most importantly, the parameter estimates provide the values of the predictors: the beta (B), standard error (SE), *Wald*, degrees of freedom (*df)*, significance (p-value), Exp(B) (OR) and the confidence intervals (95% CI) (Field, 2009).

5.3.1 Negative securitization frame

Multinomial logistic regression models are used to test the hypotheses that follow from the literature review. All irrelevant respondents were excluded from the analyses; this refers to respondents who revealed no frame in their comments, were categorized as unknown or originated from outside the European Union. This leaves the analysis with an N of 272 respondents. The negative securitization frame is the dependent variable in models A to D. Model A and B include the regional categories based on the adjusted UN categories. Model C and D include the regional categories based on the effects of the European financial crisis. The interaction variables are added in model B and D.

In all models, the 'positive frame' and 'female' are chosen as the reference categories. The distributions of the positive and negative frame in Western Europe (33.3% – 66.7%) and the leading region (31.9% – 68.1%) are the closest to the overall distribution of these frames in the European Union (28.7% – 71.3%). Therefore, the variables 'Western Europe' and 'leading region' are chosen as base levels for region of origin.

MODEL A

The model fitting information of model A (see table 10 for the results of model A) shows that the full model tested against the baseline model is statistically significant, which indicates that the chosen predictors (region of origin, gender and the respondents who commented on the image of the Turkish flag) as a set can reliably distinguish between the positive and negative frame (χ^2 = 51.34, p = 0.00 with *df* = 5). The goodness-of-fit test results show that the model is a good fit of the data (Pearson χ^2 = 3.18, p = 0.87 and Deviance χ^2 = 4.07, p = 0.77 with *df* = 7). The results show that the observed values do not significantly differ from the expected values. Based upon these results, it can also be concluded that over-dispersion is not present in the data (øPearson and øDeviance ≤ 2, p ≥ 0.05). The Pseudo R-Square shows that 17.2% to 24.5% of the variability of the dependent variable can be explained by the model (*Cox & Snell R^2* value = 0.17, *Nagelkerke R^2* value = 0.25). The likelihood ratio test results show that the variable gender has a marginally significant main effect ($\chi2$ = 2.99, p = 0.08) and that the variable UN_Regions has a significant main effect ($\chi2$ = 44.95, p = 0.00) on the usage of the securitization frame. The variable Turkey_Image, on the contrary, does not have a significant effect on

the dependent variable ($\chi2 = 0.20$, $p = 0.66$). These statistics do not yet reveal the specific effects of the factors that are included in the analysis. The parameter estimates do provide this information.

The parameter estimates show that originating from Southern Europe (*Wald* = 4.18, p = 0.04), Eastern Europe (*Wald* = 16.89, p = 0.00) and Western Europe (compared to Southern and Eastern Europe) has a significant effect on the usage of the negative securitization frame. Gender (*Wald* = 3.02, p = 0.08) makes a marginally significant contribution. Compared to the reference group, the image of the Turkish flag (*Wald* = 0.19, p = 0.66) and Northern Europe (*Wald* = 2.17, p = 0.14) are not significant predictors for the usage of the negative securitization frame.

The results, as displayed in table 10, show that male respondents are 74.0% more likely (OR = 1.74) than female respondents to perceive immigrants through the negative securitization frame rather than through the positive. Respondents from Southern Europe have 48.2% less chance (OR = 0.52) of selecting the negative frame rather than the positive one, compared to respondents from Western Europe. Respondents from Eastern Europe are 544.5% (OR = 6.45) and respondents from Northern Europe are 389.0% (OR = 4.89) more likely to apply the securitization frame. The respondents who commented on the image of the Turkish flag are 32.7% (OR = 1.33) more likely to perceive immigrants through the securitization frame rather than the positive frame. The last column in table 10 represents the decrease in the R^2 values if the predictor is excluded from the model. The results show that originating from Eastern Europe has the greatest effect on the dependent variable, followed by originating from Southern Europe. Gender and originating from Northern Europe both make a relatively small contribution to the R^2 values. Excluding the variable 'Turkey_Image' from the model does not have an appreciable effect on the Pseudo R square.

Table 10.

Results multinomial logistic regression: DV = securitization frame, adjusted UN regions.

PREDICTOR	SECURITIZATION FRAME				
	B	*SE*	*OR*	*95% CI*	↓ *R² values*
Intercept	0.22	(0.33)			
Gender					0.01
Male	0.55	(0.32)	1.74	0.93 – 3.25	
Female (ref.)					
UN_Regions					
Southern Europe	-0.66	(0.32)	0.52*	0.28 – 0.97	0.01 - 0.02
Eastern Europe	1.86	(0.45)	6.45**	2.65 – 15.67	0.07 - 0.10
Northern Europe	1.59	(1.08)	4.89	0.59 – 40.55	0.01
Western Europe (ref.)					
Turkey_Image	0.28	(0.65)	1.33	0.37 – 4.71	0.00
Chi-square for model	51.34**				
Nagelkerke R²	0.25				
Cox & Snell R²	0.17				
*p < 0.05 ** p < 0.01					

MODEL B

This model includes interaction variables for Southern and Eastern Europe, as originating from these regions has a significant effect on the negative securitization frame (as demonstrated in model A). The model fitting information of model B (see table 11 for the results of model B) shows that the unexplained variability in the data has significantly decreased, compared to a model that only includes the intercept term (χ^2 = 53.04, p = 0.00 with *df* = 7). The *Cox & Snell R²* value (0.18) and the *Nagelkerke R²* value (0.25) imply that model B explains slightly more of the variability than model A. For Southern and Eastern Europe interaction terms are included to test the moderating effect of gender on these regions. The likelihood ratio test results show that the interaction terms Southern_gender (χ^2 = 0.33, p = 0.57) Eastern_gender (χ^2 = 1.68, p = 0.19) do not significantly explain a part of the variability of the dependent variable. The parameter estimates demonstrate that no significant interaction is found between region and gender; Southern_gender (*Wald* = 0.33, p = 0.57) and Eastern_gender (*Wald* = 1.41, p = 0.24). Therefore, it can be concluded that gender does not strengthen or weaken the effect of region of origin on the usage of the securitization frame.

Due to the inclusion of the interaction terms, the main effects of the original predictors are partly nullified and become simple effects. Only Eastern Europe (*Wald* = 7.15, p = 0.01) continues to make a significant contribution to the usage of the negative securitization frame. Gender (*Wald* = 3.28, p = 0.07) has a marginally significant simple effect on the variability of the dependent variable. Southern Europe (*Wald = 0.43,* p = 0.51), and Western Europe (compared to the other regions) are no longer significant predictors. The image of the Turkish flag (*Wald = 0.18,* p = 0.67) and Northern Europe (*Wald* = 2.12, p = 0.15) remain not significant.

Table 11.
Results multinomial logistic regression: DV = securitization, interaction variables.

PREDICTOR	SECURITIZATION FRAME			
	B	*SE*	*OR*	*95% CI*
Intercept	-0.04	(0.43)		
Gender				
Male	0.90	(0.50)	2.47	0.93 – 6.56
Female (ref.)				
UN_Regions				
Southern Europe	-0.37	(0.57)	0.69	0.23 – 2.01
Eastern Europe	2.97	(1.11)	19.57**	2.21 – 173.15
Northern Europe	1.58	(1.09)	4.86	0.58 – 40.89
Western Europe (ref.)				
Turkey_Image	0.27	(0.65)	1.32	0.37 – 4.70
Southern_gender	-0.39	(0.69)	0.68	0.18 – 2.59
Eastern_gender	-1.44	(1.22)	0.24	0.02 – 2.57
Chi-square for model	53.04**			
Nagelkerke R²	0.25			
Cox & Snell R²	0.18			
*p < 0.05 ** p < 0.01				

MODEL C

Model C (see table 12 for the results) includes the regions that are based on the effects of the European financial crisis. The model fitting information shows that the full model tested against the baseline model is statistically significant, which indicates that the chosen predictors (region of origin, gender and the control variable Turkey_Image) as a set can reliably explain part of the variability of the dependent variable (χ^2 = 46.27, p = 0.00 with df = 4). The goodness-of-fit test results show that the model is a good fit of the data (Pearson χ^2 = 4.09, p = 0.77 and Deviance χ^2 = 5.38, p = 0.61 with df = 7). The observed values do not significantly differ from the expected values, which indicates that over-dispersion is not present in the data (øPearson and øDeviance ≤ 2, p ≥ 0.05). The Pseudo R-Square shows that 15.6% to 22.3% of the variability of the dependent variable can be explained by the model (*Cox & Snell R²* value = 0.16 and *Nagelkerke R²* value = 0.22). The likelihood ratio test results show that both the variable gender ($\chi 2$ = 4.00 p = 0.05) and the variable FC_Regions have a significant main effect ($\chi 2$ = 39.89, p = 0.00) on the usage of the securitization frame. The variable Turkey_Image, on the contrary, does not have a significant effect on the dependent variable ($\chi 2$ = 0.53, p = 0.47).

The parameter estimates show that the PIIGS region (*Wald* = 4.15, p = 0.04), the lagging region (*Wald* = 15.68, p = 0.00), the leading region (compared to the other regions) and gender (*Wald* = 4.03, p = 0.05) all make a significant contribution to the usage of the negative securitization frame. The image of the Turkish flag (*Wald* = 0.51, p = 0.48) however, is not a significant predictor.

Table 12 shows that male respondents are 87.0% (OR = 1.87) more likely to perceive immigrants through the negative securitization frame rather than the positive frame, compared to female respondents. Furthermore, whereas respondents from the PIIGS region are 47.1% less likely (OR = 0.53) to select the negative frame, respondents from the lagging region are 500.5% (OR = 6.01) more likely to select the securitization frame rather than the positive frame, compared to respondents from the leading region. The respondents who commented on the image of the Turkish flag are 56.3% (OR = 1.56) more likely to perceive immigrants through the securitization frame rather than the positive frame. However, this finding is not significant. The last column in table 12 represents the decrease in the *R²* values if the predictor is excluded from the model; originating from the lagging region has the greatest effect on the dependent variable, followed by originating from PIIGS region and gender. The variable 'Turkey_Image' makes the smallest contribution to the *R²* values.

Table 12.
Results multinomial logistic regression: DV = securitization frame, financial crisis regions.

PREDICTOR	SECURITIZATION FRAME				
	B	SE	OR	95% IC	↓ R² values
Intercept	0.23	(0.32)			
Gender					0.02
Male	0.63	(0.31)	1.87*	1.02 – 3.46	
Female (ref.)					
Region of origin					
PIIGS region	-0.64	(0.31)	0.53*	0.29 – 0.98	0.07 - 0.09
LAGGING region	1.79	(0.45)	6.01**	2.47 – 14.58	0.02
LEADING region (ref.)					
Turkey_Image	0.45	(0.63)	1.56	0.46 – 5.36	0.01
Chi-square for model	46.27**				
Nagelkerke R²	0.22				
Cox & Snell R²	0.16				
*p < 0.05 ** p < 0.01					

MODEL D

Model D extends model C by including interaction variables for the PIIGS region and the lagging region (which both have a significant effect on the negative securitization frame, as demonstrated in model C). The model fitting information of model D (see table 13 for the results of model D) shows that the unexplained variability in the data has significantly decreased, compared to a model that only includes the intercept term (χ^2 = 47.84, p = 0.00 with *df* = 6). The *Cox & Snell R²* value (0.16) and the *Nagelkerke R²* value (0.23) indicate that model D explains more of the variability than model C but less than models A and B.

For both the PIIGS region and the lagging region interaction terms are included to test the moderating effect of gender on these regions. The likelihood ratio test results show that the interaction terms PIIGS_gender (χ^2 = 0.00, p = 0.98) LAGGING_gender (χ^2 = 1.37, p = 0.24) do not significantly explain a part of the variability of the dependent variable. The parameter estimates demonstrate that no significant interaction is found between region of origin and gender; PIIGS_gender (*Wald* = 0.00, p = 0.98) and Eastern_gender (*Wald* = 1.16, p = 0.28). Therefore, it can be concluded that gender does not significantly strengthen or weaken the effect of region of origin on the usage of the securitization frame.

Due to the inclusion of the interaction terms, the main effects of the original predictors are partly nullified and become simple effects. Only the lagging region (*Wald* = 6.39, p = 0.01) continues to have a significant simple effect on the usage of the negative securitization frame. The PIIGS region (*Wald* = 1.30, p = 0.26) and the leading region (compared to the other regions) are no longer significant predictors and gender (*Wald* = 2.46, p = 0.12) is no longer marginally significant.

Table 13.
Results multinomial logistic regression: DV = securitization frame, interaction variables.

PREDICTOR	SECURITIZATION FRAME			
	B	SE	OR	95% IC
Intercept	0.13	(0.41)		
Gender				
Male	0.77	(0.49)	2.15	0.83 – 5.62
Female (ref.)				
Region of origin				
PIIGS region	-0.64	(0.56)	0.53	0.18 – 1.59
LAGGING region	2.79	(1.11)	16.35*	1.87 – 142.75
LEADING region (ref.)				
Turkey_Image	0.43	(0.64)	1.54	0.44 – 5.34
PIIGS_Gender	0.02	(0.68)	1.02	0.27 – 3.85
LAGGING_Gender	-1.31	(1.21)	0.27	0.03 – 2.93
Chi-square for model	47.84**			
Nagelkerke R²	0.23			
Cox & Snell R²	0.16			
*p < 0.05 ** p < 0.01				

5.3.2 Comparison multivariate results securitization frame

When comparing the results, some observations can be made. Whereas model B seems to explain the variability to the greatest extent, model C includes most significant predictors. While only three out of four regions that are based on the adjusted United Nations categorization make a significant contribution, all regions based on the effects of the financial crisis are significant predictors. Hence, H2 can be confirmed: differences in the usage of the securitization frame can be explained by region of origin.

Furthermore, the results show that gender is a significant predictor. Men are more likely to apply the securitization frame than women. This finding is in accordance with results of a study conducted by Bridges and Mateut (2014) and confirms H3.

When focusing on the specific regions, the results show that respondents from Southern Europe or the PIIGS region are relatively least likely to perceive immigrants through the negative securitization frame. Hence, H7 receives support. Nevertheless, this finding contradicts results of earlier studies on anti-immigrant attitudes (Coenders et al., 2005; Meuleman et al., 2009). Respondents from Eastern Europe or the lagging region, on the contrary, are most likely to use the securitization frame. Therefore, H8 can be confirmed. That respondents from Eastern Europe are most likely to perceive immigrants through the securitization frame is in accordance with the studies of Coenders and others (2005) and Meuleman and others (2009) on anti-immigrant attitudes.

The results indicate that voting behavior and support for right-wing populism are the best indicators to predict the relationship between the demographic factors and the likelihood to perceive immigrants as a threat. The securitization frame is present within the practice of European elected politicians (Vuori, 2008; Huysmans, 2011) and could influence the citizens. As described by Givens (2004), men are more attracted to radical right-wing parties (that tend to propagate anti-immigrant sentiments). Furthermore, the Populism Graph (2017) showed that the support for right-wing populism is the lowest in Southern Europe and the highest in Eastern Europe.

The control variable Turkey_Image did not have a significant effect on the variability of the dependent variable. Therefore, it can be concluded that the image of the Turkish flag did not significantly affect the likelihood that respondents revealed frames in relation to immigrants in their comments.

Lastly, no significant interaction effects have been found between region of origin and gender.

Now that the results of the multinomial logistic regression models for the securitization frame have been discussed, the results of the more fine-grid multinomial logistic regressions, that include predictors of the axes, will be described. All respondents who could not be placed on an axis, originated from outside the European Union or were categorized as unknown were excluded from the analyses. In addition, the 'political axis' presented a relatively small group of 5 observations. Including this group made it impossible to extract reliable results from the multinomial regressions. Because of the exclusion of the political axis, there were only 83 respondents of the 88 left for the analysis. 'Axes' is the dependent variable in model A1 and B1, of which model A1 includes the adjusted United Nations regions and model B1 includes the regions based on the effects of the financial crisis. If significant results are found, interaction variables will be added in new models. The economic axis is the reference category in the models. In addition, the variables 'Western Europe', the 'leading region' and 'Female' are chosen as reference categories to ensure the continuity in the models.

MODEL A1

The model fitting information of model A1 (see table 14 for the results of model A1) shows that the full model tested against a model that only includes the intercept is not statistically significant, which indicates that the chosen predictors (region of origin, gender and the respondents who commented on the image of the Turkish flag) as a set cannot reliably explain the variability in the axes (χ^2 = 6.06, p = 0.81 with *df* = 10). The goodness-of-fit test results show that the model is a good fit of the data (Pearson χ^2 = 15.41, p = 0.12 and Deviance χ^2 = 17.30, p = 0.07) with *df* = 10). The results show that the observed values do not significantly differ from the expected values. Based upon these results, it can also be concluded that over-dispersion is not present in the data (øPearson and øDeviance ≤ 2, p ≥ 0.05). The Pseudo R-Square shows that 7.0% to 7.9% of the variability of the dependent variable can be explained by the model, if it were significant (*Cox & Snell R²* value = 0.07, *Nagelkerke R²* value = 0.08). The likelihood ratio test results show that the variable gender (χ^2 = 0.40 p = 0.82), the variable UN_Regions (χ^2 = 5.20 p = 0.52) and the variable Turkey_Image (χ^2 = 1.04 p = 0.59) do not have a significant effect on the usage of the axes. These statistics do not reveal the specific effects of the factors that are included in the analysis. Although not one of the included predictors has a significant effect on the usage of a certain axis in the comments of respondents, the results of the parameter estimates will be discussed.

The parameter estimates show that male respondents are 33.3% (OR = 1.33) more likely to use arguments that fit within the societal axis, rather than the economic axis, compared to female respondents. Respondents from Southern Europe are 40.7% (OR = 1.41) more likely to use the societal axis rather than the economic axis while respondents from Eastern Europe are 59.5% (OR = 1.60) more likely to select the societal axis rather than the economic axis, compared to respondents from Western Europe. Respondents from Northern Europe are 181.6% (OR = 2.82) more likely to prefer the societal axis over the economic axis. Respondents who commented on the image of the Turkish flag are 68.3% (OR = 0.32) less likely to select the societal axis rather than the economic axis.

Male respondents are 16.3% (OR = 0.86) less likely to select the criminological axis rather than the economic axis, compared to female respondents. Respondents from Southern Europe are 54.3% (OR = 0.46) less likely to select the criminological axis over the economic axis. Respondents from Eastern Europe are 20.4% (OR = 0.80) less likely to apply the criminological axis rather than the economic axis, compared to Western Europe. Respondents from Northern Europe are 316.1% (OR = 4.16) more likely to select the criminological axis over the economic axis. Respondents who commented on the image of the Turkish flag are 66.5% (OR = 0.34) less likely to apply the criminological axis rather than the economic axis.

Because there are no significant relations between the variables, the contributions of the predictors to the *R²* values and the effect of interaction terms will not be examined.

Table 14.

Results multinomial logistic regression: DV = axes, adjusted UN regions.

PREDICTOR	Soc. Axis				Crim. Axis			
	B	*SE*	*OR*	*95% IC*	*B*	*SE*	*OR*	*95% IC*
Intercept	-0.21	(0.83)			0.66	(0.77)		
Gender								
Male	0.29	(0.74)	1.33	0.31 - 5.68	-0.15	(0.71)	0.86	0.21 – 3.49
Female (ref.)								
UN_Regions								
Southern Europe	0.34	(0.79)	1.41	0.30 – 6.58	-0.78	(0.83)	0.46	0.09 – 2.31
Eastern Europe	0.47	(0.69)	1.60	0.42 – 6.11	-0.23	(0.66)	0.80	0.22 – 2.91
Northern Europe	1.04	(1.40)	2.82	0.18 – 43.98	1.43	(1.27)	4.16	0.34 – 0.53
Western Europe (ref.)								
Turkey_Image	-1.15	(1.34)	0.32	0.02 – 4.41	-1.09	(1.22)	0.33	0.03 – 3.67
Chi-square for model	5.78							
Nagelkerke R²	0.08							
Cox & Snell R²	0.07							
*p < 0.05 ** p < 0.01								

MODEL B1

The model fitting information of model B1 (see table 15 for the results of model B1) shows that the full model tested against a constant only model is not statistically significant, which indicates that the chosen predictors (region of origin, gender and the respondents who commented on the image of the Turkish flag) as a set cannot reliably explain the variability in the axes (χ^2 = 10.78, p = 0.22 with *df* = 8). The goodness-of-fit test results show that the model is a good fit of the data (Pearson χ^2 = 13.83, p = 0.18 and Deviance χ^2 = 15.53, p = 0.11) with *df* = 10). The results show that the observed values do not significantly differ from the expected values. Based upon these results, it can also be concluded that over-dispersion is not present in the data (øPearson and øDeviance ≤ 2, p ≥ 0.05). The Pseudo R-Square values reveal that the independent variables as a set would have explained between the 12.2% and the 13.7% of the variability, if the model were significant (*Cox & Snell R²* value = 0.12, *Nagelkerke R²* value = 0.14). The likelihood ratio test results show that the variable gender (χ2 = 0.43 p = 0.81) and the variable Turkey_Image (χ2 = 0.51 p = 0.78) do not have a significant effect on the usage of the axes. On the contrary, the variable FC_Regions (χ2 = 9.92 p = 0.04) as a whole, makes a significant contribution to the variability of the dependent variable. Although there are no significant factors included in the model, all results of the parameter estimates will be discussed.

     The parameter estimates show that male respondents are 34.9% (OR = 1.35) more likely to use arguments that fit within the societal axis rather than the economic axis, compared to female respondents. Respondents from the PIIGS region are 131.9% more likely to prefer the societal axis (OR = 2.32) over the economic axis, compared to respondents from the leading region. Respondents from the lagging region are 97.5% (OR = 1.98) more likely to select the societal axis rather than the economic axis. Respondents who commented on the image of the Turkish flag are 50.9% (OR = 0.49) less likely to select the societal axis rather than the economic axis.

     Male respondents are 14.7% (OR = 0.85) less likely to select the criminological axis rather than the economic axis, compared to female respondents. Respondents from the PIIGS region are 73.0% (OR = 0.27) less likely to select the criminological axis over the economic axis. Respondents from the lagging region are 45.9% (OR = 0.54) less likely to apply the criminological axis rather than the economic axis, compared to the leading region. Respondents who commented on the image of the Turkish flag are 49.6% (OR = 0.47) less likely to apply the criminological axis compared to the economic axis.

Because there are no significant relations between the variables, the contributions of the predictors to the R^2 values and the effect of interaction terms will not be examined.

Table 15.

Results multinomial logistic regression: DV = axes, financial crisis regions.

PREDICTOR	Soc. Axis				Crim. Axis			
	B	*SE*	*OR*	*95% IC*	*B*	*SE*	*OR*	*95% IC*
Intercept	-0.47	(0.85)			1.02	(0.75)		
Gender								
Male	0.30	(0.74)	1.35	0.32 – 5.76	-0.16	(0.71)	0.85	0.21 – 3.45
Female (ref.)								
Region of origin								
PIIGS region	0.84	(0.76)	2.32	0.53 – 10.24	-1.31	(0.79)	0.27	0.06 – 1.27
LAGGING region	0.68	(0.71)	1.98	0.49 – 7.97	-0.62	(0.64)	0.54	0.15 – 1.90
LEADING region (ref.)								
Turkey_Image	-0.71	(1.32)	0.49	0.04 – 6.57	-0.75	(1.12)	0.47	0.05 – 4.23
Chi-square for model	10.48							
Nagelkerke R²	0.13							
Cox & Snell R²	0.12							
*p < 0.05 ** p < 0.01								

5.3.4 Comparison multivariate results axes

Based upon the results, gender and region of origin cannot significantly explain the applicability of the axes to the respondents. Nevertheless, this section discusses the findings and compares them to the results of other studies. As no significant results were found, the findings are uncertain. A clear overview of all hypotheses and results is provided in table 4 in appendix E.

When comparing the results, some gender differences can be described. Whereas male respondents are more likely to post comments that fit within the economic or societal axis, female respondents are more likely to use the criminological axis. Therefore, H4, according to which female respondents are more likely to prefer the economic axis, is rejected. That no support is found for H4 contradicts the results of earlier studies (Dustmann & Preston, 2007; Valentova & Alieva, 2004). Nevertheless, this hypothesis was based on traditional gender relationships (for example, women taking care of the children and having a weaker position in the job market). Therefore, it is possible that the finding that female respondents are less likely to use economic arguments than male respondents, can be explained by women's emancipation in the job market (CBS, 2015). H6, based on the expectation that female respondents would be more likely to prefer the societal axis, does not receive support either. H5 however, is confirmed: male respondents are more likely to prefer the societal axis. That male respondents are more likely to use the societal axis than female respondents, confirms earlier studies according to which racial hostility is higher among men (Dustmann & Preston, 2007; Valentova & Alieva, 2004).

Respondents from Eastern Europe or the lagging region are less likely than respondents from Southern Europe or the PIIGS region but more likely than respondents from Western Europe or the leading region to use the societal axis. Therefore, H9 cannot be confirmed. According to H9, respondents from Eastern Europe or the lagging region would be least likely to post comments that fit within the societal axis, compared to respondents from all other regions. This hypothesis was based upon the foreign-born populations in European Countries, indicating sizable immigrant groups that could trigger anti-immigrant sentiment (Quillian, 1995).

Furthermore, compared to respondents from Southern Europe or the PIIGS region, respondents from Eastern Europe or the lagging region are less likely to post comments that fit on the economic axis. Therefore, H10, according to which respondents from Eastern Europe or the lagging region are more likely to post comments that fit within the economic axis than respondents from other regions, does not receive support. H12 however, that was based on exactly the expectation that respondents from Southern Europe or the PIIGS region are more likely to apply the economic axis than respondents from Eastern Europe or the lagging region, is confirmed. Respondents from Western Europe, Northern Europe or the leading region are less likely to apply the economic axis, which confirms H11. These findings are in line with the economic competition theory, according to which the amount of available resources is an indication for anti-immigrant sentiments. The results also in accordance with outcomes of earlier studies (Quillian, 1995; Kunovich, 2004; Rustenbach, 2010).

Respondents from Western Europe, Northern Europe or the leading region are most likely to use the criminological axis in their comments. Respondents from Southern Europe or the PIIGS region are least likely to use the criminological axis. These findings reject H13 because respondents from Southern Europe or the PIIGS region are least instead of most likely (as was expected) to post comments that apply the criminological axis. This is a surprising result, as the strongest argument of the supporters of the criminal migrant thesis is the overrepresentation of foreigners in European crime involvement rates (Ceyhan & Tsoukala, 2002) and both Western Europe or the leading region and Southern Europe or the PIIGS region have a relatively high percentage of foreigners in penal institutions. H14 can be rejected as well; although respondents from Eastern Europe or the lagging region are less likely to apply the criminological axis than respondents from Western Europe, Northern Europe or the leading region, they are not least likely to apply this axis.

Unfortunately, no statements can be made on H16 and H17, as the small number of respondents who applied the political axis led to unreliable results.

In this chapter, the main findings are discussed and compared to the results of former studies. In addition, the strengths and limitations of this study are explained. The last paragraph discusses findings that do not directly relate to the purpose of the study and formulates recommendations for future research.

6.1 Main findings

First of all, this study showed the presence of the securitization frame among European citizens that take part in online political communication with the European Parliament. Secondly, significant regional and gender differences were shown in the usage of the securitization frame among respondents. Moreover, the applicability of the axes to the respondents has been examined. The results show that the axes are only marginally present among the respondents and that the usage cannot be explained by demographic characteristics. The findings are summarized in table 16.

The regional differences in the usage of the securitization frame will be described first. As discussed before, two kinds of regional categories were applied: one based on cultural differences and one based on economic differences. The results show that the first type of categories explains most of the variability while the second type contains the most significant predictors. Three out of the four categories that are based on cultural differences form significant predictors for the usage of the frame. Northern Europe is not a significant predictor, which might be caused by the small number of observations that resulted from the relatively small amount of countries in this region (only three countries). The results show that respondents from Eastern Europe are most likely to apply the frame, followed by respondents from Northern and Western Europe while respondents from Southern Europe are least likely to perceive immigrants as a threat. All categories that are based on the economic competition theory are significant predictors for the usage of the securitization frame. Respondents from the lagging region are most likely to use the frame, followed by respondents from the leading region while respondents from the PIIGS region are least likely to perceive immigrants as a threat.

These results both confirm and contradict former studies on different aspects. It was not unexpected that originating from Eastern Europe or the lagging region relates to the usage of the frame, considering the findings of research on anti-immigrant attitudes (Meuleman et al., 2009; Coenders et al., 2005). In view of the potential for cultural and economic competition, this finding is not surprising either: the region is confronted with an increasing number of immigrants (Coenders et al., 2005) and has the lowest GDP of the European Union (Eurostat Statistics, 2016). This means that it is possible that respondents from Eastern Europe or the lagging region are more likely to apply the securitization frame because they perceive immigrants as cultural and economic competitors.

Following Eastern Europe, respondents from Northern and Western Europe were most likely to apply the securitization frame. Cultural hegemony could explain this finding while the relatively high GDPs of these regions eliminates the economic competition theory as an explanation. Nevertheless, this finding contradicts earlier results from a study conducted by Coenders and others (2005) according to which citizens from Northern Europe, and particularly the Scandinavian countries, prefer to disassociate themselves rather than express resistance.

Respondents from Southern Europe or the PIIGS region are least likely to apply the securitization frame. This is a surprising finding as this region is confronted with both a great influx of immigrants and severe economic impact of the financial crisis. Therefore, this finding cannot be explained by cultural or economic competition. Moreover, former studies demonstrated that citizens from Southern Europe showed relatively negative attitudes towards immigrants (Meuleman et al., 2009; Coenders et al., 2005). On the contrary, this study showed that respondents from Southern Europe were most likely to apply a positive frame, thereby expressing sympathy for immigrants. The sympathy indicates feelings of compassion rather than threat. It is possible that the fact that this region

is structurally confronted with immigrants who risk their lives in an effort to reach the Mediterranean shores, has a disarming effect on frames through which the natives' perceive immigrants.

Furthermore, gender differences in the usage of the securitization frame were found among respondents. The two-proportions Z-test revealed significant gender differences in the usage of the securitization frame, which were confirmed by the results of the multivariate analyses. In accordance with findings by Bridges and Mateut (2014) on anti-immigrant attitudes, male respondents are more likely to reveal the securitization frame while female respondents are more likely to perceive immigrants through a positive frame.

Both the gender and regional differences demonstrate that voting behavior and political support for right-wing populism are good indicators to predict the relation between the securitization frame and demographic factors. As described by Givens (2004), men are more attracted to radical right-wing parties (that tend to propagate anti-immigrant sentiments). Furthermore, the Populism Graph (2017) showed that the support for right-wing populism is the highest in Eastern Europe or the lagging region. In addition, it also showed that support for these political parties is relatively weak in Southern Europe or the PIIGS region.

Lastly, based upon the results, the usage of the axes by respondents cannot be explained by their origin and gender. Although not significantly, the findings showed gender and regional differences. Whereas male respondents are more likely to post comments that fit within the societal and economic axis, female respondents are more likely to provide arguments that fit within the criminological axis. Moreover, while respondents from Northern Europe are most likely to apply the societal and criminological axis, respondents from Southern Europe are most likely to apply the economic axis. In addition, whereas respondents from the PIIGS region are most likely to apply the societal and economic axis, respondents from the leading region are most likely to post comments that fit within the criminological axis. That no significant results were found could be caused by the relatively small number of observations. The fact that not many respondents motivated their threat-perceptions on immigrants may be related to the nature of the comments. Generally, comments were relatively short statements that did reveal a frame but did not include a motivation.

6.2 Strengths & limitations

A strength of this study is its focus on the rather unexplored online political communication on the topic of immigrants in the European Union. The comments provided a rich base of new data that gave an unique insight into the frames through which respondents perceive immigrants. Another strength of this study is the incorporation of public opinion by focusing on the applicability of a rather theoretical concept to a part of the European electorate, as was recommended by Karyotis and Patrikios (2012). As such, the study provided a new approach by including public opinion and by using a new source of data to study the securitization frame.

The relatively small number of observations is an important limitation of this research. Although 643 respondents were collected and coded, in a majority of the cases no frame was found. There were enough observations to show the regional and gender differences in the usage of the general securitization frame but not enough to show whether the demographic characteristics had a statistically significant effects on the specific axes. As a result, the external validity is limited. As the study includes only 643 (self-selected) respondents, the findings are not representative of the frames through which 'the European citizen' perceives immigrants. Moreover, the respondents do not form representative samples on both gender and regional distributions. Nevertheless, the respondents are a valuable focus group from which the European Parliament can extract input. The results of this study are representative of online political engagement of citizens on the topic of migration on the Facebook page of the European Parliament.

Furthermore, the time span of one year might be too short to collect enough eligible observations, especially in order to extract significant findings on the usage of the axes.

6.3 Other findings and recommendations for future research

The descriptive statistics showed some interesting findings that are not directly related to the purpose of this study. First of all, an overwhelming part of the respondents are men (approximately three quarters). This shows that men are more likely to comment on the Facebook page of the European Parliament to share their point of view on immigration-related topics, than women. It is possible that men attach more importance to these topics or that the uneven gender distribution is related to an overrepresentation of male respondents on social media in general. As the cause(s) of this finding remain unknown, it would be an interesting subject for future research.

Secondly, a substantial part of the respondents originated from non-European countries. As the European Parliament aims to represent the interests of European citizens only, it would be interesting to examine the reasons for non-Europeans to interact with the Parliament. It is possible that European policies affect these citizens indirectly, thereby stimulating them to seek contact.

Furthermore, over one third of the European respondents criticized the European Union in their comments. It is probable that many respondents only visit the Facebook page of the European Parliament to express their discontent. Another explanation could be that the European policy on immigration in particular, triggers a lot of resistance against the European Union. This would be in line with former research that concluded that resistance against immigrants played a major role in the Brexit (Inglehart & Norris, 2016). The regional distributions show that respondents from Southern Europe or the PIIGS region expressed themselves critically most often. These critical attitudes could be caused by the effects of the financial crisis, as this region experienced the most severe impact; the economic situation could result in anti-European attitudes. Another possibility is that the critical attitudes are caused by the lack of an united European response to the immigration crisis. This would confirm the results of a study conducted by Inglehart and Norris (2016). The lack of an united European response affects the Southern region in particular, as a considerable part of the immigrants arrives on its shores (Hammond, 2015).

In addition, as voting behavior and support for right-wing populism seem to be the most important indicators to predict the relation between the demographic characteristics and the usage of the securitization frame, it is very likely that the securitization discourse applied by the politicians is copied by citizens. Nevertheless, politicians would argue that they simply represent the interests of the people. According to former studies, anti-immigrant attitudes are the result of sizable immigrant populations. However, citizens in Southern Europe or the PIIGS region are confronted with a major influx of immigrants and still show the lowest support for right-wing populist parties. Therefore, other potential causes for the presence of the securitization frame should be addressed, such as religiosity, environmental factors and media framing. These factors are interesting to examine because the securitization frame does not evolve in a vacuum. It is very likely that frames evolve in an interactive process in which citizens, the media and politicians influence each other. Especially in the case of online political communication, respondents can easily be influenced by the comments of other respondents. Respondents might read comments from others and start online discussions on the topics. As a result, frames can modify, reinforce or fade. Therefore, future research could also focus on this interactive process.

As this study was limited by the number of observations, new studies should incorporate a longer time-span to collect more data. For example, since the terrorist attacks of 9/11 are often discussed as an accelerator of the securitization of migration, it could be interesting to collect media messages from before and after this potential turning point. The same could be done before and after the terrorist attacks in London and Madrid. The scope of the study could also be expanded by analyzing other tools of online political communication between the European Parliament and citizens such as Twitter.

Lastly, as discussed in the literature review, the securitization frame is based on a social construct. Therefore, it would be interesting to assess to what extent the threat-perceptions of European citizens are well-founded. In order to do so, future studies could examine the extent to which immigrants form cultural or/and economic competitors across the European Union.

Table 16.

Summary of the findings

Variable	Results
Securitization frame (H$_1$)	The securitization frame was not revealed by a majority of the respondents.
Gender (H$_3$)	Gender has a significant effect on the usage of the securitization frame. Male respondents are more likely to perceive immigrants as a threat than female respondents.
UN_Regions (H$_2$, H$_7$, H$_8$)	The adjusted UN regions have a significant effect on the usage of the securitization frame. Whereas respondents from Eastern Europe are most likely to apply the frame, followed by respondents from Western Europe, respondents from Southern Europe are least likely to perceive immigrants through the securitization frame. Northern Europe is not a significant predictor.
FC_Regions (H$_2$, H$_7$, H$_8$)	The regional categories that are based on the economic effects of the financial crisis have a significant effect on the usage of the securitization frame. Whereas respondents from the lagging region are most likely to apply the frame, followed by respondents from the leading region, respondents from the PIIGS region are least likely to perceive immigrants as a threat.
Axes	Only a small minority of the respondents provided arguments in their comments that made it possible to fit them within the axes.
Gender (H$_4$ - H$_6$)	Gender does not have a significant effect on the applicability of the axes to the respondents. While male respondents are more likely to post comments that fit within the economic and societal axis, female respondents are more likely to post comments that fit within the criminological axis.
UN_Regions (H$_9$ - H$_{17}$)	The adjusted UN regions do not have a significant effect on the applicability of the axes to the respondents. Whereas respondents from Northern Europe are most likely to apply the societal and criminological axis, respondents from Southern Europe are most likely to apply the economic axis.
FC_Regions (H$_9$ - H$_{17}$)	The regional categories that are based on the economic effects of the financial crisis do not have a significant effect on the applicability of the axes to the respondents. Whereas respondents from the PIIGS region are most likely to apply the societal and economic axis, respondents from the leading region are most likely to apply the criminological axis.

Now that all results are presented and discussed, the research questions will be answered. In addition, this section reflects on the scientific and societal relevance of this study.

It can be concluded that the securitization frame is applicable to the electorate. Therefore, the first research question can be answered in the affirmative. Nonetheless, some nuance is required: a majority of the respondents did not reveal a frame at all. However, of the respondents who did reveal a frame, a majority revealed the negative securitization frame. Therefore, it can be concluded that the securitization frame is applicable to the electorate, but not as prominently as expected based on former studies (European Commission, 2016; Huymans, 2000). The axes are only marginally present among the respondents. Of the 272 European respondents who perceived immigrants through the securitization frame, only 88 provided arguments that made it possible to place them on an axis. These respondents showed that economic, societal, criminological and political concerns are present among the electorate.

The second research question 'Do region of origin and gender explain the usage of the securitization frame?' can also be answered in the affirmative: based upon the findings, it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between region of origin and the usage of the general securitization frame. Statistically significant regional differences confirm that the usage of the securitization frame is dependent on the origin of respondents. Originating from Eastern Europe or the lagging region increases the likelihood that one perceives immigrants through the securitization frame. Originating from Southern Europe or the PIIGS region decreases the chance that one perceives immigrants as a threat. Originating from Western or Northern Europe or the leading region places one on middle ground. Furthermore, a significant relationship between gender and the applicability of the securitization frame is found. Male respondents are more likely to reveal the securitization frame while female are more likely to post positive comments. Based upon the results, region of origin and gender do not explain the usage of the axes by the electorate.

Considering the findings, it can be concluded that voting behaviour and support for right-wing populism are the best indicators to predict the relationship between the securitization frame and the demographic characteristics.

The scientific relevance of this study lies in the contribution to the literature on the securitization of migration by discussing whether the securitization frame, which has already been proven to be present in political rhetoric and policy, is also applicable to the electorate. In accordance with the proposition of Karyotis and Patrikios (2012), the study involves public opinion to complement the existing discourse analysis. Moreover, it presented a new approach to assess the securitization frame.

The societal relevance of this study lies within the clarification of the presence of the securitization frame. Results of the Eurobarometer (11/2016) showed that resistance against immigrants is widely shared. This study contributed to existing literature by showing whether or not respondents perceive immigrants as threatening, and on what specific topics. Respondents could use the results of this study to inform themselves and become aware of the frames that their comments reveal. Based upon the regional trends, respondents could reconsidering or reinforce their threat-perceptions. Obtained information can also contribute to the understanding of anti-immigrant attitudes by political institutions. It is important that this information is taken seriously, as anti-immigrant sentiments are often related to anti-European sentiments. It is therefore in the interest of the European Union to stimulate a process of de-securitization. Regional and gender differences can be used to prioritize and to choose an optimal approach. In order to do so, the root causes that lead to support for right-wing populism should be addressed. The results showed however, that most respondents did not motivate their statements. Political institutions could act upon this information by asking for argumentation in the comments of respondents. In addition, addressing threat-perceptions could contribute to the debate between the Parliament and the electorate.

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A. The Populism Graph

B. Foreign-born population by country of birth

C. GDP at current market prices in 2013, 2014 and 2015

D. Foreign population in European penal institutions on September 1st, 2015

E. Overview of the findings

Figure 1.

The Populism Graph
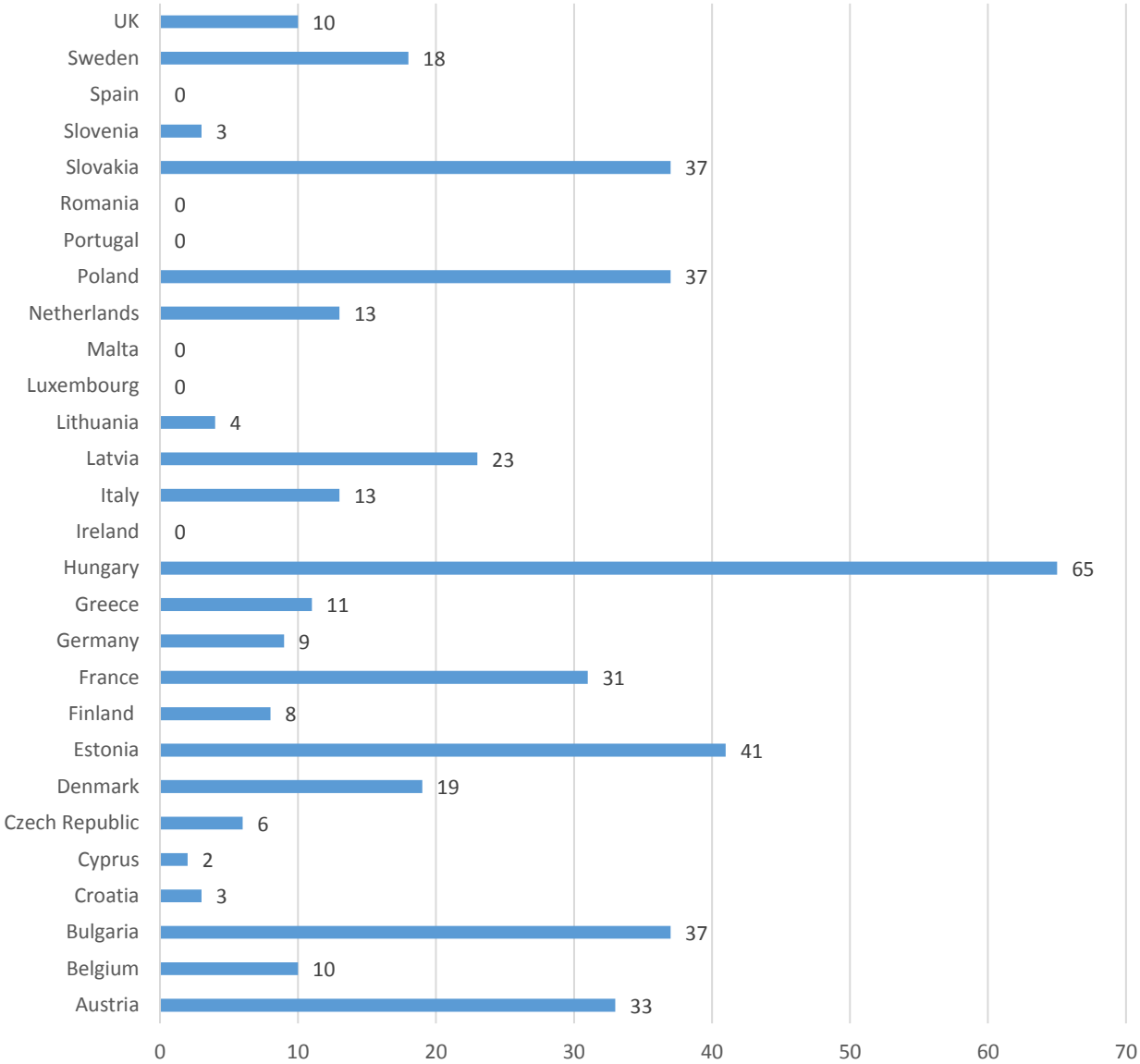
Notes:
Figure 1. [Chart]. The populism graph, popularity of right-wing political parties among the likely voters in the given country. Reprinted *from The Progressive Post website*, by Progressive Post, Q1 2017, retrieved from http://www.progressivepost.eu/spotlights/ populism/graph/

Table 1.

Foreign-born population by country of birth

	Total		Born outside EU	
	Thousands	% of the population	Thousands	% of the population
Austria	1578.2	18.2	864.6	9.9
Belgium	1845.6	16.3	978.8	8.7
Bulgaria	136.4	1.9	87.9	1.2
Croatia	547.9	13.1	479.4	11.4
Cyprus	172.8	20.4	62.4	7.4
Czech Republic	433.3	4.1	261.5	2.5
Denmark	636.7	11.2	419.8	7.4
Estonia	193.8	14.7	174.6	13.3
Finland	329.2	6.0	210.4	3.8
France	7902.8	11.8	5699.0	8.5
Germany	10908.3	13.3	6556.4	8.0
Greece	1220.4	11.3	870.3	8.1
Hungary	505.8	5.1	183.3	1.9
Ireland	798.6	16.9	251.0	5.3
Italy	5907.5	9.7	4083.6	6.7
Latvia	258.9	13.1	231.3	11.7
Lithuania	129.7	4.5	108.9	3.8
Luxembourg	260.6	45.2	65.8	11.4
Malta	45.9	10.6	25.1	5.8
Netherlands	2056.5	12.1	1501.6	8.8
Poland	626.4	1.6	410.1	1.1
Portugal	872.5	8.4	640.5	6.2
Romania	350.8	1.8	202.3	1.0
Slovakia	181.6	3.3	31.1	0.6
Slovenia	241.2	11.7	174.2	8.4
Spain	5919.2	12.7	3962.2	8.5
Sweden	1675.1	17.0	1145.3	11.6
United Kingdom	8698.2	13.3	5447.5	8.3

Notes:

Foreign-born population by country of birth, 1 January 2016 (¹).png. Adapted from *migration and migrant population statistics*, by Eurostat Statistics, 2016 (online data code: migr_pop3ctb). Retrieved from http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/File:Foreign-born_population_by_country _of_birth,_1_January_2016_(%C2%B9).png
[a] Adjusted for foreign-born population born in another EU Member State. [b] The values for the different categories of country of birth may not sum to the totals due to rounding.

Table 2.

GDP at current market prices in 2013, 2014 and 2015

	GDP (billion PPS)		
	2013	2014	2015
Austria	297	303	314
Belgium	355	363	378
Bulgaria	89	92	96
Croatia	67	68	70
Cyprus	19	19	20
Czech Republic	233	244	259
Denmark	189	193	202
Estonia	26	28	28
Finland	164	165	170
France	1908	1938	2020
Germany	2678	2796	2933
Greece	217	217	220
Hungary	176	184	192
Ireland	162	170	193
Italy	1587	1602	1663
Latvia	34	35	37
Lithuania	58	60	61
Luxembourg	38	41	44
Malta	10	10	11
Netherlands	595	606	625
Poland	688	715	757
Portugal	216	223	230
Romania	289	302	323
Slovakia	110	114	119
Slovenia	44	47	49
Spain	1130	1163	1221
Sweden	319	327	347
United Kingdom	1851	1934	2051
European Union	**13548**	**13958**	**14635**

Notes:
GDP at current market prices, 2013–2015 YB16.png. Adapted from *national accounts and GDP,* by Eurostat
Statistics, 2016. Retrieved from http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained
/index.php/File:GDP_at_current_market_prices,_2005_and_2013%E2%80%932015_YB16.png
[a] Adjusted for 2005 and GDP per capita.

Table 3.

Foreign population in European penal institutions on September 1st, 2015

	NUMBER[a]	NUMBER[b]	%[c]
Austria	*9037*	4817	53.3
Belgium	*12841*	5146	40.1
Bulgaria	*7583*	233	3.1
Croatia	*3341*	191	5.7
Cyprus	*654*	250	38.2
Czech Republic	*20866*	1666	8.0
Denmark	*3203*	865	27.0
Estonia	*2768*	207	7.5
Finland	*3007*	455	15.1
France	*65544*	-	-
Germany	*63628*	19921	31.3
Greece	*9646*	5254	54.5
Hungary	*17773*	824	4.6
Ireland	*3746*	463	12.4
Italy	*52389*	17304	33.0
Latvia	*4399*	154	3.5
Lithuania	*8022*	126	1.6
Luxembourg	*667*	491	73.6
Malta	-	-	-
Netherlands	*9002*	1723	19.1
Poland	-	-	-
Portugal	*14222*	2495	17.5
Romania	*28642*	250	0.9
Slovakia	*10087*	184	1.8
Slovenia	*1399*	131	9.4
Spain	*64017*	18680	29.2
Sweden	*5770*	1285	22.3
United Kingdom	*95629*	10944	8.7
European Union	**517883**	**94113**	**18.2**

Notes:

Foreign inmates on 1st September 2015. Adapted from "*Council of Europe annual penal statistics, SPACE I – Prison Populations*" by M. Aebi, M. Tiago and C. Burkhardt on behalf of the Council for Penological Cooperation of the Council of Europe, 2017, Strasbourg, France. P.69-70.

[a]Total number of inmates (Data Council of Europe, Space I 2015) at 1 September 2015. [b]Total number of *foreign* inmates (Data Council of Europe, Space I 2015) at September 2015. [c]% Of foreigners in the total number of inmates (Data Council of Europe, Space I 2015) at September 2015. [d]Adjusted for European Countries and including only total number of inmates, total number of foreign inmates and % of foreigners in the total number of inmates.

Table 4.

Overview of the findings

Hypotheses	Results	Conclusion	Significant
H1: A majority of the respondents will perceive immigrants through the negative securitization frame.	46.7% of the European respondents did not reveal a frame in relation to immigrants.	Rejected	Does not apply
H2: Differences in the usage of the securitization frame can be explained by region of origin.	Region of origin has an effect on the usage of the securitization frame but not on the usage of the axes.	Confirmed	Yes
H3: Compared to female respondents, male respondents are more likely to use the securitization frame.	Compared to female respondents, male respondents are 87.3% more likely to apply the securitization frame but gender has no effect on the usage of the axes.	Confirmed	Yes
H4: Compared to male respondents, female respondents are more likely to post comments that fit within the economic axis.	Compared to female respondents, male respondents are 15.8% more likely to post comments that fit within the economic axis.	Rejected	No
H5: Compared to female respondents, male respondents are more likely to post comments that fit within the societal axis.	Compared to female respondents, male respondents are 33.3% more likely to post comments that fit within the societal axis.	Confirmed	No
H6: Compared to male respondents, female respondents are more likely to post comments that fit within the societal axis.	Compared to female respondents, male respondents are 33.3% more likely to post comments that fit on the societal axis.	Rejected	No
H7: Compared to respondents from other regions, respondents from Southern Europe or the PIIGS region are less likely to use the securitization frame.	Respondents from Southern Europe (OR = 0.52) or the PIIGS region (OR = 0.53) are least likely to use the securitization frame.	Confirmed	Yes
H8: Compared to respondents from other regions, respondents from Eastern Europe or the lagging region will be more likely to use the securitization frame.	Respondents from Eastern Europe (OR = 6.45) or the lagging region (OR = 6.01) are most likely to use the securitization frame.	Confirmed	Yes

Hypotheses	Results	Conclusion	Significant
H9: Compared to respondents from other regions, respondents from Eastern Europe or the lagging region are less likely to post comments that fit within the societal axis.	Compared to respondents from Western Europe or the leading region, respondents from Eastern Europe (OR = 1.60)or the lagging region (OR = 1.98) are more likely to post comments that fit on the societal axis.	Rejected	No
H10: Compared to respondents from other regions, respondents from Eastern Europe or the lagging region will be more likely to post comments that fit within the economic axis.	Compared to respondents form Southern Europe (OR = 2.19) or the PIIGS region (OR = 3.71), respondents from Eastern Europe (OR = 1.26) or the lagging region (OR = 1.85) are less likely to post comments that fit on the economic axis.	Rejected	No
H11: Compared to respondents from other regions, respondents from Western Europe, Northern Europe or the leading region will be less likely to post comments that fit within the economic axis.	Compared to respondents from other regions, respondents from Western Europe (ref.), Northern Europe OR = 0.24) or the leading region (ref.) will be less likely to post comments that fit within the economic axis.	Confirmed	No
H12: Compared to respondents from Eastern Europe or the lagging region, respondents from Southern Europe or the PIIGS region will be more likely to post comments that fit within the economic axis.	Respondents from Southern Europe (OR = 2.19) or the PIIGS region (OR = 3.71) are more likely to post comments that fit within the economic axis than respondents from Eastern Europe (OR = 1.26) or the lagging region (OR = 1.85).	Rejected	No
H13: Compared to respondents from other regions, respondents from Western and Southern Europe or the leading region and the PIIGS region will be more likely to post comments that fit within the criminological axis.	Compared to respondents from Eastern Europe (OR = 0.80) or the lagging region (OR = 0.54), respondents from Southern Europe (OR = 0.46) or the PIIGS region (OR = 0.27) are less likely to post comments that fit within the criminological axis.	Rejected	No

Hypotheses	Results	Conclusion	Significant
H14: Compared to respondents from other regions, respondents from Eastern Europe or the lagging region will be less likely to post comments that fit within the criminological axis.	Compared to respondents from Southern Europe (OR = 0.46) or the PIIGS region (OR = 0.27), respondents from Eastern Europe (OR = 0.80) or the lagging region (OR = 0.54) are more likely to post comments that fit within the criminological axis.	Rejected	No
H15: Compared to respondents from other regions, respondents from Northern Europe or the leading region will be more likely to post comments that fit within the political axis.	Due to too little observations, including the political axis in the regression analysis led to unreliable results.	No finding	
H16: Compared to respondents from other regions, respondents from Southern Europe or the PIIGS region will be less likely to post comments that fit within the political axis.	Due to too little observations, including the political axis in the regression analysis led to unreliable results.	No finding	