“No Escape from Hell”; Securitization of aid and the migration journey in Libya.

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EU- European Union
IOM- International organisation for migration
EUTF- The EU emergency trust fund for Africa
HWR- Human Rights Watch
VHR- Voluntary Humanitarian Return

1. Introduction
The little boy who washed ashore in Turkey, Aylan Kurdi, was searching for a better life, but instead ended up trending on Twitter after his drowned body was found next to a luxury resort. Aylan was only three years old when he became a martyr for refugees washing ashore on Southern European borders as he too was one of many immigrants forced to flee their former homes. #Humanitywashedashore led the trending tweet of the picture, a depiction of the reality there. An aggravating photo is one of the few ways to catch the public’s eyes in a world full of snapshots. The picture of Aylan, dead on the beach, acted as a wake-up call for the naivety of the wider western population. How could such a young boy die such a horrible death? Many people asked. The European Union’s policies denied the immigrants a safe place, which in some cases, like Aylan Kurdi, led to people’s bodies washing ashore. The ability to safely enter Europe for a life out of harm’s way is not the reality most migrants live in currently.

The Mediterranean sea is one of the most dangerous paths for refugees to enter Europe. Still, no safer alternative has been available as rejections for refugees keep being handed out. The death of Aylan Kurdi acted as one of the first steps in trying to change the migration route through the Mediterranean, but did the international authorities take a step in the wrong direction? The securitization of migrants and the migration journey in Libya was formulated to ensure better safety for the migrants. According to Gerard and Pickering (2013); the work for security and control in Libya could instead have led to migrants being forced to use even more dangerous routes to flee the nation. Furthermore, Gerard and Pickering found that borders are full of structural violence and fleeing has become even more of a class and financial-based issue. The securitization of migrants and its potential consequences is thus something which this text will look further into.

After the scenes of the refugee crisis in 2014-2015 were spread on news outlets and other forms of social media, the European Union established The European Union Emergency Trust Fund for stability and to address the root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa (EUTF for Africa) in November 2015. The trust fund was established to address the
issues of irregular migration, insecurity and poor governance (EUTF 2015). The goals of the trust fund are to;

“The EUTF for Africa was established to deliver an integrated and coordinated response to the diverse causes of instability, irregular migration and forced displacement. The EUTF for Africa provides a new impetus for EU cooperation on migration by creating a platform to reinforce political engagement and dialogue with partner countries in Africa, pooling together EU and other donors’ resources, and enlarging the EU evidence base to better understand the drivers and dynamics of migration. The EUTF for Africa also undertakes to build a comprehensive approach to support all aspects of stability, security and resilience, aiming at addressing the conditions that could be conducive to violence and destabilisation, and supporting governments in their efforts to improve security” (EUTF 2015).

As clearly stated, several ideas are mentioned here. With a focus on stability, support and donation, the EUTF aims to improve the migration plan. They are taking on a paternalistic idea of how to help with security. The policies suggested have a goal to stabilise and provide aid for the situation. Yet researchers like Bernard, S (2018) as well as the works of Gerard and Pickering (2013) have questioned what the consequences of this have led to. Furthermore, initially, the funding led to a decrease in irregular migration to the EU: by 2018 the migration from Libya to Italy and Malta had decreased by a total of 96% from its peak in October 2015 (European Council 2018). At what cost did these numbers come from? And what this potentially is a result of is something which will be discussed later in this text.
1.1 Aim and thesis question

Drawing upon the perspective of securitization, the purpose of this thesis is to explore the EUTF for Africa and how it affects the situation of migrants. The thesis focuses on aid to Libya. The reason why I chose Libya was due to its location within the central Mediterranean route, thus a big amount of migration goes through Libya. This together with the securitization of migrants in Libya made it interesting to look further into. While previous research proves useful in pointing at the securitization of migrants in general (i.e. describing migrants as a threat), this thesis focuses on aid and how securitization may be evident in aid documents.

The thesis question and the subquestion are the following:

1. In what ways is aid to Libya securitized? Are there any traces of securitization evident in development aid policy documents?
2. What are the impacts of the aid agreements on migrants and the migration journey?

2. Literature review and contribution
The literature on securitization of migration in the EU is rather vast, and includes literature such as Bertrand, S. (2018), Barry Buzan, Ole Weaver, and Jaap de Wilde. (1998), Alison Howell. Melanie Richter-Montpetit 2019 as well as Jonna Nyman (2013). What this literature argues and shows is a trend in which migration and refugees increasingly have been presented as a threat to Europe and its populations. In addition to being described as potential terrorists and thus as a threat to physical security, they are also presented as threats to welfare systems and general stability (Burchell et. al. 1991). This study makes a contribution to this literature by conducting an analysis of EU aid documents to analyze whether this aspect of securitization can be traced also in such documents.

General literature on securitization relevant to this study will be presented under the section of theory. I will in the below mainly briefly account for more empirical studies on that are relevant to the study, and which I will also make refer to in relation to research question 2. One such text is Gender, securitization and transit: Refugee women and the journey to the EU by Alison Gerard and Shanon Pickering, which focuses on women’s experiences in the transit from North Africa to Malta. This research discusses how the EU’s creation of securitization of aid has affected the migration transits to Europe and is built upon interviews with women who have taken these journeys as migrants to Europe. The text explores the themes of both how it is to migrate as an asylum seeker and as an irregular migrant to the EU. The text brings up examples of the structural, sexual and physical violence that female migrants face on their journey and how the EU is upholding these structures through financial support. “This article argues EU policy is blind to the lived realities of those who seek refugee protection in the EU and urgently needs to address the structural contradictions exacerbating violence experienced by refugee women in transit.” (Gerard, Pickering 2013:338). This text comprehensively discusses border securitization which is based on the broad exclusion of undesirable migrants and gives a well-formulated discussion of the women refugees’ experiences of these transit journeys to the EU.
Other relevant, yet non-academic studies, have been done by Human rights watch, in particular *No escape from hell, EU policies contribute to abuse of migrants in Libya* (2019). This study shows how migrants in Libya are being treated due to the increased surveillance of irregular migration to Europe. This empirical research will be used to explore how the securitization of aid in Libya affects migrants and the transit route.

3. **Background**

Libya’s geographical location in North Africa, with its coastline along the Mediterranean Sea, has made the nation-state very attractive for Western nation-states to take control over historically. To have control over Libya meant to have control over the Sub-Saharan trade route as well as the natural resources within the nation-state which resulted in multiple Western countries colonising Libya. The Ottoman Empire was the first foreign power to claim rule over one region of Libya in 1517 and then extend its rule 35 years later to include multiple regions (Brambilla 2014:224). The European nation started to become interested in Libya in the 1900s when Italy established a colony in the 1910s. The Italians took the coastal regions of Tripolitania and Cyrenaica from the Ottomans in 1911 which thus gave them power over the trade routes connected to the Mediterranean. When Mussolini took the power over Italy in the 20s the colony extended region by region using brutal methods. The Italian military companies inflicted cruel and enormous devastation to the country and its people as the Libyans were moved by force to Italian detention camps (Brambilla 2014:225). Italy’s canonization of Libya was a horrendous act against human rights: “Libya will become Italy’s bridge to Africa and Italy will be for Libya its door to Europe.” (Brambilla 2014:232). Libya had no benefits from the colonisation and to state that Libya had something to gain from Italy’s theft was nothing but untrue.

During the colonial period from 1911- to 1943 about half a million Libyans died as a result of battles, starvation, diseases and/or thirst. The long wars of colonisation killed the prominent leaders, and that pushed the Libyan peasants as well as the Tribesmen to the rural areas and away from the coastline. The Italians had no interest in using the farmers and tribesmen as
labourers but instead brought their farmers from Italy to manage the lands, consequently leaving the Libyans out to dry. The memory of these awful times has not yet faded and the attributes of the anti-colonial resistance are still sought out by the nation-state as a post-colonial rule. The difficult times of the 19th century, distraught with colonisation, have pierced the memory of multiple generations thereafter (Abdullatif Ahmida 1994:1-2). Italy used Libya's connection to the Mediterranean as a means to justify colonisation because they saw themselves as having a rightful claim to the Mediterranean area (Abdullatif Ahmida 1994:6).

After the Italian colonies from 1911- to 1943, the British Empire and the French occupied Libya. The British took the regions of Cyrenaica and Tripolitania, whilst the French ruled over Fezzan. After the second world war, many well-educated and previously exiled Libyans came back to the country. The nation was at that time affected by the war and politically less stable than it previously was. The people arriving back had worked in high positions in other Arab states and brought back the Arab nationalistic views which sparked something in the anti-colonialists. The nationalistic forces in Libya were tired of living under empirical rules and were left out to dry after the economic hit by the war. The British and French administrations tried to push back and hinder the Libyan’s ability to gain power over their own country. Between 1945-1951 the people of Libya had to leave their fate in the hands of the European imperial nations as they tried to decide on whether to directly give Libya its independence, give the colonial powers back to Italy or if the power was going to gradually be given back to Libya. The process was tedious and went on for 6 years which is a true depiction of the selfish interest that Europe had in Africa and in using their national resources as well as transit routes for their use (Collins 1974:11).

After the Italian, French and British colonies, Libya, with support from the US, tried to seek independence. Britain and France, who still had control over the everyday affairs in Libya in 1950, were willing to give up their official power (Dearden 1950:395-396). Libya’s development towards statehood in 1951 (except for the Swathe which was under French rule until 1954) was not an entirely independent transition because of American involvement and their monitoring of the state change. The new monarchy that was in Libya enabled American
and British military bases within the country, making the nation-state an exemplary post-colonial country in the eyes of the Western nations (Sidaways 2012).

4. Theoretical Framework

4.1 Securitization theory

The Copenhagen school started as an organisation based on Barry Buzan's study of security and has its base on non-militant securitization. This school of securitization is based on three main criteria: (1) A move towards securitization requires a suitable actor with jurisdictional and political power, and to identify a point of no return if not acted upon now; (2) The acceptance of the people/ audience; (3) Lastly, the use of extraordinary measures to handle security issue (Buzan et al 1998:26).

Securitization theory makes a contribution to security studies through the use of the discursive speech act, securitization provides a strategy for understanding the application of security’s character to any issue to make it a security issue. This theory thus focuses on the construction of security threats through language and thus the so-called speech act. Securitization is defined as a speech act, which is built out of rhetorical criteria that are used to securitize an issue (Buzan et al 1998:23). By a nation-state using the term “security,” declares a state of emergency and thus enables said state to use extraordinary measures to block the threat or a threatening development. The invocation of security is used as the key to legitimising the use of force (Buzan et al 1998:21). To issue a securitization, a representative of a state does not have to prove an actual physical threat to the nation's security but rather has to argue sufficiently for the cause. Security is thus a self-referential practice (Buzan et al. 1998:25-27). The EU has a multidimensional process for securitization of migration which consists of three points. Internal security, cultural security and a crisis of the welfare state (Gerard, Pickering 2013:339).
One primary contributor to the securitization theory has been Barry Buzan, Ole Weaver, and Jaap de Wilde; they describe the meaning of securitization and how the theory should be developed. The authors discuss a more constructivist approach to international security. The authors argue that the approach should entail cultural, economic and environmental perspectives. Furthermore, they argue for a need for rethinking the tools and boundaries of security studies. Their text refers to security issues such as those "staged as existential threats to referent objects by a securitizing actor who thereby generates endorsement of emergency measures beyond rules that would otherwise bind" (Buzan et al. 1998:5).

One text that also made a practical contribution to the research on security issues is the book *Critical Approaches to Security: An Introduction to Theories and Methods* by Laura j. Shepherd (2013) in which J. Nyman wrote a chapter on Securitization theory. This chapter discussed the topic using a critical approach to security and built on Copenhagen's school of security. The text uses a case study to demonstrate the critical approach, illustrate the theory in practice, and question the process of securitization, thus showing the limitations of the theory. This text makes an important contribution by highlighting the social construction of ‘threats’ and ‘security’. Even though it has limitations, it could potentially remain a useful tool for studying the process of security issues and its creation and results.

This thesis will focus on the securitization of migration; a legal framework created by the members of the European Union. This cultivation of securitization prevents irregular migrants, including asylum seekers, from arriving in the EU. Securitizing migration enables states to provide aid and this strengthens the external and internal borders in connection to the member states of the EU (Gerard, Pickering 2013). Strengthening of the borders results in lesser migration to the EU which has had dire consequences for the migrants affected. I will dig deeper into this in the analysis part of the thesis.

“Securitization uses many ‘techniques of government’ to permeate migration, three of which are central (Huysmans 2006). First, securitization seeps into policy development and implementation. Second, securitization is mobilised through political discourse that exaggerates the risks of migration and asylum. Third,
securitization constructs migration as a security problem and poses security solutions as the only viable remedy. “(Gerard, Pickering 2013: 339)

At the same time, the literature shows that the securitization of migrants (where migrants are seen as a threat) are more hidden and implicit. In policy document and in much official discourse it is instead the refugees that are described as under threat, by ruthless smugglers etc. and how the EU has the obligation to protect them from such threats (European council conclusion 28 June 2018)

“As regards the Central Mediterranean Route, efforts to stop smugglers operating out of Libya or elsewhere should be further intensified. The EU will continue to stand by Italy and other frontline Member States in this respect. It will step up its support for the Sahel region, the Libyan Coastguard, coastal and Southern communities, humane reception conditions, voluntary humanitarian returns, cooperation with other countries of origin and transit, as well as voluntary resettlement. All vessels operating in the Mediterranean must respect the applicable laws and not obstruct operations of the Libyan Coastguard “……. “ In order to definitively break the business model of the smugglers, thus preventing tragic loss of life, it is necessary to eliminate the incentive to embark on perilous journeys” (European council conclusion 28 June 2018)

As stated above, this study makes a contribution to this literature by conducting an analysis of EU aid documents to analyze potential securitization moves in such documents.

Finally, it should be emphasized that securitization theory also has received critique – especially from scholars working on gender and race/racism, even if such perspectives also by now are integrated into the field. For instance, Bertrand, S. (2018). Can the subaltern securitize? Postcolonial perspectives on securitization theory and its critics discusses securitization from both a post-colonial and a feminist perspective. The article discusses the “silence problem” meaning that the securitization theory is made up of colonial relationships where the periphery is often silenced whilst the core countries take it upon themself to speak
for those who are silenced. The article discusses both how the periphery is excluded from using securitization and how the western nations silence the periphery so they can’t be heard.

Another critical text which draws on the post-colonial theory of securitization is the article written by Alison Howell and Melanie Richter Monpetitte in 2019. The two authors discussed how the Copenhagen school of securitization theory is made up of eurocentrism, civilizationism, methodological whiteness, and antiblack racism. They argue that this is justified by civilization history which privileges Europe as the civilised desecuritization, which historically has worked with colonial projects. The speech act theory is making becoming like Europe the moral imperative. “Using ostensibly neutral terms, securitization theory prioritises order over justice, positioning the securitization theorist as the defender of (white) ‘civilised politics’ against (racialized) ‘primal anarchy’.” (Alison Howell, Melanie Richter Monpetitte 2019).

5. Methodology

5.1 Case selection

Case studies are typically seen in social science and can be defined as an intensive study of a unit/group. The case study is an intensive and systematic investigation of a unit where a researcher examines data in-depth concerning multiple variables. What will be explored in the case study and research question 2 is how migrants passing through Libya are affected by the EU’s policy for securitization of irregular migrations. Case studies are somewhat flexible as the approach can be alternated to the research and the case study can often illustrate a particular phenomenon (Eaisasson 2017:109-111).

Hence, this research is delimited to Libya. The reason why I chose to study precisely Libya is because of its geographical position and how it is used as a transit route to Europe. Libya has a history of colonisation which thus makes it interesting to examine the EU’s attempts to somewhat control Libya's migration through aid. Furthermore, why I choose Libya and not
another North African country is because there are empirical studies of refugee situation in that country that I can make use of in the study. The case study in this thesis is based on interviews made by the Human Rights Watch (2019) and Gerard and Pickering (2013), of the migrants and the detention camps personnel.

When it comes to organizations, the selection has naturally been the EU. I have however also included texts by IOM as this is a central UN organization that works close with the EU. When it comes to the selection and analysis of policy texts, analyzing whether a securitization process presenting migration and migrants as a threat can be discerned in such texts, I will discuss that below.

5.2 Choice of method

This thesis will be based on secondary material and qualitative text analysis. Text analysis is considered an important methodological tool in social science. This type of analysis emphasises the importance of texts and other types of communications, and analyses these through parsing text to extract facts and deeply analyse the content of the text (Eaissson 2017).

Yet the type of method and analysis differs between the two research questions. For research question one on potential traces of securitization, I will conduct a qualitative analysis, probing into meanings in the texts. More operationalized questions will be presented below.

For question two I will use secondary material on the situation of migrants in the wake of the aid agreements with Libya. Here I will not search for meanings, but try to get factual information about the situation of migrants.
5.3 Material and operationalization

I will in the following section present the material and operationalization, following the two research questions.

1. *In what ways is aid to Libya securitized? Are there any traces of securitization evident in development aid policy documents?*

To answer this research question I have chosen the following documents:

- The EU emergency trust fund for Africa (EUTF)
- Malta Declaration by the members of the European Council on the external aspects of migration: addressing the Central Mediterranean route.
- European Council. 2018, 28-29 June 2018 (for Increased migration)

Why I chose these policy documents is that it deals with the matter of migration from Libya and what security measures are being executed by the EU as a response. The documents entail information about the policies implemented in Libya to officially ensure better safety for the migrants. These documents are all published by the EU and thus provide this text with a clear perspective from the EU. Since these documents are all one-sided, meaning they do not adhere to the migrant’s experience, they will be counterbalanced by and analysed based on the secondary material listed below.

In this analysis I will attempt to answer if there are any traces of securitizing in the documents. Thus this will be a classical securitization analysis and ask the questions:

- What kind of threats – if any – can be traced in the documents?
- Who/what group is under threat (e.g. EU, migrants)?
- What kind of threats are these (e.g. risk of terrorism/violence, of welfare)?
- Who constitutes the threats (e.g. migrants, smugglers)?

2. *What are the impacts of the aid agreements on migrants and the migration journey?*
In order to respond to this question, I will use available studies on the situation of migrants in Libya (discussed above). These are mainly the following documents.

- *Gender, securitization and transit: Refugee women and the journey to the EU* by Alison Gerard and Shanon Pickering (2013)

All of these texts are based on extensive interviews and surveys among migrants in Libya. The material by the human rights watch and the research by Gerard and Pickering paints the picture of the migrants' experience with these policies which are trying to stop the irregular migration to Europe.

I’m using the material as it is important to have a critical perspective in relation to the literature. Are there potential biases in the text? Here it should be acknowledged that there might be biases, especially in non-academic reports such as those by Human rights watch (2019). The methodology used in those studies may be less rigorous. Moreover, such organizations can sometimes be driven by an agenda to portray a situation in a particular manner. Furthermore, it has to be acknowledged that migrants themselves may have a particular agenda to present their situation in a particular manner. As Mats Utas (2005) showed that self-staging as victims is a common and natural tactic and consequence when living under difficult, risky, and disempowering circumstances. Hence, there is a risk that migrants interviewed in the studies at times alter their stories are their circumstances in ways that they believe may further their situation.

Yet, this is a risk attached to all similar studies and contexts and while a critical perspective to the material is in place the studies used here are based on detailed and extensive interviews
with migrants, conducted by professional people. Moreover, as noted in the list of analyses is also based on reports by the EU to counterbalance and give a nuanced picture.

In analysing these texts I will not simply describe the situation of migrants but also how this situation can be linked to the aid agreements. I will also try to search for how the situation may differ for different groups, such as men and women, adults and children, and background when it comes to migrants’ origin.

5.4 Limitation

The limitations of this thesis are first of all the limit to material and time. This thesis is based on some reports from the EU, but would arguably benefit from a more comprehensive source of material, and with all the EU documents combined. The thesis would overall benefit from a bigger collection of material, to achieve as nuanced a view as possible. The research could furthermore gain from a field study to get a primary source from Libya, and would additionally benefit from interviews with subjects affected by the aid from the EU in Libya.

6. Analysis

The analysis will be divided into two sections. The division will be according to the two research questions In what ways is aid to Libya securitized? Are there any traces of securitization evident in development aid policy documents? followed by the findings for the question: What are the impacts of the aid agreements on migrants and the migration journey?

6.1 Libya and Securitization

I will in this section answer the question In what ways is aid to Libya securitized? Are there any traces of securitization evident in development aid policy documents? I will use the operationalization of securitization to prove that it is used in aid implementation for irregular
migration from Libya. The operationalization is as mentioned, “What kind of threats – if any - can be traced in the documents? Who/what group is under threat (e.g. EU, migrants)? What kind of threats are these (e.g. risk of terrorism/violence, of welfare)? And lastly, who constitutes the threats (e.g. migrants, smugglers)? ”

The migration from Libya has led to an increase in smuggling and trafficking networks. This is a part of what the EU considers the threat from irregular migration. Thus in February 2017, the EU leaders agreed upon new measures to reduce irregular arrivals from the transit route through/from Libya. The EU’s commitment to increasing cooperation with Libya and to tackling migrant smugglers became the start of the Malta declaration. To deal with these issues the EU implemented extraordinary political measures to increase the security for migrants (EU 2017).

"On the Central Mediterranean route, however, over 181,000 arrivals were detected in 2016, while the number of persons dead or missing at sea has reached a new record every year since 2013. With hundreds having already lost their lives in 2017 and spring approaching, we are determined to take additional action to significantly reduce migratory flows along the Central Mediterranean route and break the business model of smugglers, while remaining vigilant about the Eastern Mediterranean as well as other routes. We will step up our work with Libya as the main country of departure as well as with its North African and sub-Saharan neighbours.” (EU, 2017)

This is paragraph 3 of the Malta declaration (2017) and sums up the threat and what has been implemented to stop the situation. This paragraph speaks of the need of implementing extraordinary political measures to combat a safety issue which is urgent. The paragraph furthermore points out that it is the migrants who are in need of safety since there have been casualties on the sea. Moreover, this quote also brings up the matter of smugglers which is also something which the EU wants to stop through security implementations. One might thus say the Malta declaration thus provides some evidence of securitization. Furthermore the use of “extraordinary political measures” is often used when speaking of securitization.
The Malta declaration's in its totality use of words points to the matter of needing hasty measures to prevent these issues.

Similar signs of securitization can be seen in the EUTF (2017) reports. The EUTF was established to deliver a coordinated response to “diverse causes of instability, irregular migration and forced displacement” and in their annual report from 2017, they bring forward the migration situation in Libya.

> “Along the Central Mediterranean Route, the EUTF for Africa, notably through the EUTF-OIM Initiative, has contributed to fighting smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings, helping to manage migratory flows more effectively, continuing to save lives at sea and in the desert, and improving the living conditions of migrants and refugees in Libya and in the Sahel region. The Commission called on Member States to provide additional contributions to the EUTF for Africa, and in particular for the North of Africa region. As a result, resources pledged by EU Member States and other donors have increased by 148.5 % during 2017“

This shows both the imminent threat and the extraordinary political measures taken to combat the situation. In this quote, it is also the migrants who are portrayed as in need of help and security. There is, stated in this quote, a need to stop human trafficking, and smuggling as well as saving the lives at sea, here the migrants are clearly stated as the people in need of security. Moreover, we can see here that it is clearly stated that it is the migrants who are in need of security and that it is the smuggling and human trafficking which is the threat. What is interesting though is that they say “helping to manage migratory flows more effectively”. This is brought up in the same paragraph as saving the migrant’s lives at sea, and one might thus wonder why they also want to manage the migration flow and what the motivation for this is.

Even though the securitization of aid in Libya is seemingly enacted to protect the migrants from harm, it might not be the complete story. Many scholars have studied whether or not the securitization of aid might have an alternative agenda. Similar to what Gerard and Pickering (2013) argued and Nyman (2013) argued - Securitization, thus being able to utilise
extraordinary measures, can be used as means to control the receiving country to the extent that it benefits the country/state providing the aid. By providing aid to Libya and further controlling where that aid goes to and what the aid should accomplish, the EU essentially already have some sort of control over the migration flow. Furthermore, since the EU provided training to the coast guards and also funded part of the border control, the EU has gained some power whilst providing the aid. By gaining some control via funding, the EU arguably gained greater control over the migration flow.

The EU has spoken of the securitization of migrants as means to combat smuggling and trafficking of humans, at the same time as they also state a “positive” result of a 96% decrease of migrants who arrived from the central Mediterranean route as a result from the EU’s actions (European Council 2018). These two statements could potentially be seen as contradictory as the motivation for the aid is to combat smuggling and trafficking and not to hinder/decrease migration from the central Mediterranean route, whilst the result seemingly is that they have decreased migration a great deal with their new actions. Bertrand, S. (2018) furthermore argues that securitization is a means to control the periphery by providing aid and thus gaining control. Seldom, according to Bertrand, in these sorts of aid projects does the receiving country (often a part of the periphery) get a say in the decision-making process and thus gets excluded in the policy implementation within their border. Taking this into account, one might wonder how much say Libya had in the actions enacted to stop smuggling and trafficking via the central Mediterranean route. Taking all the components listed above, one might wonder if the EU did have an agenda to hinder migrants to enter the EU.

As mentioned before, the securitization theory has been criticised for having an alternative motive and promoting the colonial structure of silencing the periphery and using this to control and implement aid that fit the western culture instead of listening to the receiving nation's ideas or needs. Based on the post-colonial and feminist critique made by Bertrand, S. (2018) and Howell, A and Richter Monpetitte, M (2019) one might question if the securitization of migrants is solely enacted to protect the migrants or if the EU also wants to protect their culture/whiteness as argues in Howells and Richter Monpetitte article. By securitizing the migrants and providing aid to Libya the borders in Libya have strengthened
thus resulting in lesser migration to Europe, something which in the EU report is presented as something positive (European Council, 28-29 June 2018). Based on the report of lesser migration to the EU and based on that it is the EU that has provided the training of the Libyan Coast Guards (which has been accused of using violence, bribes and rape on migrants), as well as the EU mostly, has devoted their aid to strengthening the boards and thus hindering migration to Europe, one might wonder if the EU has an alternative motive of stopping migration from Libya to EU. And what is seen as the threat to Europe might not be the health and wellbeing of the migrants but the migrants themselves.

"One of the objectives of the European Union is the gradual creation of an area of freedom, security and justice, which means, inter alia, that illegal immigration must be combated (EC 2002: 62). “ (Gerard, Pickering 2013: 338). This states that the EU sees irregular migration and security as intertwined. Unauthorised migration is here connected to freedom, security and justice. Burchell et. al. (1991) argue that the EU's process of securitizing migrants is thus a combination of the crisis of the welfare state, internal security and cultural identity. The securitization of irregular migration from Libya or just passing through has sustained the violence in mobility transits to Europe, this is not just concerning for Libya but for all of North Africa (Gerard, Pickering 2013: 339). Previously, countries located in the transit routes of irregular migration to Europe were threatened with reduced development aid if they did not cooperate, or rather did not do what the EU wanted them to do, and so some countries were forced to work within the EU’s framework to stop this type of migration. These incentives have affected North Africa since the EU has emphasised a lot of effort to stop illegal migration from these nation-states. One might thus argue that the European Union has therefore used the developing countries’ financial shortcomings to force them to cooperate, something which was previously called expanding the EU’s “circle of friends” (Gerard, Pickering 2013: 340).

“EU policy-makers and leaders justify this focus as a political and practical necessity to assert control over Europe’s external borders and break the business model of smugglers, as well as a humanitarian imperative to prevent dangerous boat migration.” (Human rights watch, 2019)
Whilst asserting a security issue the EU thus has no legal responsibilities to care for the migrants and asylum seekers, and by outsourcing the migration control to Libya, the EU can officially withstand any backlash from the projects in Libya. Most of the migrants travelling by boat to Europe arrive in Italy, which responses to this have been to take the lead in assisting the Libyan coast guards who are breaking human rights. Italy furthermore abdicates all responsibility to provide help for those lives at stake in the Mediterranean (Human rights watch, 2019).

6.2 Impacts on migrants and the migration journey

I will, in this part, disclose the consequences of the securitized aid in Libya and how the increased implementation of extraordinary political measures has affected migrants. Thus answering the question What are the impacts of the aid agreements on migrants and the migration journey?

The documents from the EU regarding securitization state that the migrants need to be securitized since they are exposed to, according to EUTF (2015), horrible conditions on the migration journey to Europe. The EU has provided aid to strengthen border control through financing the coast guard, in Libya to hinder migrants from taking illegal trips via boat over the Mediterranean. The aid provided by the EU to increase the border controls has led to the coast guards opening detention centres, where migrants are detained under horrible conditions, according to Gerard and Pickering (2013). In the same article, multiple refugee women testify to the horrible conditions of the detention camps in Libya. The camps are used to detain illegal migrants and multiple testimonies state that it is in prison-like conditions. There is no voluntary movement from the detention camps. The detention centres are partly funded by the Italian government. Although Italy claimed to provide healthcare to the camps, it has never been provided. Human rights watch has provided reports of the detention centres as overcrowded, violent and unhygienic. Many migrants strategically avoid public spaces in Libya to not be sent to the detention camps. The detention centres have minimal access to basic needs such as food and water. “The living situation is difficult because you are not free.
People are standing over you and you have to negotiate to leave. Some people pay money to leave, others provide sex or are raped. Multiple witnesses have claimed to have been exposed to physical violence as well as rape. To be able to leave the area people had to negotiate with the guards, either offering money or sexual favours (Gerard, Pickering 2013: 348).

Similar reports have been made by the Human rights watch where migrants have been tortured in the detention centre without provoking the guards. The Human Rights Watch text *No escape from hell, EU policies contribute to the abuse of migrants in Libya* brings awareness to the situation in the detention camps in Libya. The organisation has sent employees to Libya to get an understanding of the situation and report on the detention camps in which migrants are forced to live under “slave-like conditions” (HRW 2019). The text discusses how the EU indirectly supports these situations through financial aid. The text is very comprehensive and gives a thorough explanation of what the EU is financing through their securitized aid. In 2018, representatives of the Human Rights Watch went to four detention centres in Tripoli, Misrata, and Zuwara in Libya. The representatives documented;

> “inhumane conditions that included severe overcrowding, unsanitary conditions, poor quality food and water that has led to malnutrition, lack of adequate healthcare, and disturbing accounts of violence by guards, including beatings, whippings, and use of electric shocks” (Human rights watch, *No escape from hell* 2019)

It is not only in camps that aid has led to less safety for migrants but the harbours are now filled with violence, according to the interviews done by Gerard and Pickering. The migrants passing through Libya which has retched the boats with South Europe as its destination have been arrested by coast guards and sent to the detention camps. The detention implicitly hindered and punished the migrants trying to get to the EU by boat. The testimonies from migrants have depicted how the guards wait at the harbours to arrest the people (Gerard, Pickering 2013:341).

The low wages as a result of the high levels of poverty made the guards of the detention centres susceptible to corruption. The bribes provided were thus not only accepted but
encouraged by the guards as they supplemented their poor wages. The organisation has limited finances and thus cannot pay the guards more, which indirectly encourages the guards to accept bribes. The guards have reportedly accepted bribes for the migrants to be able to leave and later arrested them again to receive even more bribes. Thus the detention camps are a part of a lucrative industry of corruption. This corruption and systemic violence could potentially be a result of underfunding the coast guards (Gerard, Pickering 2013: 348). Since the detention camps and the Libyan coast guards have received funding from Italy and the EU one might argue that the aid given to Libya has a part in this. Furthermore, a framework was formulated between the EU and Libya to stop illegal immigration in the late 2010s, Libya estimated a need of 5 billion €, but only 60 million € was provided to combat the issue (Gerard, Pickering 2013: 341). Thus the European Union’s underfunding could potentially have contributed to the structural violence and corruption along the borders of the country.

By November 2009, 1409 migrants had been forcibly returned to Libya and detained. The migrants in detention did not get their asylum applications adjudicated, thus breaching the right of asylum seekers. Furthermore, the international convention for the safety of life at sea implemented a duty to assist the boats on the Mediterranean in need of help. The EU failed to provide sufficient help to the boats crossing the sea to reach Europe. The failure might be to blame on the member states’ lack of medical care sent to the rescue and the rescue operations were a failure (Gerard, Pickering 2013: 341).

Officials of the European Union are aware of the conditions in the detention centres in Libya. In November 2017 Dimitri Avramopoulos, EU migration commissioner, claimed to be aware of the appalling conditions in which some migrants are forcibly held. “We are all conscious of the appalling and degrading conditions in which some migrants are held in Libya.” (Human rights watch 2019). Avramopoulos, together with other officials have claimed to want to improve the conditions of the detention camps, not to shut down but to improve, and have recognised the reported cases of abuse. Interviews provided by Human rights watch have proven that the efforts had little to no results. After interviewing the staff of the detention centres and Libyan officials, it is proven that the EU efforts to change have not had a positive impact. The EU has not responded by decreasing or stopping its aid to the coast guards or
border controls in Libya but instead since 2016 intensified its efforts to stop further migration to Europe (Human rights watch 2019).

There is a program called VHR (voluntary humanitarian return) which provides a service for migrants who wish to return from their attempt to migrate to Europe. This is an important service as it ensures that people who need to return or wish to, get the chance to return. Human rights watch interviewed multiple people who had experienced horrible abuse or lost people along the way and who wanted to return to their home country. “Some detainees who might otherwise apply for asylum may opt to participate in IOM’s return program, a quicker option than registering with UNHCR and awaiting evacuation“ (Human rights watch 2019). The program as an idea is important and one might say that it has good intentions, although since the migrants in detention camps seldom have other options for freedom, many migrants might turn to VHR and thus return home even if they do not wish to. The circumstances that the VHR program is implemented give the migrants an unbefitting condition as they often see this program as their last resort.

Finally, as a result of previous colonisation, Italy formed a treaty of friendship with Libya. This agreement was to be used as a document depicting fellow countries coming together after hard times but has been now used as means to stop irregular migration. Italy has an intensified role in Libya’s border security and has a role in patrolling the coasts. Furthermore, Italy together with the EU has monitored Libya stretching further than solely the border through satellite surveillance (Gerard, Pickering 2013: 340).

7. Discussion

Securitizing the migration flow in Libya has led to increased financial support to coast guards, officials and companies working to prevent irregular migration from Libya. As written in the analysis, the financial support from the EU has indirectly led to violence against the migrants as they have been sent to detention camps instead of being given a non-violent path to safety. They have furthermore been forced into sexual favours as means of bribes and there are many reports of other abuse. In trying to block the commonly used transit routes for
irregular migration to Europe, it has diverted migrants to using even more dangerous and longer transits. The securitization of migrants has, according to Gerard and Pickering, led to an even more prominent hierarchy of mobility as the only migrants making it to Europe are the ones with the greatest resources. This is due to it taking social and financial capital to make the trip (Gerard, Pickering 2013:341).

As previously mentioned, the migrants who reach the southern borders, in some cases, do not even get their asylums tested but instead get sent back to their home country straight away (Gerard, Pickering 2013: 341). If the goal was to combat illegal migration then why would they also hinder legal migration, one might ask. This could prove that the ultimate goal of the European Union is not to stop irregular migration to prevent security threats, but perhaps they simply do not want immigrants from that part of the world. As previously mentioned in the theoretical section, researchers like Bertrand, S (2018). Howell, A. Richter-Montpetit, M (2019) have all critiqued the securitization theory as being a means for racially unjust policies and silencing the periphery. This could mean that the EU can potentially use the securitization of migrants to stop migration from Libya. As mentioned, the EU has not supplied sufficient aid to the boats at sea in need of help but has rather encouraged private civil people to help with the crisis at sea. The lack of help for migrants to reach the southern parts of Europe can potentially be seen as evidence that the EU has a motive to decrease irregular migration from Libya. One might suggest that the EU policy’s lack in helping the migrants to safely cross the Mediterranean could insinuate that increasing border control is to hinder migration and not to provide safety for the migrants.

The programs of VHR can furthermore be criticised for the same reason as stated before. The IOM is potentially focusing on not receiving any migrants, and working to get the irregular migrants to either stop at the border or return to their home countries (Human rights watch 2019). The VHR could be a good representation of how the western nations are actively working to stop immigration instead of helping to create a safe migration route. The IOM as well not currently working to help refugees to seek asylum but instead promotes the VHR to help them to return to the country they have chosen to migrate from. The VHR is depicted as a program where the migrants get to choose whether or not they want to return from their
journey to Europe. Arguably since the migrants are met by detention camps, all sorts of violence and even death, one could say that the VHR is the lesser of two evils. Some obstacles on the migration route, one might argue, are created by the EU. Since they fund the detention camps and don’t pay the detention personnel enough they turn to bribes. This in turn creates a hierarchy of mobility, according to Gerard and Pickering (2013), as migrants with better financial opportunities have a better chance to leave.

Burchell et al. (1991) state that the motivation for the EU's process of securitizing migrants is a combination of the crisis of the welfare state, internal security and cultural identity. It is interesting to look into what is viewed as a cultural identity and how it is threatened by irregular migration. It is furthermore interesting to see which identity can therefore be determined as one superior cultural identity and in need of protection. What this motivation of securitization could potentially tell us is that the EU is trying to protect European identity by excluding some immigrants. Is the so-called "cultural identity" so sacred to the EU to protect that they are prepared to conserve it at all costs? The theories about coloniality such as postcolonialism show how the centrality of race and culture is currently being upheld through the structures of western nations as a subject and the periphery as an object of exploitation. Similar to the text by Alison Howell and Melanie Richter-Monpetitte (2019) on post-colonialist thinking of securitization, one might argue that the EU thus uses the securitization of migrants in Libya to protect their culture. The western nation has, and is currently, placing its culture at the top of the hierarchy and thus working towards protecting its place. The exclusion of some immigrants is one of how the western nations in Europe protect their culture. The increased extraordinary political measures have so far led to, according to HRW (2019) inhuman detention camps, violence, rape and in some cases death, and so one might ask if the EU thinks all of this is worth it to protect Europe from the so-called threat of irregular migration.

“A key element of a sustainable migration policy is to ensure effective control of our external border and stem illegal flows into the EU” (European Council 2017). This statement can be analysed, according to Howell, Richter-Montpetit (2019) and Bertrand’s (2018) critical view of securitization, as problematic. With the Libyan colonial past, the EU’s attempt to gain
effective control of the external borders might be seen as a reflection of their colonial history. The quote from the European council states that they want to ensure effective control of the external borders and stem illegal flows, whilst the descriptions of why the implemented extraordinary political measures were rather only to stem illegal flows and to combat smuggling and trafficking of humans.

In the report from the EU, the measures to stop irregular migration are posed as a success. The illegal migrations through the central Mediterranean route, of which Libya is a part, have decreased by 96 % from its peak in October 2015 (European Council, 2018). The decrease of illegal migration flows is described as a success, but the means used to decrease the flow are not mentioned and not presented as an issue. Why the migration has reduced, as mentioned in the findings, might be somewhat due to the harsh environment consisting of detention camps, structural violence, corruption and increased border controls/surveillance. One might ask why the work of the EU in Libya is considered a success if the 96% of people who did not try to migrate didn’t due to being exposed to inhumane treatment (European council 2018). As mentioned before, the EU is aware of what’s happening in Libya and claims to have tried to solve the issue, but has according to Gerard and Pickering (2013) not succeeded in doing so. The EU has financially, and by training them, arguably supported the coast guards’ structural violence for multiple years and is still providing aid to Libya. Since the EU can legally blame the inhumane treatment of migrants on Libya (because it’s their officials who execute the violence etc), they can fund the Libyan actors behind the violence whilst consequently getting less irregular migration. The goal of the EU was seemingly to create security but has also indirectly led to the inhumane treatment of migrants according to multiple reports provided in this thesis. What the EU has succeeded in, indirectly or directly, is stopping the migration from some parts of North Africa and at the same time extending its control over external borders, something which arguably can be considered problematic (Gerard, Pickering 2013).
8. Conclusion

In this thesis I used two operationalisation questions to answer the research question;

*In what ways is aid to Libya securitized? Are there any traces of securitization evident in development aid policy documents? What are the impacts of the aid agreements on migrants and the migration journey?*

As I have demonstrated it is the migrants who are portrayed as in need of help and security in the documents. The threats against them are described to be human traffickers and smugglers who put the refugees at risk by making them take dangerous routes on the sea. However, even if aid to Libya is seemingly enacted to protect the migrants from harm, it might not be the complete story. As I have shown, many scholars have based on other studies of other policy areas and discourses shown that it is the refugees themselves who are often presented as a threat to the EU and its security and welfare – in turn requiring certain measures. The aid to Libya and the camps can be seen as one such measure to hinder the refugees from entering the EU. The extraordinary measures and the financial aid for migration in Libya have led to financing the actors protecting the borders, which has arguably indirectly created an inhuman situation where migrants’ human rights get violated daily. Securitization of irregular migration has thus indirectly led to detention camps, violence and corruption. The deficient salaries of the coast guards and employers of the detention camps have led to an environment where sexual favours, rape and bribes are used as a means of freedom for migrants. The council of the European Union has been informed of the ghastly, according to HRW and Gerard and Pickering, the environment they have created with their funds to stop irregular migration but there has been no improvement.

The European Union is, through these measures, gaining control over the external border of North Africa to thus be able to control immigration to Europe. The aid implementation, combined with Italy’s increased surveillance of Libya, has created a structure that, when taking the previous English, French and Italian colonies in Libya, might be viewed as problematic.
Future research could include more in-depth research on what exactly the EU is funding with its aid in Libya. By researching the financial flow one might get a more comprehensive picture of the scope of the EU’s influence on Libya. It would furthermore be beneficial to research the process of securitization in this specific case, to see if there is a real threat of irregular migration or if the motivation was solely an excuse to stop further immigration to the EU. Future research would gain from conducting interviews with the migrants who have tried to cross the Libyan border to reach southern Europe, and interviews with the employers of Libya’s coast guards and the EU’s sector dealing with this issue.
9. List of references


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