Speaking and Perceiving Security

A Case Study of the Trump Administration's Securitization of Illegal Immigration Fueling Populism in the US

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Abstract:

During his presidential campaign and throughout his presidency Donald Trump's dealings with illegal immigration have sparked global controversy. The election of Donald Trump has thus insinuated a debate within the academic field of International Relations and a reoccurring concept within said debate is populism. This thesis includes itself into said debate through considering the empirical case study of the Trump administration's securitization of illegal immigration. More specifically, it investigates how Trump's securitizing speech acts fuel populism in the US which challenges discourses of open borders and subsequently affects US-Mexico relations. The thesis analyzes polls to captivate the US' general population as an audience and applies discourse analysis on speeches held by Donald Trump to grasp how the Trump administration's securitization of illegal immigration fueled populism in the US. It studies the negative effects of the securitization on US-Mexico relations by examining the reactions of Mexican presidents, members of the Mexican Foreign Relations Department and members of the Mexican senate. It is found that Trump's rhetoric employed throughout the securitization of illegal immigration fueled authoritarian populism and xenophobic populism in the US which captivates the negative sentiments of the predominantly conservative Republican voters towards illegal immigration. The employed rhetoric subsequently challenged discourses of open borders. The effects of said challenges had negative implications on US-Mexico relations as the investigations of the reactions of the Mexican presidents, the members of the Mexican Foreign Relations Department and the members of the Mexican senate have shown.

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1. Introduction

The recent rise of populism within Western democracies challenges discourses of open borders. Examples for events resulting from the rise of populism are Brexit, the success of populist parties in Europe like the Alternative for Germany (AFD) and the fact that Donald Trump has been elected as president of the United States (US). All of the aforementioned events are a result of the rise of populism in Western democracies and arguably challenge discourses of open borders. To investigate how the rise of populism challenges discourses of open borders the thesis considers the empirical case study of the Trump administration's securitization of illegal immigration. Specifically, it argues that the Trump administration's securitization of illegal immigration is fueling populism in the US and that Trump's rhetoric throughout his securitizing speech acts showcases challenges against open borders. For the purpose of the thesis open borders are referred to as borders which enable the free movement of people without substantial restrictions as a result of effective bilateral cooperation on the border between two countries (Casey, 2010: 16). The thesis aims to demonstrate that this is not the case at the US-Mexico border because the securitization of illegal immigration by the Trump administration fueled populism in the US which arguably had negative impacts on the effective bilateral cooperation between the US and Mexico, thus resulting in the restriction of movement on the border between the two countries. The thesis exemplifies this by investigating the negative effects Trump's securitizing speech acts have on US-Mexico relations. More specifically, said negative effects will be discussed in detail in section 4.6 as they follow as a deduction of the preceding elements within the analysis. I will therefore investigate the following research question; How did the Trump administration's securitization of illegal immigration fuel populism in the US and consequently challenge discourses of open borders?

During his campaign and throughout his presidency Trump's dealings with illegal immigration have been perceived controversially. The election of Donald Trump as President has led to a wide array of reactions within the academic field of International Relations (IR). Numerous scholars incorporated the concept of populism in investigating the election and the presidency of Trump. However, there has been a lack of emphasis on Securitization Theory (ST) when analyzing the concept of populism with regards to Trump's campaign and his time as president. Therefore, the thesis will include itself into the debate by considering the theoretical lens of ST in focusing on how the Trump administration's securitization of illegal immigration is fueling populism in the US. The consideration of ST ultimately provides a means to better understand how the recent rise of populism

challenges discourses of open borders because the securitization of illegal immigration involves the portrayal of illegal immigration as an existential threat which affects the US general population.

Therefore, this thesis argues that a consideration of the general population as an audience within ST illuminates how the Trump administration's securitization of illegal immigration fuels populism in the US. The general population is treated as the target audience because populism encompasses "the people" being wronged, betrayed, or left vulnerable to forces which are outside of their control (Gagnon et al., 2018:9). Treating the elite instead of the general population as the audience would thus not contribute to the aim of understanding how populism challenges discourses of open borders.

The thesis is relevant to the academic field of IR because ST is connected to constructivist theories of IR, specifically when considering that the process of securitization is situated in the realm of discursive legitimization (Williams, 2003:511). The theoretical framework of ST is applied in conjunction with discourse analysis and discursive institutionalism. The thesis is not just relevant to the academic field of IR, but also to the empirical system level of international relations because it investigates how the recent rise of populism challenges discourses of open borders. The thesis showcases this by investigating how Trump's securitizing speech acts fuel populism in the US which challenges discourses of open borders and subsequently negatively affects US-Mexico relations. Said negative effects refer to the general disagreement of the US and Mexico on the use of rhetoric and the decision-making around dealing with issues caused by immigration at the border of which both countries bear the consequences, resulting in tensions within the relationship between the two countries.

First, in the literature review the thesis introduces the theoretical implications of ST. Within the theory a focus is placed on the concept of audience as it has traditionally not been considered a dominant feature when the Copenhagen School first developed the theory of securitization (Buzan, et al. 1998). The thesis, however, deems it necessary to expand on the concept of audience because comparatively little research has been done with a consideration of a non-elite audience within ST (Balzacq et al, 2015). Moreover, the literature review considers how populism, Jacksonianism, discursive institutionalism and US-Mexico Relations have been treated in the academic field of IR. Secondly, the methodology applied in the analysis will be presented. Thirdly, with regards to populist implications, the conceptual apparatus of ST will be applied to the Trump administration's securitization of illegal immigration. The thesis will conclude with a discussion of the findings and suggestions for further research.

2. Literature Review

As mentioned in the introduction I am aiming to investigate how the recent rise of populism in Western democracies challenges discourses of open borders. To do so, the thesis considers the empirical case study of the Trump administration's securitization of illegal immigration. I am outlining five themes characterizing the research of relevance to this thesis' endeavor. The literature review will begin with the primary attributes of the thesis; ST and populism. Concretely, I will first provide an overview of ST as the empirical case of the Trump administration's securitization of illegal immigration makes for a better understanding of how the recent rise of populism in Western democracies challenges discourses of open borders. Secondly, I will provide an overview of criticism expressed towards ST with a focus on its lack of emphasizing the role of the audience. Thirdly, a discussion around the conceptual properties of populism will be introduced. I will discuss how scholars investigated populism with regards to the Trump administration. Furthermore, I will dissect the broad nature of the term into the two conceptualizations of authoritarian populism and xenophobic populism to make for a better understanding of populism in the US for the further course of the thesis.

The following themes are of secondary nature, but still essential to the following course of the thesis. Concretely, Discursive institutionalism will be incorporated as it illustrates how political figures such as Trump engage the general public in a communicative discourse in light of the recent rise of populism in the US. The institutions making for a so-called discursive bridge considered in this thesis are the Democratic Party, the Republican Party and the American constitution. Jacksonianism makes for a better understanding of the Trump administration fueling populism in the US. The consideration of research on the Trump administration's negative effects on US-Mexico relations illuminates how the rise of populism in the US negatively affected US-Mexico relations.

2.1 Securitization Theory

Through ST the thesis considers the general population as the target audience during the securitization process. It hypothesizes that this aids in understanding how the Trump administration's securitization of illegal immigration fuels populism in the US to better understand how populism challenged discourses of open borders. The theory first emerged as the product of the work of Buzan, Waever and De Wilde who engaged in studying security. Their work is collectively referred to as the "Copenhagen School". Securitization refers to the transformation of a subject into an existential threat which can only be countered with extraordinary measures in the name of security. The Copenhagen

School states that there is a difference between politicization and securitization. Specifically, politicized subjects require regular government action whereas securitized subjects require the application of extraordinary measures (Buzan et al., 1998:23).

Securitization occurs when a subject is moved from the politicized area into the securitized area. Therefore, successfully securitized subjects receive disproportionate amounts of recourses and attention compared to unsuccessfully securitized subjects. A significant strength of ST is its uniqueness within the general field of security studies as it explores the character of security in a broader context by incorporating the military-, political, societal, economical and the environmental sector instead of only focusing on one specific sector (Buzan et al., 1998). The thesis places an emphasis on the political, the societal and the economic sector as they are of higher importance to the investigation of how the Trump administration's securitization of illegal immigration fueled populism in the US.

Furthermore, Buzan, Waever and De Wilde developed a conceptual apparatus to provide a better understanding of the transformation from a politicized subject into a securitized subject (Buzan et al., 1998:21). First, there must be an existential threat which threatens the survival of a referent object. In the societal sector the referent object can be understood as a distinct culture, or a national identity. The portrayal of something as an existential threat can then justify the use of extraordinary measures. The portrayal takes place in the form of a securitizing move, which is a speech act conveyed by a securitizing actor. However, extraordinary measures can only be justified if the audience towards whom the speech act is directed to accepts the existential threat as one. For the sake of academic accuracy, it is important to mention that securitization can take place even though the securitized subject is not an existential threat. (Buzan et al. 1998:21-26). In summary, the Copenhagen School's ST presents three main attributes which contribute to the process of securitization: the referent object, whose survival has been threatened, the securitizing actor, who enacts the speech act and the audience which may or may not support the securitizing actor's call for extraordinary measures.

2.2 Critique towards Securitization Theory

A considerable weakness of the theory and its conceptual apparatus is that the audience has traditionally not been considered a predominant attribute of ST when the Copenhagen School first developed the theory of securitization (Buzan, et al. 1998). It was merely conceptualized as something that is "backing up" speech acts (Buzan et al., 1998:26–33). Speech acts were here defined as securitizing moves that became securitizations through audience consent. Additionally, the

Copenhagen School portrayed the audience as the political elite of a nation-state. This is arguably due to its argumentation that extraordinary measures can still be accepted through the political elite even though the general population deems them as illegitimate (Collins, 2005).

As a result, there has been a wide range of scholarship within the academic field of IR arguing that the concept of audience within ST has been undertheorized (Fierke, 1997; McDonald, 2008; Balzacq et al, 2015). For example, Balzacq et al (2015) criticize the Copenhagen School by accentuating the role of the audience and therefore characterizing ST as an intersubjective theory. They believe that the audience plays an important role in legitimizing the securitizing actor's decision. Furthermore, Balzacq (2005) criticizes that there is a greater focus on the articulation itself rather than on the result of a negotiation between the speaker and the audience towards whom the speech act is directed to (Balzacq, 2005:173). Balzacq therefore argues that securitization should be audience-centered and that it can be better understood as a strategic practice which occurs as part of a configuration of circumstances, which predominantly includes the context of the speech act in relation to the psycho-cultural disposition of the audience. Balzacq therefore underlines the interdependence of the securitizing actor and the audience during their interaction (Balzacq, 2005:172). The strength of Balzacq's research lies in the fact that his aim was to tackle a theoretical gap within ST and the securitization process in particular.

Fierke (1997) also integrated into the discussion around the role of the audience within ST by arguing that audiences constitute speech communities in which certain forms of representation are legitimate and intelligible and others are illegitimate and unintelligible. This argumentation accentuates the interactive aspect of the speech act during the securitization process which Balzacq emphasized. Matt McDonald (2008) also argues that the Copenhagen School undertheorized securitization and therefore aims to strengthen the theoretical framework of ST by integrating several dimensions of constructing security. According to him, one of said dimensions is the concept of audience which needs to be expanded in order for ST to cover a wider range of subjects within the security discourse (McDonald, 2008:231). He argues that, for example, official publications by political actors are aimed at the broader public, which is why it becomes a natural target audience during the securitization process. The thesis includes itself into this discussion by arguing that the general population in the US must be considered as an audience within the Trump administration's securitization of illegal immigration.

2.3 Populism

Populism is one of the central premises within this thesis. However, there is an ongoing debate around the term populism. For example, and as with many concepts within the academic field of IR, there is not one agreed upon definition of the term populism. Therefore, it must be further explored to place it into the right context within the analysis of this thesis. The following section will provide an overview of research conducted on the heterogeneous conceptual terrain of populism.

Gagnon et al. (2018) accentuate that populism is a highly contested concept by stating that it is viewed as a term with a binary connotation as either left-wing or right-wing within contemporary postmillennial politics (Gagnon et al., 2018:8). Nonetheless, the authors attempted to conceptualize populism by stating that the term's single defining characteristic is "the people" being wronged, betrayed, or left vulnerable to forces which are outside of their control (Gagnon et al., 2018:9). The strength of the author's work in this case is that it arguably established a common denominator for a term as controversially perceived as populism.

The research conducted by Inglehart and Norris (2017) connects to the argumentation that populism resembles a dissatisfactory disconnection between the general population and the elite. Inglehart and Norris examined how less educated people, who do not belong to *the top* experienced declining existential security which arguably fueled populist phenomena such as Brexit and the election of Donald Trump (Inglehart & Norris, 2017:451). Inglehart and Norris argue that higher levels of insecurity make people more xenophobic since security and survival cannot be taken for granted. This has the effect of less educated people being less inclined towards accepting outgroups who might contest *the little security* that is there (Inglehart & Norris, 2017:444).

Now that it has been established how the term populism is generally treated within the field of IR the section can discuss how scholars investigated the effect populism had on discourses of open borders. This is done to inform the analysis of Trump's speech acts to ultimately investigate what effect the Trump administration's securitization of illegal immigration had on the system level. More specifically, examined is how it affected US-Mexico diplomatic relations. Walker et al (2018) argue that the rise of populism did not just lead to a polarization of Right and Left, but that it also pushed discourses of open borders towards discourses involving "hardening national borders" and "pushing back on migration" (Walker et al, 2018:88). Walker et al argue recent populist discourses reinforce distinctions between citizens and non-citizens with regards to the movement of people across borders. This underlines the argument of the thesis that the recent rise of populism within Western democracies challenges discourses of open borders. Walker et al underline this argumentation by

pointing out how the recent rise of populism results in new waves of isolation in the form of fences and walls to control immigration and a refusal to "share the cake" (Walker et al, 2018:102).

Schubert (2016) engages in research on Trump's rhetoric and how he metaphorically frames Mexican immigrants. He argues that Trump misrepresents Mexican immigrants to legitimize enhanced border security and that Trump employs a xenophobic approach by framing Mexicans as villains in order to reach voters who feel underprivileged (Schubert, 2016:39).

Serra (2018) includes himself into the debate by arguing that Trump displays populist attributes by putting himself on the side of the neglected working class against the corrupt elite (Serra, 2018:62). Furthermore, he argues that it was not Trump's experience in the field of politics which made him president of the US, but rather his populist rhetoric which reinforced populism in the US (Serra, 2018:65). None of the aforementioned perspectives adopted the theoretical implications of ST. This thesis, however, employs ST and argues that the Trump administration's securitization of illegal immigration is fueling this populism in the US and that Trump's rhetoric throughout his securitizing speech acts showcases challenges against open borders.

In analyzing Trump's rhetoric throughout the securitization process the thesis will draw on two distinct conceptualizations of populism; authoritarian populism and xenophobic populism. According to Inglehart and Norris (2018), authoritarian populism supports strong leaders who are willingly expressing politically incorrect views as long as it defends traditional beliefs and values such as keeping people in fairly paid work and the jobs for that at home (Inglehart & Norris, 2018:17). The thesis will regard political incorrectness as information which is factually ambiguous or untrue.

The other relevant conceptualization, xenophobic populism supports an organic understanding of *the people* as a culturally homogenous group which is threatened by the "dissolution of their identity" and who counters these perceived threats through the exclusion of weaker groups such as migrants (Filc, 2011:223). The thesis will emphasize authoritarian populism and xenophobic populism within the analysis. More specifically, I will investigate whether Trump's rhetoric throughout the securitization process reinforced authoritarian populism and xenophobic populism in the US. The following section will introduce discursive institutionalism which arguably clarifies the connection between the speaker and the audience during the securitization process.

2.4 Discursive Institutionalism

Rothstein (1998), Schmidt (2008) and Schulze (2018) emphasize the relevance of discursive institutionalism when exploring the role of the audience within the process of securitization. Schulze

accentuates the political sphere of discursive institutionalism as it resolves around how political figures engage the public in a communicative discourse (Schulze, 2018:226). This argumentation stresses the aforementioned argument that the audience participates in the securitization process. The political sphere of discursive institutionalism will be taken into consideration within the analysis of this thesis. Concretely, when examining how Trump engaged the general public of the US in a communicative security discourse through his speech acts and thus ultimately reinforced populism.

Rothstein argues that the communicative aspect of discourse develops through institutions. More specifically, considering institutions aids in the explanation of why particular ideas fail and others succeed based on *how, where and to whom* they were projected (Rothstein, 1998:121). Schmidt elaborates on said argument by stating that therefore, institutions characterize the relationship among the members of a discourse and how securitizing speech acts are conveyed and perceived (Schmidt, 2008:309). Schmidt's research lends to the discussion around the emerging importance of the non-elite audience in the securitization discourse and whether their importance emerged due to the influence of institutions which allowed for them to be active participants in the security discourse. Hence, considering discursive institutionalism is beneficial when analyzing how a non-elite audience engaged in security discourse.

Because discursive institutionalism considers how political figures engage the public in a communicative discourse about whether certain policies are necessary or appropriate it aids in understanding how the Trump administration was able to reinforce populism in the US through securitizing illegal immigration. Considering institutions thus aids in the explanation of why particular ideas fail and other success based on *how, where and to whom* they were projected. The thesis treats the Democratic Party, the Republican Party and the US Constitutions as institutions which build the discursive bridge between the speaker and the audience during the securitization process to better understand how populism in the US was fueled by the securitization of illegal immigration.

2.5 Jacksonianism

A prominent and reoccurring feature of research connected to the concept of xenophobic populism is the concept of Jacksonianism. It specifically connects to the idea of "the people" being threatened by the dissolution of their identity (Cha, 2016:84). This relates to the conceptualization of xenophobic populism in terms of viewing *the people* as a culturally homogenous group which is threatened by

the dissolution of their identity. Gallagher (2016) examined the arguably recent upsurge of Jacksonianism in the US by investigating empirical examples that provoked the American middle-class to adopt Jacksonian attributes (Gallagher, 2016:20). Cha (2016) builds on Gallagher's examination by arguing that is was Trump who did not just grasp said upsurge, but also made that force identify with what he advocates (Cha, 2016:86). Moreover, Cha argues that Jacksonians emphasize egalitarianism and anti-elitism in drawing a distinction between members of the folk group and people that are outside of it (Cha, 2016:93). Just like the conceptualization of xenophobic populism Jacksonianism reveals populist implications in terms of anti-elitism in drawing a distinction between members of their own folk group and people that are outside of it, which is arguably a xenophobic populist attribute.

Germano (2017) analyzed how Jacksonian attributes are reinforced by Trump's rhetoric which in turn negatively influences US-Mexico relations. Germano's argument thus relates to the endeavor of the thesis which is to determine how Trump's speech acts strengthened populism in the US and simultaneously rhetorically challenged ideas of open borders. A prominent aspect within his work has been Trump's argument that he would make Mexico pay for the wall. He argues that, since a large part of the American population is more interested in retaliation against the problems of illegal immigration rather than in foreign policy development, there is a disregard for successfully maintaining international relations with Mexico (Germano, 2017:5).

Considering the concept of Jacksonianism is helpful when aiming to understand how the Trump administration's securitization of illegal immigration fueled populism in the US as it aids in understanding a large segment of the general population's concerns such as anti-elitism and the perception of threat from outside forces.

2.6 US-Mexico Relations

The thesis aims to investigate how the rise of populism challenges discourses of open borders by considering the empirical case study of the Trump administration's securitization of illegal immigration. More concretely, examined are the negative effects Trump's securitizing speech acts have on US-Mexico relations. To put this aim into the context of the academic field of IR this section considers how scholars such as Stevenson (2016), Gill (2019) and Slack (2019) have investigated the effect which the Trump administration has on US-Mexico relations.

Stevenson analyzed polls and states that 76% Mexicans either have a bad or a very bad impression of Trump (Stevenson, 2016:1). He discusses how the Trump administration's harsh dealing with illegal immigration results in the Mexican government making less of an effort in interdicting immigrants before they reach the US-Mexico border (Stevenson, 2016:1). Moreover, Stevenson touches upon the Trump administration's critical view towards the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and how the prolonged renegotiations caused domestic instabilities in Mexico, resulting in negative pressure on US-Mexico Relations (Stevenson, 2016:2). Lastly, Stevenson discussed the transition from former Mexican president Peña Nieto to current López Obrador and how the López Obrador administration arguably plays on the "Mexican electorate's distaste for Trump's right-wing policies" (Stevenson, 2019:2). Stevenson argues that this increases the tension between the countries on both a societal level and a political level. Gill (2019) also investigates the effects which Trump's rhetoric had on US-Mexico relations. He emphasizes that there is no separation between rhetoric and policy and therefore argues that the two are interdependent. This led Gill to argue that Trump calling illegal immigrants "rapists" underpins the building of the wall (Gill, 2019:107).

Slack's research predominantly resolves around the Trump administration's militarization of the border between the US and Mexico. He argues that the militarization brings about a number of negative effects for both countries, especially with regards to the border's facilitation of transnational flows of capital. Slack exemplifies this by referring to less and less people willing to cross the border on the ground for commercial purposes due to the arguably extreme military measures implemented by the Trump administration (Slack, 2019:195). Building on this is Slack's argument that the militarization's direct conflict with capital will intensify and result in considerable negative effects on US-Mexico relations (Slack, 2019:197). As argued above, the Trump administration's securitization of illegal immigration has negative effects on US-Mexico relations which is arguably a result of how the rise of populism in Western democracies challenges discourses of open borders. The perspectives mentioned above will illuminate the analysis in which said effects will inter alia be investigated.

2.7 Summary

The conceptualizations of authoritarian populism and xenophobic populism serve as explanatory conceptual guidelines for understanding how the Trump administration is fueling populism in the US.

The consideration of research on Jacksonianism provides a better understanding of populism in the US in particular. It also serves as a basis for understanding the nationalistic attributes of a large segment of the US population and the resulting conformity with the Trump administration's securitization of illegal immigration, which ultimately affects US-Mexico relations. Jacksonianism in the US is tied to the concept of national identity which is particularly relevant within the concept of xenophobic populism. The analysis of how the Trump administration strengthened populism in the US is underlined by ST in general and the conceptual apparatus in particular as it will serve as a framework for the analysis. An emphasis will be placed on the concept of audience through treating the general population in the US as such. Specifically, it is investigated how a *non-elite* audience was targeted by Trump's speech acts in the US which arguably reinforces populism in the US.

Trump's speech acts and the resulting discursive interaction with the general population in the US is informed by discursive institutionalism. It provides a means to analyze the communicative aspects between Trump's security discourse and the general population as an audience in the US. The consideration of the Republican Party, the Democratic Party and the Constitution as institutions provides a basis for understanding the discursive bridge and thus the power mediated between the general population and the Trump administration. Moreover, the research discussed on the Trump administration's negative effects on US-Mexico relations illuminates the investigation of how the rise of populism in the US negatively affected US-Mexico relations because the rise of populism in Western democracies arguably challenges discourses of open borders. Hence, the relevant background for the further course of the thesis has been discussed and established. The following section will present and discuss the methodological approaches applied within the analysis.

3. Methodology

The research problem of this thesis is to better understand how the recent rise of populism within Western democracies challenged discourses of open borders. To do so the thesis considers the empirical case study of the Trump administration's securitization of illegal immigration. I will investigate how Trump's securitizing speech acts strengthen populism in the US which challenges discourses of open borders and subsequently negatively affects US-Mexico relations. The aims require the combination of the conceptual apparatus of ST and the aforementioned concepts of authoritarian populism, xenophobic populism, Jacksonianism and discursive institutionalism. The

following section provides an overview of how the empirical case study contributes to the pursuit of these aims.

3.1 Units of Analysis

The thesis argues that a consideration of the general population as an audience within ST explains how the Trump administration's securitization of illegal immigration fuels populism in the US as a case study showcasing how populism challenges discourses of open borders. To do so the securitization process must be investigated first. As mentioned above, securitization is the transformation from a politicized subject into a securitized subject. To better understand this transformation Buzan, Waever and De Wilde developed the conceptual apparatus of ST (Buzan et al., 1998:21). I will now connect the case of the Trump administration's securitization of illegal immigration to the conceptual apparatus developed by Buzan, Waever and De Wilde.

First, there must be an existential threat which threatens the survival of a referent object. In the case of this thesis the portrayed existential threat is illegal immigration. The analysis aims to investigate several referent objects situated in the societal and the economic security sector which will be specifically examined through the consideration of Trump's speech acts within the analysis. According to the conceptual apparatus the portrayal of something as an existential threat can justify the use of extraordinary measures. The analysis aims to investigate several extraordinary measures through the consideration of Trump's speech acts. The portrayal takes place in the form of securitizing moves which are speech acts conveyed by a securitizing actor. The securitizing actor conveying the speech acts is Donald Trump. However, extraordinary measures can only be justified if the audience towards whom the speech act is directed to accepts the existential threat as one.

The general population of the US will be treated as the target audience to aid the aim of captivating how the Trump administration's securitization of illegal immigration is fueling populism in the US. That is because populism encompasses "the people" being wronged, betrayed, or left vulnerable to forces which are outside of their control (Gagnon et al., 2018:9). Illegal immigration is arguably outside the control of general population. It will be investigated how Trump portrays illegal immigration as an existential threat towards referent objects which ultimately affect the US general population.

To better understand what constitutes the general population the thesis analyzes statistical data in the form of polls and Trump's speech acts aimed at securitizing illegal immigration in the US. The polling data specifically aids in detecting the US political environment wherein the general population

exists. This arguably clarifies whether the political alignments have an effect on the response towards securitizing moves, which also makes for a better understanding of the speaker-audience relationship throughout the securitization process. The thesis considers a number of different research centers for the polls to avoid the risk of analyzing biased data.

Furthermore, the thesis investigates the political environment in the US within the timeframe of when Trump started running for president until the time of writing. This is justifiable as the aim is to captivate the effect of populism on the Trump administration's securitization of illegal immigration. The securitization process arguably began when Trump first engaged in campaigning for the office of president and continues at the time of writing this thesis. I will not analyze all speeches regarding illegal immigration which were held within this timeframe due to restrictions in time and space. Instead, I selected eleven speeches which span across the aforementioned timeframe and contain the units of analysis of the conceptual apparatus of securitization to accommodate the aim of investigating how Trump's securitizing speech acts fuel populism in the US which challenge discourses of open borders and subsequently negatively affects US-Mexico relations. Trump's candidacy announcement speech was held at Trump Tower in New York City. The majority of the selected speeches on illegal immigration held during his presidency took place at the white house in places accessible to the media. Exceptions are "Donald Trump's Immigration Address" and the "Remarks by President Trump on the National Security and Humanitarian Crisis on our Southern Border" which were held in the Oval Office and broadcasted to the public via various news outlets.

Subsequently, I will analyze the reactions of the former Mexican president Peña Nieto, current president Andrés Manuel López Obrador, members of the Mexican Foreign Relations Department and members of the Mexican senate to illuminate how Trump's rhetoric negatively affects US-Mexico relations.

3.2 Discourse Analysis and Discursive Institutionalism

Now that the conceptual apparatus of ST has been applied to the empirical case study it is possible to argue for the applicability of discourse analysis. Qualitative discourse analysis will be applied to analyze speech acts by Trump which are aimed at securitizing illegal immigration and to analyze the reaction of the aforementioned Mexican government officials. I will scan Trump's speech acts for the units of analysis within the conceptual apparatus of ST to analyze how illegal immigration is being securitized by the Trump administration. More specifically, the speech acts will be scanned for how

illegal immigration is portrayed as an existential threat towards the referent object and how this leads to the call for extraordinary measures.

I will emphasize the conceptual properties of the social and the political sphere of discursive institutionalism to underline the general population as the audience. According to discursive institutionalism discourse is not only about what an actor says, but also about to whom they say it. More specifically, just as this thesis will, discursive institutionalism considers the interactive aspect of discourse as it demonstrates that ideas are dynamic by emphasizing how, why and where the carriers of ideas convince others (or not) to take up their ideas. Institutions are assumed to be organizational and ideational structures which construct a frame for interaction between the speaker and the audience. The institutions emphasized within the analysis of this thesis which contribute to said interaction are the Democratic Party, the Republican Party and the US Constitution. Specifically, I will argue that it is partisanship and group loyalty which shape the interaction between Trump's speech acts and the general population as an audience within the security discourse.

I will not apply Laclau and Mouffe's theoretical conceptualization of discourse analysis. Concretely, the construction process of discourse is not going to be the target of analysis. At this point it is important to mention that identities are constructed over time since national identity is a considerable factor within the analysis. The thesis acknowledges this aspect of identity. However, it will not primarily resolve around the construction process of how the national identity was shaped through discourses.

Furthermore, I will partially apply Fairclough's critical discourse analysis and the connected concepts of intertextuality- and interdiscursivity. The thesis acknowledges that individual discourses draw on elements of other discourses, but it will not emphasize the analysis of their specific relationships because of restrictions in both time- and space. Instead, I will make use of two out of the three aspects; first, the wider social practice to which the communicative event belongs, and secondly the linguistic features of the text to analyze how Trump portrays himself, the existential threat and the referent object. This will be done in conjunction with discursive institutionalism and an emphasis on the units of analysis within the conceptual apparatus of ST.

3.3 Data Collection and Justification

To investigate how the rise of populism challenges discourses of open borders the thesis considers the empirical case study of the Trump administration's securitization of illegal immigration. The

thesis applies discourse analysis on the empirical single case of the Trump administration's securitization of illegal immigration.

The primary unit of analysis analyzed through discourse analysis are therefore speech acts by Donald Trump aimed at securitizing illegal immigration. As I touched upon previously, immigration is a system level factor which impacts the state level of the US. The way illegal immigration is dealt with on the state level in the US reciprocally affects US-Mexico relations (the system level). The main influential factor taken into consideration in this regard are speech acts by Trump aiming to securitize illegal immigration. These speech acts challenge discourses of open borders and thus arguably negatively affect US-Mexico relations. To investigate said effects, I will analyze how the former and the current Mexican president, the Mexican Foreign Relations Department and the Mexican senate reacted to Trump's rhetoric and specific consequential policy implementation.

The speeches which are being analyzed for both the securitization process and the effect on US-Mexico relations are collected within the time frame of when Trump announced his candidacy to run for president until the time of writing this thesis. The transcripts of the speeches by Trump are collected via several news outlets and official websites provided by the US government open to the public. The speeches by the two Mexican presidents and the reactions of the Mexican Foreign Relations Department and the Mexican senate are collected via US news outlets as they translated the speeches from Spanish into English. Multiple news outlets will be accessed to eliminate potential media bias and faulty translation. A list of sources analyzed within the analysis is provided within the appendix of the thesis.

In analyzing the speeches, the thesis will refer back to the literature reviewed above. The theoretical implications of ST will be applied throughout the analysis. Research on discursive institutionalism arguably reinforces the suitability of discourse analysis when examining the relevance of the general population as an audience during the securitization process. Authoritarian populism, xenophobic populism and Jacksonianism aid in understanding how Trump's speech acts fuel populism. The scholarly approaches to US-Mexico relations will inform the analysis of how Trump's speech acts challenge discourses of open borders and subsequently negatively affect US-Mexico relations.

3.4 Strengths and Weaknesses

Generally, discourse analysis is an exploration of language in context. It assumes that there is a co-variation between a given context and the discourse (Ross & Rivers, 2018:3). In this case, the

discourse is speech acts by Donald Trump aimed at securitizing illegal immigration. The context is the contemporary political environment in the US generally and the recent rise of populism specifically. Even though discourse analysis is widely applied within the academic field of IR, there is no common understanding on rules or guidelines for how to study discourse. This can be considered a weakness and a strength of discourse analysis. A weakness in that it arguably makes the method unclear in an academic context, and a strength in that the application of discourse analysis can be viewed as a contribution to the development of a research program that is "unfinished" (Milliken, 1999:223).

Another weakness of discourse analysis is that it is selective. For instance, this thesis can be considered selective when arguing for only applying discourse analysis on not just speeches by Trump, but also reactions by the Mexican presidents, members of the Mexican Foreign Relations Department and members of the Mexican senate. However, this weakness can be somewhat devalued by arguing that the aim of this thesis is to analyze how Trump's securitizing speech acts fuel populism in the US which challenges discourses of open borders and subsequently negatively affects US-Mexico relations. The selective aspect of discourse analysis is hence justifiable as analyzing other sources than the ones selected would be irrelevant to this thesis' endeavor. Another disadvantage here is that Trump's speeches are not objective in their nature. Instead, they are the result of one actor aiming to convince an audience of his stance on an issue like illegal immigration. However, the significance of said disadvantage can be partially eliminated as discourse analysis is interpretive. It provides the possibility of interpreting Trump's speech acts to not just analyze them for what they are, but also understand them as acts with a specific purpose.

Conclusively, the application of discourse analysis on Trump's securitizing speech acts and the reactions of the Mexican government representatives to the securitizing speech acts aids in examining the research question; How did the Trump administration's securitization of illegal immigration fuel populism in the US and consequently challenge discourses of open borders?

4. Analysis

The analysis will first explore the political environment wherein the Trump administration securitizes illegal immigration to better understand how the securitization fueled populism in the US. To do so the thesis will predominantly draw on polls which indicate the social and political preconditions of the general population in the US. The thesis will then proceed to analyzing the Trump

administration's securitization of illegal immigration. This will be done through the application of the conceptual apparatus of ST in conjunction with discourse analysis. A great focus will be put on the concepts of authoritarian populism and xenophobic populism because they aid in understanding how Trump reinforced populism in the US through his speech acts which challenge discourses of open borders. I will analyze the reactions of the former Mexican president Peña Nieto, current president Andrés Manuel López Obrador, members of the Mexican Foreign Relations Department and members of the Mexican senate to illuminate how Trump's rhetoric challenges open borders and subsequently negatively affects US-Mexico relations.

4.1 The Political Environment in the US

It is essential to determine the political environment in which the Trump administration securitizes illegal immigration to understand how the securitization fueled populism in the US. The political environment explored here predominantly resolves around the political ideologies of the general population in the US. It establishes several important factors of the securitization process. For example, the way securitizing moves are perceived by the audience depends on the political environment. More important, however, is that the political environment establishes what messages are being conveyed, who the sender is and who the recipient is (Leicht, 2012: 61). This thesis investigates how Trump's securitizing speech acts strengthen populism in the US which challenges discourses of open borders and subsequently negatively affects US-Mexico relations. Therefore, it must be explored in what political environment the Trump administration securitizes illegal immigration. An emphasis in this effort will be put on political factors.

I will now consider polling data from several research centers to encompass the political environment wherein the Trump administration reinforces populism by securitizing illegal immigration. The found data reflects a situation in the US in which two dominant political parties cause an ideological divide. More specifically, the US political environment is dominated by the ideological divide between the predominantly conservative Republican voters and the predominantly liberal Democrat voters (Bykov, 2017:53). For example, in 2018 51% of Democrats identified as liberal and 73% of Republicans identified as conservative (Saad, 2019). The recent rise of populism in Western democracies arguably caused a polarization of right and left as argued by Walker et al. (2018:88), making a population more adhesive towards Trump's rhetoric which is fueling populism in the US.

The ideological divide is further underlined by the finding that seniors and adults aged 50 to 64 with no college education lean more Republican conservative than Democratic liberal by 15 percentage points. In contrast to that, adults aged 18 to 49 with a postgraduate education lean more Democratic liberal than Republican conservative by four points (Saad, 2019). This resembles Inglehart and Norris' argument that less educated people experience declining existential security which leads them to being less inclined towards accepting outgroups who might contest *the little security* that is there (Inglehart & Norris, 2017:451). When emphasizing views on immigration in particular, 37% of Republicans view immigration as the top issue in the US whereas only 10% of Democrats view it as the top issue (Mccarthy, 2018).

It is possible to argue that the stance of the conservative Republican segment of the general population towards illegal immigration was fueled by the Trump administration's securitization of illegal immigration. This is accentuated when taking Trump's proposed wall at the southern border into account and the administration's measures taken to implement the proposal. In 2018 73% of Republicans supported "significantly expanding the construction of walls along the U.S.-Mexico border," whereas only 13% of Democrats said the same (Newport, 2019). Even in 2019 it has been found that 82% of Republicans support expanding the wall, whereas 93% of Democrats oppose it (Gramlich, 2019).

As mentioned above the found data reflects a situation in the US in which there is an ideological divide between the predominantly conservative Republican voters and the predominantly liberal Democrat voters. The consideration of the polling data makes it easier to understand who the target audience of the Trump administration's securitization of illegal immigration is. More specifically, the polls indicate that the predominantly conservative Republican voters are more likely to accepts Trump's securitizing speech acts, especially when considering the polling data with regards to the wall at the southern border. The predominantly liberal democrats, in contrast, are not as likely to accepts the securitizing speech acts due to the predominantly liberal ideology which does not coincide with the Trump administration's securitization of illegal immigration (Birnbaum, 2018:696).

Furthermore, the predominantly conservative Republican part of the population reflects the previously established conceptual attributes of xenophobic populism, and Jacksonianism. Xenophobic populism in terms of the predominantly conservative Republican voters being a culturally homogenous group which is threatened by the dissolution of their identity and who counters these perceived threats through the exclusion of weaker groups such as migrants. Jacksonianism in terms of drawing a distinction between members of the folk group and people that are outside of it.

Therefore, the Trump administration's securitizing moves related to illegal immigration will most likely be successful with the predominantly conservative Republican part of the population as the apparent populist attributes are fueled by Trump's rhetoric within his speech acts. This is especially identifiable when considering how many Republican voters support the wall at the southern border. This argument will be further examined with regard to securitizing speech acts by Donald Trump in the next section of this thesis.

4.2 Donald Trump – The Securitizing Actor

According to the conceptual apparatus of ST, the transition of a politicized subject into a securitized subject becomes evident through the portrayal of an issue as an existential threat towards a referent object. In the case of this thesis the transformation takes place in the form of speech acts by Donald Trump. Through analyzing speech acts this section is going to investigate how Trump's rhetoric strengthens populism in the US which challenges discourses of open borders and ultimately negatively affects US-Mexico relations.

4.2.1 Authoritarian Populism

As established above, it is possible to argue that Trump's rhetoric fuels authoritarian populism. Authoritarian populism supports strong leaders who are willingly expressing politically incorrect views as long as it defends traditional beliefs and values such as keeping people in fairly paid work and the jobs for that at home (Inglehart & Norris, 2018:17). These attributes become evident within a number of speeches by Trump. For example, during his candidacy announcement speech Trump said that "if you can't make a good deal with a politician, then there's something wrong with you" (Trump, 2015). This is one of numerous instances in which Trump generalizes "politicians" and portrays them in a negative light to make himself look better as a *non-politician*. This becomes even more evident when Trump said that "they will never make America great again" (Trump, 2015).

Trump even goes as far as to argue that politicians are controlled "by the lobbyists, by the donors, and by the special interests" (Trump, 2015). Again, this was said with the purpose of portraying himself in a better light in contrast to the politicians portrayed in a negative light. Therefore, he continues by saying that: "our country needs a truly great leader" (Trump, 2015). The authoritarian populism is arguably fueled by Trump saying: "I'll bring back our jobs from China, from Mexico, from Japan, from so many places" (Trump, 2015). This kind of rhetoric reinforces authoritarian

populism because Trump willingly expresses politically incorrect views through generalizing all politicians to defend traditional beliefs and values such as keeping people in fairly paid work and the jobs for that at home.

Furthermore, during a speech on illegal immigration in Phoenix he states that "the special interests spend a lot of money" in trying to cover up unspoken facts about illegal immigration "because they are making an absolute fortune" (Trump, 2016). There is no factual validity of this statement which plays into the argument that Trump is willingly expressing politically incorrect views based on the previously established argument that the thesis regards political incorrectness as information which is factually ambiguous or untrue. This is further underlined by Trump's statement that "the truth is, the central issue is not the needs of the 11 million illegal immigrants or however many there may be" (Trump, 2016). This is a vague statement on one of the administration's central issues. Therefore, Trump fuels populism in general which is accentuated when referring back to Inglehart and Norris' take on populism which resembles a dissatisfactory disconnection between the general population and the elite (Inglehart & Norris, 2017:444). More specifically, in his speech acts Trump portrays the elite as ineffective in confronting the portrayed existential threat of illegal immigration which the general population is left vulnerable to. As this section demonstrated, it is also possible to argue that Trump's rhetoric in his securitizing speech acts fuels authoritarian populism in the US.

4.2.2 Xenophobic Populism

Trump reinforcing xenophobic populism can be exemplified within numerous speech acts. For example, Trump referred to undocumented immigrants as "vicious coyotes" during a speech addressing illegal immigration from the Oval Office (Trump, 2019c). Furthermore, he described undocumented Mexican immigrants as "aliens" numerous times (Trump, 2016). This is related to Schubert's argument that Trump misrepresents Mexican immigrants to ultimately legitimize enhanced border security (Schubert, 2016:38). Moreover, during the speech on illegal immigration in Phoenix he said that "to fix our immigration system, we must change our leadership in Washington" (Trump, 2016). The use of the phrasing "our leadership in Washington" is arguably populist in general as it appeals to the people, or in this case the audience, who are detached from the elite (Gagnon et al., 2018:9). Calling upon "fixing" the immigration system reveals that Trump is dissatisfied with the system in place at the time.

Furthermore, during the 2019 State of the Union address Trump is calling upon congress to defend the US against illegal immigration out of "love and devotion to our fellow citizens and to our country" (Trump, 2019b). Here, the fellow citizens are the culturally homogenous group. The threat of the dissolution of the group's identity is exemplified by Trump calling upon love and devotion for the country. It can be argued that love and devotion for a country are linked to a common national identity. The threat is countered by the exclusion of weaker groups such as in this case undocumented immigrants. The aforementioned statements showcase Trump's rhetoric which not only fuels xenophobic populism, but also challenges open borders. This argument will be further explored in the following sections.

Hence, Trump's rhetoric in the speech acts in which he securitizes illegal immigration fuels authoritarian populism and xenophobic populism. The next will establishe who the rhetoric resonated with to better understand how the Trump administration strengthened populism in the US.

4.3 The Audience

The general population is treated as the target audience because populism encompasses "the people" being wronged, betrayed, or left vulnerable to forces which are outside of their control (Gagnon et al., 2018:9). Treating the elite instead of the general population as the audience would thus not contribute to the aim of understanding how populism challenges discourses of open borders. The following section of the analysis will contribute to this goal through the consideration of discursive institutionalism and treating the Democratic Party, the Republican Party and the US Constitutions as institutions which build the discursive bridge between the speaker and the audience.

I will first establish towards whom Trump directs his *speech acts*. The previous section already implies that Trump aims to convince an audience of the incompetence of politicians which fuels populism and plays into the argument that the target audience is the general population. During his candidacy announcement speech Trump stated: "we have to listen to the concerns that working people, our forgotten working people, have over the record pace of immigration" (Trump, 2015). This is a clear indication that Trump does not address the elite, but that he rather addresses the "forgotten working people", an arguably large part within the general population of the US.

Another example is when he said: "To all the politicians, donors, and special interests, hear these words from me and all of you today. There is only one core issue in the immigration debate, and that issue is the well-being of the American people" (Trump, 2015). This statement heavily echoes populist attributes as Trump portrays himself on the side of the people against the elite. My argument

is specifically emphasized through Trump saying: "hear these words from *me* and all of *you* today", where "*you*" arguably refers to the general population.

Moreover, the quote "To every citizen, call Congress and tell them to finally (…) secure our border" heavily accentuates the rhetoric within Trump's speech acts which fuels populism as Trump calls upon "every citizen" to stand up against congress to secure the southern border (Trump, 2015). Trump addresses the general population as the target audience which implies that Trump fuels populism through addressing the people being wronged, betrayed, or left vulnerable by congress to illegal immigration, a force which is arguably outside of their control. Trump's rhetoric employed in these aforementioned examples within the securitization of illegal immigration fuels populism in the US. Trump simultaneously calls for securing the southern border which resonates with the argument that the rise of populism in Western democracies challenges discourses of open borders.

4.3.1 The Discursive Bridge

The discursive bridge between Trump and the general population as an audience is strengthened through the consideration of discursive institutionalism. It showcases how securitizing speech acts correspond with the general understanding of the interdependence of political discourse and political institutions. I am arguing that the Democratic Party, the Republican Party and the US Constitution are organizational and ideational structures (institutions) which construct a frame for interaction between Trump and the general population as the audience. More specifically, the partisanship and group loyalty shape the interaction between Trump's speech acts and the general population within the security discourse. This has already been indicated through the polling data analyzed within the section encompassing the political environment; The Trump administration's securitizing moves related to illegal immigration will most likely be successful with the predominantly conservative Republican part of the population, whilst the predominantly liberal Democrats will most likely not accept the securitizing move. The argument is underlined by the findings from the polls which indicate that the predominantly conservative Republican voters exhibit Jacksonian- and xenophobic populist attributes which are arguably fueled by Trump's rhetoric within his securitizing speech acts.

This argument is underlined through numerous speech acts by Trump. For example, when addressing the most recent government shutdown during the immigration address from the Oval Office he said that the government remains shut because "Democrats will not fund border security" (Trump, 2019c). This statement fuels the previously established populist attributes within the

conservative Republican part of the population and thus also partisanship. The argument that Trump's securitization speech acts are more likely to resonate with Republican voters is thus reinforced.

Furthermore, during his remarks on the "Illegal Immigration Crisis and Border Security" Trump addressed immigration laws and argued that: "we can't get any Democrat votes to change them. It's only the Republicans that (…) want to change them" (Trump, 2018a). This, again, fuels the conservative Republican xenophobic populist attributes and subsequently also partisanship through the portrayal of Democrats as ineffective when it comes to changing the immigration laws which would support the Trump administration's vision of border security. Instead, Trump portrays Republicans as the only party which wants to change the immigration laws. Additionally, Trump's statement on the caravans at the southern border of the US and how they "are drawn to our country by Democrat-backed laws and left-wing judicial rulings" supports the argument that Trump demonizes Democrats which underlines that his securitizing speech acts are most likely successful with the predominantly conservative Republican voters within the general population. Through the consideration of discursive institutionalism the two political parties exhibit institutional factors strengthening the discursive bridge between Trump and the conservative Republican segment of the general population. Trump's rhetoric exemplified here also fuels the Jacksonian- and xenophobic populist attributes within said segment of the general population (Trump, 2018a). The argument is underlined by referring back to Cha's research on the recent upsurge of Jacksonianism in the US and how Trump grasped said upsurge by making the predominantly conservative Republican voters identify with what he advocates (Cha, 2016:86).

The two political parties are not the only institutional factors strengthening the discursive bridge between Trump and the general population. It is also the US constitution because it sets the institutional infrastructure which allows for the general population to elect a president who holds a significant amount of power. Amongst others, as a president Trump holds the power to appoint federal judges which can impair the courts willingness to resist the administration's executive decision making; he can alter policies which allows him to affect policy outcomes; he can issue a state of emergency and veto decisions previously made by congress (Rogoff, 2018:4). Hence, the Constitution can be categorized as an institution which mediates power between the general population and the Trump administration. Therefore, it has arguably been in Trump's interest to get the general population to accept his securitizing moves as it had and continues to have the power to accept them by voting for Trump and therefore indirectly contribute to the adoption of the extraordinary measures.

It has now been established that the general population, and particularly the predominantly conservative Republican voters, are the target audience within Trump's securitizing speech acts. Furthermore, the discursive connection between Trump and the audience has been strengthened through the consideration of discursive institutionalism and the treatment of the two political parties and the US constitution as institutions. The following section will investigate how Trump portrayed illegal immigration as an existential threat towards referent objects.

4.4 The Securitizing Move

In light of securitization theory, the transition from the politicized into the securitized area becomes evident by portraying an issue as an existential threat towards a referent object. This section will continue analyzing speeches by Trump to identify how illegal immigration into the US has been portrayed as an existential threat towards referent objects in the economic security sector and the social security sector.

4.4.1 The Economic Security Sector

The portrayal already took place during Trump's candidacy announcement speech in which he, when talking about the effects of illegal immigration, said that "they're killing us economically" (Trump, 2015). The metaphorical use of the word "killing" clearly indicates that illegal immigration from Mexico is portrayed as an existential threat towards the US economy.

Furthermore, Trump argued numerous times that undocumented immigrants from Mexico take the jobs of the American working-class people. More specifically, during the immigration address from the Oval Office in 2019 he said that illegal immigration "strains public resources and drives down jobs and wages" (Trump, 2019c). This is also observable during Trump's candidacy announcement speech when he stated that "most illegal immigrants are lower skilled workers with less education, who compete directly against vulnerable American workers" (Trump, 2015). Illegal immigration is being portrayed as an existential threat towards American workers and their jobs. Addressing American workers indicates that they are the target audience of that speech which strengthens the previous argument that the general population is the target of Trump's securitization move. Moreover, the rhetoric fuels authoritarian populism because Trump defends traditional beliefs and values such as keeping people in fairly paid work and the jobs for that within the US.

In addition to the previous quote, Trump argues that "these illegal workers draw much more out from the system than they can ever possibly pay back" (Trump, 2015). This arguably refers to the US economy in general and the future of the US in economic terms. Hence, it can be argued that Trump reinforces authoritarian populism by portraying all undocumented immigrants as criminals who steal jobs from hard working Americans, even though there is no hard proof to justify this argument.

It becomes evident that Trump does not just refer to jobs in particular as existentially threatened, but also the future course of the US economy. Thus, the referent objects within the economic security sector existentially threatened by illegal immigration are American workers, their jobs, the country's economic system, the economy in general and the increase of debt which arose due to illegal immigration.

4.4.2 The Social Security Sector

There are several referent objects portrayed as existentially threatened by illegal immigration within the social security sector. A strong indicator for this argument is Trump's statement that illegal immigration is a "humanitarian and security crisis" in the beginning of an immigration address (Trump, 2019a). From this quote it can be drawn that the use of the word "humanitarian" in conjunction with the words "security crisis" refers to human welfare as being existentially threatened. Especially when considering that the word crisis refers to a time of intense danger (Shelton, 2017:19).

In numerous other instances Trump portrays human welfare as existentially threatened by illegal immigration, especially when referring to the higher number of illegal drugs in the US. This can be drawn from the immigration address from the Oval Office during which Trump states that the southern border of the US is "a pipeline for vast quantities of illegal drugs" which, according to Trump, leads to the effect that "more Americans will die from drugs this year than were killed in the entire Vietnam War" (Trump, 2019c). These statements portray the lives of Americans as existentially threatened by the inflow of drugs which is a direct effect of illegal immigration. Trump compares the deaths caused by the inflow of drugs due to illegal immigration to a situation of war. There are other instances in which Trump does so. For example, during the remarks "on the illegal immigration crisis and border security" when stating that the caravans of migrants are "like an invasion" (Trump, 2018a). The word "invasion" refers to an instance of invading a country with an armed force. Therefore, it is possible to argue that Trump compares illegal immigration into the US to a situation of war in which the lives of American people are existentially threatened.

Trump also refers to the entire country as being existentially threatened. For example, during the same address he stated that the current influx in illegal immigration "threatens to overwhelm our immigration system (…) and poses unacceptable dangers to the entire nation" (Trump, 2018a). Stating that illegal immigration "poses unacceptable dangers to the entire nation" plays into the argument that the national identity is being portrayed as existentially threatened when considering that predominantly conservative Republican voters as part of the general population are the target audience.

During the immigration address from the Oval Office Trump said that "America's heart broke" when an American police officer was "savagely murdered in cold blood by an illegal alien" (Trump, 2019c). Several messages can be drawn from this statement. First, Trump personifies the US through using the word "heart". Secondly, he does the exact opposite to a human being by dehumanizing an undocumented immigrant through using the words "illegal alien". The personification of the US supports the argument that the national identity is being portrayed as existentially threatened because it is portrayed as being "broken". Trump's rhetoric is simultaneously strengthened through the contrast which is the dehumanization of an undocumented immigrant.

The argument that the national identity is being portrayed as existentially threatened is strengthened by Trump asking the American citizens to defend the "southern border out of love and devotion" to their country during the 2019 State of the Union address (Trump, 2019b). The existential threat are people at the southern border aiming to enter the US and the referent object is the national identity. Trump calling upon the population's "love and devotion" for the US plays into the argument that the referent object is the national identity since loving and being devoted to a country are arguably directly tied to identifying with it (Trump, 2019b). From these statements it can be drawn that Trump's securitizing speech acts fuel xenophobic populism in the US. Specifically, he portrays the US general population as threatened by the dissolution of their identity and subsequently counters these perceived threats through the exclusion of weaker groups such as migrants. In strengthening xenophobic populism in the US the Trump administration simultaneously challenges discourses of open borders as exemplified by the statement the southern border must be defended. The effects of populism in the US challenging discourses of open borders will be further investigated through considering US-Mexico relations.

Conclusively, it can be drawn from this section that the referent objects in the social security sector existentially threatened by illegal immigration are human welfare, American lives and the national identity of the American people.

4.5 The Call for Extraordinary Measures

The next part of the conceptual apparatus resolves around how Trump calls for the use of extraordinary measures on the basis of countering the portrayed existential threat to ensure the survival of the referent objects. Extraordinary measures are actions outside the realm of regular politics (Buzan et al., 1998:23). This section argues that the extraordinary measures called for by the Trump administration are the wall at the southern border of the US, the militarization of the southern border and the call for a state of emergency in conjunction with vetoing the decision of congress to revoke the state of emergency.

4.5.1 The Wall and the Militarization of the Southern Border

Trump already called for a wall at the southern border during his candidacy announcement speech in 2015. He said that he would "build a great wall" (Trump, 2015). During the State of the Union Address in 2018 Trump said that the wall "closes the terrible loopholes exploited by criminals and terrorists" (Trump, 2018b). Furthermore, during an immigration address from the Oval Office in 2019 Trump said that the wall is "absolutely critical to border security" (Trump, 2019c), and during the State of the Union Address in 2019 he said that "walls work and walls save lives" and that they will "truly make America safe" (Trump, 2019b). Therefore it is arguable that, throughout his campaign and his time as president, Trump continuously called for a wall at the southern border to protect "American lives", to make "America safe", and thus to protect the referent objects discussed above.

Moreover, there have been multiple instances in which Trump said that he "will have Mexico pay for the wall" (Trump, 2015). Calling upon Mexico to fully pay for the wall had negative implications on US-Mexico relations and falls outside the realm of regular politics. In this respect, it is possible to argue that calling for a wall is an extraordinary measure. The wall can also be considered an extraordinary measure due to its arguably high price. More specifically, rather recently during the immigration address from the Oval Office Trump requested "$5.7 billion for a wall" (Trump, 2019c). During the same speech, the high price was justified through a reference to the existential threat which illegal drugs pose towards the US and American lives; "The border wall would very quickly pay for itself. The cost of illegal drugs exceeds $500 billion a year. Vastly more than the $5.7 billion we have requested from Congress".

Above it has been established that the general population broadly and predominantly conservative Republican voters specifically are the target audience for Trump's securitizing speech acts. Building

on this premise, it is possible to argue that the audience (the general population) accepted the extraordinary measure when considering that it has been at the heart of Trump's campaign against illegal immigration at the time of running for president. With regards to the constitution as an institution and the discursive bridge it represents, the electorate voted for Trump which provided him with the means to follow through with the extraordinary measure. Furthermore, the polling data within the political environment section also showed that the majority of the predominantly conservative Republican voters support the wall called for by Trump. One might now argue that a wall at the border of a country is not an extraordinary measure which falls outside the realm of regular politics. However, I am arguing that the wall was transformed from being within the realm of regular politics into an extraordinary measure because of; the arguably high price, the logistical challenges it poses, the negative effect it has on US-Mexico relations when considering that Trump called on Mexico to pay for the wall and the effect it had on US national politics. Said effects include the national emergency in conjunction with vetoing the decision of congress to revoke the state of emergency, which will be examined below.

Another extraordinary measure implemented at the border between the US and Mexico is the Trump administration's decision to militarize the border. During a press conference at the White House Trump calls for guarding the border "with the military" until the US can "have a wall and proper security" (Trump, 2018c). Trump arguably aims at justifying this decision by stating that "we cannot have people flowing into our country illegally" (Trump, 2018c). Later in 2018 Trump even went as far as to call for going up to "15.000 military personnel on top of Border Patrol" so that "nobody's coming in" (Trump, 2018d). The Trump administration sending the military to the border cannot be regarded as an extraordinary measure per se because other US presidents have also done so in the past (Meierotto, 2014:638). However, in contrast to other administrations the military acted as law enforcement personnel under the Trump administration. For example, rubber bullets were fired on people trying to cross the border to get the chance of being interviewed for the right of asylum. This can be regarded as a break away from regular politics because federal law prohibits troops from conducting law enforcement activities in the US (Meierotto, 2014:640).

The militarization of the border evidently has negative effects on US-Mexico relations which will be investigated later on in this analysis. It can thus be argued that the Trump administration's securitization of illegal immigration reinforces populism which challenges discourses of open borders. More specifically the call for the wall at the southern border and the militarization of the

southern border oppose discourses of open borders and are products of the Trump administration's securitization of illegal immigration which fuels populism in the US.

4.5.2 The National Emergency and the Veto

On February 15th, 2019, the Trump administration declared a state of national emergency through which more than 100 special provisions became available to Trump. Amongst others, easier access to government funding for the called-for extraordinary measure; the wall (Goitein, 2019). Trump highlighted this through a speech held on the declaration of a national emergency at the White House Rose Garden. He states that the US would be safe from the negative forces of illegal immigration if the country would have a wall. Therefore, he is "going to be signing a national emergency" (Trump, 2019e). With reference to the previous section it is possible to argue that the wall can be considered an extraordinary measure outside the realm of regular politics as it led to the declaration of a national emergency. However, I am also arguing that the declaration itself is an extraordinary measure to counter the portrayed existential threat which illegal immigration poses. This becomes evident through Trump arguing for the national emergency during the aforementioned speech at the White House Rose Garden: "Because we have an invasion of drugs, invasion of gangs, invasion of people and it's unacceptable" (Trump, 2019e). The quote highlights the portrayal of illegal immigration as an "invasion" and thus an existential threat towards several referent objects, which is how Trump calls for and justifies declaring a national emergency.

The declaration of a national emergency led to another extraordinary measure; President Trump's veto to overrule congress' decision against the national emergency. The speech justifying the veto is labelled "Remarks by President Trump on the National Security and Humanitarian Crisis on our Southern Border" which implies that the Trump administration is convinced that the situation is to be treated as a national emergency. During the speech Trump implies that the protection of the country is his "highest duty" (Trump, 2019d). Following this statement, Trump portrays Congress' resolution to terminate the state of emergency as "dangerous" and something that "would put countless Americans in danger" (Trump, 2019d). Trump also argues that said resolution would "terminate vital border security operations" (Trump, 2019d). This reinforces the argument that Trump securitizes illegal immigration by portraying the safety of the US and Americans as an existentially threatened referent object. On this basis Trump states that he will be "signing and issuing a formal veto of this reckless resolution" to defend the "safety and security of all Americans" (Trump, 2019d).

I am arguing that issuing a veto in this regard reinforces the argument that declaring a national emergency is an extraordinary measure, which subsequently also reinforces the argument that the wall is also an extraordinary measure. Additionally, the veto in itself is an extraordinary measure as it is outside the realm of regular politics.

The national emergency and the veto are arguably biproducts of the call for the wall at the southern border. Hence, they oppose discourses of open borders as products of the Trump administration's securitization of illegal immigration. This in turn challenges discourses of open borders which negatively affects US-Mexico relations which will be investigated in the following section.

4.6 The Effect on US-Mexico Relations

As argued above, Trump's speeches which securitize illegal immigration challenge discourses of open borders and subsequently have significant effects on the system level. The negative effects of Trump's rhetoric towards Mexico already became apparent during the campaign, especially when the Mexican government began to criticize Trump's policy proposals on the wall and US-Mexico relations by saying that they were tainted by bigotry (Fox News, 2015).

A reoccurring attribute within Trump's speech acts is that he portrays undocumented Mexican immigrants in a negative light. For example, as mentioned before Trump referred to them as "vicious coyotes" during a speech addressing illegal immigration (Trump, 2019c). Furthermore, he described undocumented Mexican immigrants as "aliens" numerous times (Trump, 2016). Trump's rhetoric misrepresents undocumented immigrants to ultimately legitimize enhanced border security which negatively impacts US-Mexico relations. For example, former Mexican president Peña Nieto reacted to Trump's representation of undocumented Mexican immigrants by arguing that the immigration problems in the US are due to "domestic policy issues". Therefore, Trump should turn to his Congress and "not to Mexicans". Additionally, he said that Mexico "will not allow negative rhetoric" to define their actions (Peña Nieto, 2018). This clearly indicates that there is a disagreement on the use of rhetoric and on how the issues at the border should be dealt with. Moreover and as touched upon above there have been multiple instances in which Trump said that he "will have Mexico pay for the wall", which also had negative implications on US-Mexico relations (Trump, 2015). Especially when regarding that, even though former president Peña Nieto repeatedly argued that Mexico will not pay for the wall, the Trump administration continued suggesting ways of how Mexico could *indirectly* pay for the wall through enforcement of trade tariffs and increased visa fees (Trump, 2016). The Mexican Foreign Relations Department condemned these suggestions and stated that Trump's

rhetoric on the issue of illegal immigration and Mexican immigrants specifically "reflect prejudice, racism or plain ignorance" (Mexican Foreign Relations Department, 2018). Furthermore, the department stated that the Trump administration's proposals to counter illegal immigration are not just based on prejudices, but that they are also harmful for the societies of both countries, which showcases the complications within the relations between the US and Mexico.

Additionally, relations between the two countries have been negatively affected by the aforementioned deployment of National Guard troops to halt "a drastic surge of illegal activity on the southern border" (Whitehouse, 2018). Trump argued that the reason for this kind of reaction is that Mexico is not doing enough to stop the migrant caravans themselves (Trump, 2018c). As a response, the Mexican government threatened to reduce bilateral co-operation if the US militarizes the border. More specifically, the Mexican Foreign Minister stated that the militarization of the border "would gravely damage the bilateral relationship" (Videgaray, 2018). Reducing bilateral co-operations refers to negative economic effects for both countries which is accentuated with regards to the border's facilitation of transnational flows of capital. Especially when referring back to Slack's argument that less and less people are willing to cross the border on the ground for commercial purposes due to the arguably extreme military measures implemented by the Trump administration (Slack, 2019:195).

Moreover, current president Andrés Manuel López Obrador responded to Trump's signing of the order to militarize the border by stating that he is against the militarization of the border and the wall and that Mexico "will not accepts the use of force" (López Obrador, 2018). Moreover, López Obrador stated that social problems are not solved by "turning a neighboring country overnight into a ghetto" where migrants are "stigmatized, abused, persecuted, and excluded and the right to justice is denied to those who seek to work and to live free from want" (López Obrador , 2019). This is further underlined by López Obrador's argument that Mexican migrants "don't deserve this kind of treatment" (López Obrador, 2019). He even went as far as to state that the Trump administration's policy direction of America First is "a fallacy" (López Obrador, 2019). With regards to these statements it is possible to argue that Trump and López Obrador disagree on decision-making around issues of which both countries bear the consequences, resulting in tensions within the relationship of the two countries.

It is not just the Mexican president(s) who took a stance against Trump's signing of the order. Also the Mexican Senate urges its government to end cooperation with the US on security and migration over Trump's plan to militarize the border. For example, the lawmakers condemned Trump's aggressive rhetoric toward Mexico in a motion which passed the Senate floor unanimously.

It was stated by the Mexican senate that Trump's decision to send troops to the border is "one more insult" (Rojas, 2018). Additionally, Laura Rojas, the head of the Senate's foreign relations committee said in support of the motion that Trump's conduct has been "permanently and systematically, not only disrespectful, but insulting based on prejudices and misinformation and making frequent use of threats and blackmail (…)" (Rojas, 2018).

This makes it apparent that the Trump administration's securitization of illegal immigration in the US did not only fuel populism, but that it also challenged discourses of open borders which became visible through analyzing the reactions of the Mexican presidents, members of the Mexican Foreign Relations Department and members of the Mexican senate. The reactions clearly indicate that the relations between the US and Mexico have been disrupted by the Trump administration's extraordinary measures implemented as a result of the securitization of illegal immigration in the US and by Trump's rhetoric used throughout the securitization process fueling populism in the US.

5. Conclusion

The recent rise of populism within Western democracies animated numerous scholars in the field of IR to debate on the effects it has on global politics. This thesis contributes to said debate by analyzing the argument that the recent rise of populism within Western democracies challenges discourses of open borders. It investigated the empirical case study of the Trump administration's securitization of illegal immigration to understand how the rise of populism challenges discourses of open borders. In doing so, it utilized the conceptual apparatus of ST in conjunction with applying discourse analysis and discursive institutionalism on speeches by Donald Trump. Several conclusions can be drawn from the analysis.

First, Trump's speech acts in which he securitizes illegal immigration contain rhetoric that addresses the general population as the target audience, which reinforces populism in the US. More specifically, Trump's speech acts exhibit rhetoric which fuels authoritarian populist and xenophobic populist attributes within the conservative Republican segment of the general population. The identification of the securitizing actor and the audience provided a basis to investigate the transformation from illegal immigration being treated as a subject in the politicized area into the securitized area. Specifically, it has been demonstrated that Trump portrayed several referent objects within the economic- and the social security sector as existentially threatened by illegal immigration. This provided a ground for Trump to call for extraordinary measures. Therefore, all concepts within

the conceptual apparatus of ST are applicable to the case study which allows for the argument that the Trump administration securitized illegal immigration in the US. Furthermore, the predominantly conservative republican voters accepted the Trump administration's securitization moves by voting for him. This gave Trump the power to put his extraordinary measures into motion through the power given to the president within the constitution. The power given to Trump through the votes of the electorate underline the argument that it is not only the elite who plays a significant role in the securitization process, but also the general population.

The thesis identified multiple extraordinary measures; the wall at the southern border, the militarization of the southern border, the declaration of a national emergency and the veto against Congress' resolution to terminate the issued state of emergency. The call for said extraordinary measures opposes discourses of open borders as a product of the Trump administration's securitization of illegal immigration. It can thus be argued that the Trump administration's securitization of illegal immigration fuels populism which consequently challenges discourses of open borders on the system level. The thesis exemplified this by investigating the negative effects which the Trump administration's securitization of illegal immigration has on US-Mexico relations. It analyzed the reactions of the Mexican presidents, members of the Mexican Foreign Relations Department and members of the Mexican senate. The reactions clearly indicate that the relations between the US and Mexico have been disrupted by the Trump administration's extraordinary measures implemented as a result of the securitization of illegal immigration in the US and by Trump's rhetoric used throughout the securitization process. Hence, it is possible to argue that Trump's speech acts took an active role in determining international relations through his speech acts.

Furthermore, ST was utilized within the thesis which contributed to the sub-field of security studies. More specifically, the development of ST by emphasizing the arguably undertheorized concept of audience within the conceptual apparatus of the theory. However, this thesis demonstrates that more research on the general population as an audience within ST is necessary as it is a significant gearwheel within the conceptual apparatus of the theory. Furthermore, populism is still rising within Western democracies. The thesis contributes to the implications the rise of populism has on discourses of open borders, but it is unclear what effects these implications have in the future of the empirical field of international relations. Hence, it is an ongoing process which requires an ongoing investigation within the academic field of IR.

In conclusion, the thesis contributed to the IR debate around the recent rise of populism within Western democracies in that it identified how it challenged discourses of open borders by considering

the empirical case study of the Trump administration's securitization of illegal immigration. It found that Trump's rhetoric around the securitization of illegal immigration played on the predominantly conservative Republican voter's basic desires and fears which fueled populism in the US and challenged discourses of open borders. More specifically, Trump's rhetoric employed throughout the securitization of illegal immigration fueled authoritarian populism and xenophobic populism in the US which captivated the negative sentiments of the predominantly conservative Republican voters towards illegal immigration. The Trump administration's fueling of populism in the US led to a polarization of Right and Left and pushed discourses of open borders towards discourses of strengthening the US border and fending off illegal immigration, thus challenging discourses of open borders. Especially with regards to the called for extraordinary measures impacting the border between the US and Mexico. The challenge against open borders in this case had negative implications on US-Mexico relations, such as disagreements on not just the use of rhetoric, but also on the enforcement of trade tariffs, increased visa fees, and the militarization of the border. The investigations of the reactions of the Mexican presidents, the members of the Mexican Foreign Relations Department and the members of the Mexican senate underlined said disagreements.

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7. Appendix

<u>Trump's Speech Acts:</u>

1. 2015. Donald Trump's Presidential Announcement Speech held at Trump Tower in New York

2. 2016: Donald Trump's Immigration Speech, held during a Rally open to the Public in Phoenix.

3. 2018a: Remarks by President Trump on the Illegal Immigration Crisis and Border Security held in Washington D.C. at the White House.

4. 2018b: President Trump's 2018 State of the Union Address held in Washington D.C. at the United States Capitol.

5. 2018c: Remarks by President Trump on Guarding the US-Mexico Border with the Military held in Washington D.C. at the White House.

6. 2018d: Remarks by President Trump on deploying 15.000 Troops to the US-Mexico Border held in Washington D.C. at the White House.

7. 2019a: President Trump's Immigration Address held in Washington D.C. at the White House.

8. 2019b: President Trump's 2019 State of the Union 2019 Address held in Washington D.C. at the United States Capitol.

9. 2019c: Remarks by President Trump on the Border Wall held in Washington D.C. at the White House.

10. 2019d: Remarks by President Trump on the National Security and Humanitarian Crisis on our Southern Border held in Washington D.C. at the White House.

11. 2019e: Remarks by President Trump on Declaring a National Emergency held in Washington D.C. at the White House.

Reactions to the Trump administration's Securitization of Illegal Immigration by Mexican Government Officials

1. 2018: Reactions by the Mexican Foreign Relations Department on Trump's Stances within emailed comments

2. 2018: Reactions by former Mexican President Peña Nieto on Trump sending National Guard Troops to the US-Mexico Border during a Press Conference held in Mexico City

3. 2018: Reactions by Current Mexican President López Obrador on Trump increasing Border Security through the Wall and sending National Guard Troops to the U.S.-Mexico Border during a Press Conference held in Mexico City.

4. 2018: Reactions by Mexican Foreign Minister Luis Videgaray on Trump Militarizing the US-Mexico Border during a Press Conference held in Mexico City.

5. 2018: Reactions by the Head of the Mexican Senate's Foreign Relations Committee Laura Rojas on Trump Sending National Guard Troops to the US Mexico Border during a Press Conference held in Mexico City.

6. 2019: Reactions by Current Mexican President López Obrador on Trump's Threat to increase the Militarization at the US-Mexico Border within a Public Letter to Donald Trump.