The analysis of the Polish-Belarusian Border Crisis of 2021 through the theoretical framework of the Copenhagen School of Security Studies

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Abstract

The following paper examines the securitisation of migration during the Polish-Belarusian Border Crisis of 2021, through the conceptual framework of the Copenhagen School of Security Studies. This case has been chosen as is has received relatively little attention in the academic literature and can provide more insight into the power relations in the Polish politics. Methodology of the paper was based on collecting the data (oral speeches, interviews, Tweets, media summaries and videos). The study identified key themes in the texts and in the discourse surrounding the crisis and analysed them using the method of critical discourse analysis. The Border Crisis was prompted by the Belarusian regime, which through advertisement and violence pushed migrants from mainly Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan towards the Polish-Belarusian border. The examination of the chosen case showed that the securitising actor was Law and Justice (PiS) party, which also held the position of power. Through speech act it moved the issue of migration to the sphere of 'emergency politics', which had anti-democratic consequences. The analysis of the discourse focused on three identified themes: "heroic defence of the borders", "national and state security", and "immigrant threat". Analysing the themes with critical discourse analysis provided proved, that language used Law and Justice aimed to portray the migration through the border with Belarus as a threat to the state and society. The paper also proves that, with use of state-controlled media and anti-migrant campaign, PiS gained moral and formal support from the relevant audience (Polish citizens).

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1 Introduction

In summer of 2021 the Polish border of Belarus the first groups of migrants started arriving to the Polish-Belarusian border. They were welcomed by soldiers armed with guns, water cannons, teargas, and tall fences with barbed wire. Innocent people looking or the better future became pawns in the political game between Polish government controlled by the Law and Justice Party and Lukashenko's authoritarian regime. They were sent to the border by Belarusian services with promises of an easy entry to the European Union. Unfortunately, they were being lied to. In polish discourse, the migrants were portrayed as a threat to the society's identity and security and used as a tool by the PiS officials to gain more power and support.

1.1 Research Question and objectives

The paper aims to examine the actions of the Polish government during the Polish-Belarusian Border Crisis of 2021. For that purpose, the study will use the theoretical and conceptual framework of the Copenhagen School of Security Studies. This leads to following main and additional research question:

> *"How can the Copenhagen School be used to gain a better understanding of the Polish-Belarusian Border Crisis of 2021?"*

Additional research question:

> *"How were the Polish public media used in the securitisation process during the Polish-Belarusian Border Crisis of 2021."*

In this paper I will argue that the Polish conservative government started the secularization process in reaction to the migrant crisis on the Polish-Belarus border. The government consists of Law and Justice party members which has a majority in Polish Parliament; controls the office of President and all the ministries. The securitisation process used speech acts (such as Tweets, interviews, press conferences) in reaction to the actions of the Belarusian government, which directed numerous groups of migrants towards the border. The Polish government shifted the issue of migration from the domain of normal politics to the sphere of national security, understood by the Copenhagen School as 'emergency politics'. Through the media it controlled, the government convinced the population of the need to secure the border and introduce state of emergency in the counties near Polish-Belarusian border (Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde 1998; Umbrasko 2022).

The referent object in this study is societal security and national security. The special measurement in the securitisation is sealing the border with Belarus and implementing the state of emergency in the border area.

1.1 Background of the study

Since 2015, Poland has experienced a significant deterioration of democracy. From the ideological point of view, the ruling party, Law and Justice (pol. *Prawo i Sprawiedliwość* – PiS) is characterised by the researchers studying the Polish political landscape as conservative, nationalist and populist (Cadier & Szulecki 2020, 2; PopuList 2019). Their approach towards historical discourse and patriotic values created a large enough electoral base for them to consequently hold power since 2015 and win in every major national election. It is important to note that after 2019 parliamentary election PiS lost control over Senate (48 out of 100 mandates were hold by PiS Senators, with 51 as a majority need to control), but apart from making the legislative process longer, it did not stop the government to enact laws it sees fit. The ruling party introduced a number of controversial changes to the judicial system, media freedom and civil society (Camut 2023; Umbrasko 2022, 25). These changes have been widely criticized by national and international observers as undermining the principles of the rule of law and separation of powers. PiS was also accused of using state institutions for its own political purposes and of deliberately targeting political opponents and independent media (Amnesty International 2022b; Umbrasko 2022, 25). The politicization of the judicial system has raised concerns about the independence and impartiality of the courts. Moreover, Poland has been criticized for undermining journalistic independence and civil liberties (Amnesty International 2022b). This affects the decision-making process in Poland and has weakened the functioning of democratic mechanisms, giving the decision-makers more uncontrolled power. The democratic rule of law has been crippled by the changes imposed the Law and Justice government since its rise to power in 2015 (Camut 2023). International law institutions, such as European courts and human rights NGOs commented numerously that changes made by the PiS influenced the shape of the democratic system itself (Amnesty International 2022b).

The presented material is meant to showcase that Law and Justice party has in the past violated democratic procedures and the rule of law. As conservative party it has based its narrative on patriotism, nationalism, and Catholic values, as well as follows xenophobic tendencies while approaching the migration issues.

1.2 Significance and context of the study

Since the 2015 migrant crisis, there has been an increase of border control policies (Horolets et al, 2020, 731; Kabata & Jacobs 2022, 1). Populist movements have emerged with anti-immigration slogans and the ruling elites aimed to protect its population against the influx of migrants (Slaven 2021, 1). This paper shows how the securitisation process is applied more than 50 years after the creation of the securitisation theory by the scholars of the Copenhagen School. Although critics of CS accuse it of missing important factors (such as lack of research focusing on the actors and issue under securitisation or lack of tools provided by the CS to successfully study securitisation) (see: Stritzel 2014; Autrup, Sjeerm & Wichern 2019), the theory effectively proves that the Law and Justice government used the fear of migrants to achieve its own political goals, which is presented in this paper.

This paper sheds new light on the crisis on the Polish-Belarusian border. Previous studies focus on the legality of the actions of the Polish authorities concerning mainly human right issues (see: Balicki 2022; Tidskriften 2022;) and the use of migrants by the Belarusian government in a hybrid war (Akal 2021; Filipiec 2022). Among the researchers of the issue, there is a lack of analysis of the discourse about the migration crisis. Examining it in terms of the theory of securitisation will allow the paper to layout the process of securitising the border and managing the discourse in Poland.

The paper will help in understanding how securitisation is used in the 21st Century by the countries of the former communist bloc. The example of Poland can also be applied to the region that experienced an influx of migrants from the Belarusian border (Lithuania, Latvia and, to a lesser extent, Ukraine). Also, the use of tweets as speech acts will allow the theory of securitisation to be developed and adapted to the realities of the 21st century, where politicians and state officials more often than official state channels prefer faster and more social means of communication. Additionally, the paper contributes by analysing the discourse of the Law and Justice government and party officials during the Polish-Belarusian Border Crisis of 2021. The paper showcase main subjects of the discourse as well as the main actors and issues they see as threats to the public and state security.

1.3 Connection to Global Studies

This paper focuses on framing the migration as a threat and analyses the securitisation process of state authorities implementing countermeasures, which is not a new phenomenon in the world politics (Kabata & Jacobs 2022, 2). The migration does not necessarily have to be focused

on one group or nationality that flows into a country. Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde mention the progressing homogenization of world culture, becoming 'global', that for many is an attack on regional traditions, language, and values (Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde 1998, 124). If a nation is built on a melting pot of ideologies of different groups merging into one new group, the existing national identity will be exposed to the reaffirmation of racial and cultural distinctiveness and incommensurability. As the paper proves, to justify the securitisation of the issue, ruling elites use fear of losing their national identity to other cultures. In the case of Poland and the PiS government, the most common culture that the conservative government puts as the main opponent is Islam (Newsweek 2015; Pędziwiatr 2016, 427). It happens that Islam is also identified with the globalization process, for example by intimidating citizens with incidents from other Western countries. PiS politicians and state-controlled or state-friendly media create a narrative that these countries have been flooded by 'Islamic immigrants' who impose their laws and traditions on their societies (Pędziwiatr 2016, 434). Demonizing the image of Muslim immigrants and amplifying their influence on other countries has become a common practice in the public debate in Poland.

2 Theory

2.1 The Copenhagen School's approach to security

The Copenhagen School of Security Studies (CS) is a theoretical approach to the study of international security and politics, developed at the University of Copenhagen's Department of Political Science in the 1990s (McDonald 2012, 71). With the research agenda focused on the works of Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver, the school is known for its emphasis on the non-military dimensions of security. This distinguishes it from the traditional security policy studies and aligns it with the constructivist approach of putting the emphasis on the non-military means in addressing security issues (Diskaya 2012, 2; Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde 1998, 204). CS's framework is built around the so-called security sectors, which the authors define as military, political, economic, environmental, and societal (see: Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde 1998, 7-8). For the purposes of the paper, I will focus my considerations only on the societal sector.

The school's approach to security studies focuses on the idea that security threats are socially constructed. The scholars highlight and address the role of discourse, language, and norms in shaping security (Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde 1998; Wæver 1998; Buzan 1983). In CS's understanding, an issue becomes a security matter in result of an actor defining it as such. Ole Wæver's book "Security: A New Framework For Analysis", which is a primary text for the

Copenhagen School's framework, the natural interpreters of what poses a threat to the state will be power holders (Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde 1998, 123). Those can be either an influential elite or the state itself. Following, the political leaders can, from a position of power, claim to speak for the state or nation, gain public attention, and introduce emergency measures (McDonald 2012, 73). Therefore, concepts of CS present that security warnings can be based on social actors and their perception of possible dangers.

The security of individuals is depended on national security and vice versa. In his research, Barry Buzan expands the notion of security by calling it "a powerful political tool in claiming attention for priority items in the competition for government attention" (Buzan 2007, 26; 288). He also based his understanding of state security on the notion of individual security, as for him those two are inseparable from each other (Buzan 1983, 18). Therefore, if the threat to society becomes too high, it results in sacrificing some aspects of one's personal freedom to counter it (such as privacy or the right to information). In his book, "People, States & Fear: The National Security Problem in International Relations" (1983), Buzan states that people start perceiving the state as a mechanism, which if danger arises, will protect them, and defend them (Buzan 1983, 20). In this expanded research of the CS, the studies show that individual security is dependent on state security, as society has to give up rights in the face of danger.

The Copenhagen School is part of the constructivism trend, that became popular at the end of the Cold War. Until the 1980s, constructivism was not a preferable approach while studying national security. As Buzan states in the book "People, States & Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era" (2007), this field was dominated by other two approaches. Firstly, the realist perfective, which views security to be only assured through power; and secondly the idealist view, which favours peace as a tool to provide security (Buzan 2007, 25-26). Buzan argues that security is far more versatile and goes beyond the simple distinction between power and peace, but until the end of the 1980s, this concept still had a heavy military emphasis (Buzan 2007, 27). With the emergence of constructivism in International Relations, the duopoly on the theoretical approach towards security has been abolished (McDonald 2012, 63). Therefore, the understanding of securitisation as an issue concerning the military power of the state, transformed into studying it through discourse created within the public space (Buzan 2007, 26).

2.2 Securitisation Theory

The Copenhagen School's approach to security challenges the traditional realist perspective that focuses on military power and state interests. Instead, it emphasizes the role of language and discourse in shaping perceptions of security threats and the responses to those threats. The school argues that security is a social construct that is created and maintained through political and societal processes. (McDonald 2012, 76). The security process are being shaped by the securitisation acts. This is established in the one of the most important contributions of the Copenhagen School, the securitisation theory (McDonald 2012; Balzacq 2010). This approach is the main theoretical framework which this paper is based on.

One of the school's key contributions is the concept of "securitisation," which refers to the process of framing a non-security issue as a security concern and justifying exceptional measures to address it (Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde 1998, 47; Wæver 2014, personal interview). Developed by Wæver in the 1990s, securitisation theory is based on civilization's conceptualization of politics and defence against colonial aggression (Wæver 1995, 12). Calling securitisation, a "discoursive construction of threat", he depicted it as a notion that allows politicians not only to portray certain inconvenient issues as a danger to national security, but also to possibly prevent these "threats" (such as illegal migration) (Wæver 1995, 12; McDonald 2012, 72).

Identifying threats as a result of societal discourse, became an approach adapted by the CS. The scholars point out that with sufficient persuasion and a large enough audience to accept the securitisation process, any issue can be labelled as a threat and dealt with as an emergency (Diskaya 2012, 2). As the threats become political and the audience is more politically aware of it, securitisation can be seen as a more extreme version of politicisation (Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde 1998, 24).

In theory, every issue can become securitised, including those that are not possible to be influenced by the state's power. Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde provide some examples of how, in practice, the placement of the securitisation varies from state to state (and across time) (Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde 1998, 24 For example, Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde argue that some states, such as Iran or Saudi Arabia, will politicise religion, while on the other hand, in countries such as France (or..), religion will not play a dominant role in the politics. Similarly, securitisation of culture is commonly noticeable in the countries of the former Soviet Union and its sphere of influence during the Cold War (Ibid.). CS scholars note that, as culture in this

particular region was a target of suppression throughout most of the 20th by the totalitarian Soviet regime, the post-USSR societies became very protective over newly regained traditions and values after regaining independence in 1989 (Hough 2018, 111). Therefore, the CS argues that securitization can affect a varied set of notions of, for example, religious or cultural character.

Once an issue is securitized, this 'normal politics' dynamic is suspended as the issue enters the realm of security and is dealt with urgency (and often secrecy), with few actors able to contribute to the political debate on how this issue should be addressed (McDonald 2012, 74). By normal, scholars within the Copenhagen School understand the politics that is regulated by normal (democratic) rules and regulations of policymaking (Floyd 2007, 329). This form of negative 'panic politics' (or 'emergency') is characteristic of the Copenhagen School and their theory of securitisation and helps explain Wæver's normative preference for desecuritisation (Wæver 1998, 56). For CS by articulating an issue as a part of a perceived security threat, it moves beyond normal politics (Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde 1998, 29).

According to the CS, security is mainly about survival, which became the key argument for securitisation (Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde 1998; Buzan 1983). The actors who securitize, place the highest goal of defending the state or nation against the threat they consider to be the greatest. A huge role in securitisation is played by the subjective opinion of the securitisation actor, who can identify any problem as threatening collective security (Autrup, Sjeerm & Wichern 2019, 9). Moreover, Wæver evaluates securitisation negatively and openly calls it "a failure to deal with issues of normal politics" (Wæver 1998, 39). The same opinion can be found in "Security: A New Framework for Analysis", where authors state that bringing in emergency measures and failing to deal with the issue with normal politics, can often create 'anti-democratic' consequences (Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde 1998, 29). Those consequences are justified by the securitising actor, as necessary to protect, restore or even enforce order (Ibid., 23). As long as the actor has the support of the audience, the way to treat any cause as an 'existential' threat is open to him (Wæver 1998, 55).

Throughout the years, the securitisation theory has been expanded by the researchers of the security politics (see: Floyd 2007; Balzacq 2010). In this paper I will focus on three points of the theory: the speech acts, the audience, and the media. These notions will be later implemented in the case study of the Polish-Belarusian Border Crisis of 2021.

2.2.1   Speech Acts

Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde state that the securitisation process takes place through a speech act (Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde 1998). The CS' approach to the speech act is based on "performativity of utterance" (Kabata & Jacobs 2022, 2), where it is by saying the words, something is done (like betting, giving a promise, naming a ship)" (Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde 1998). A speech act is an articulation of a threat itself (McDonald 2012, 72). However, in "Security: A New Framework…", the scholars claim that the security speech act is not simply defined by uttering the word 'security', but rather by designating an existential threat requiring an emergency action (Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde 1998, 27).

In the approach of the Copenhagen School towards the speech act, the referent object and the securitising actor play a crucial role in the security analysis. The definition of both is provided by Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde, with the referent object defined as "things that are seen to be existentially threatened and that have a legitimate claim to survival", such as state or the nation (Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde 1998, 36). The securitizing actor "securitize issues by declaring something – a referent object – existentially threatened", such as a person or a group who performs the security speech act (Ibid., 40).

Moreover, while naming threats, securitising actors can refer to various issues of both national and international politics. In some cases, state leaders refer to the state and sovereignty; in others to nation and identity (Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde 1998, 123). The securitising issue does not have to pose a threat to the referent object, as according to the CS:

> "Security" is thus a self-referential practice, because it is in this practice that the issue becomes a security issue – not necessarily because a real existential threat exists but because the issue is presented as such a threat."
>
> (Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde 1998, 24)

However, Wæver notes, that not everyone is capable of carrying out a securitisation act because, as it must come 'only from a specific place, in an institutional voice' (Wæver 1998, 57). Those actors can never be objective, which is why the actions and decisions they make to classify an issue as a security problem, will remain political, rather than analytical (Diskaya 2012, 3). It is also worth mentioning that securitisation does not always have to be linked to the state, with Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde claiming, that "politicization, as well as securitization, can be enacted in other fora as well", such as lobbyists or pressure groups (Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde 1998, 24;40).

In the view of the Copenhagen School after the speech act, said issue automatically ceases to be part of 'normal politics' and is transferred into the realm of emergency politics. It is then no longer subject to the normal laws or mechanisms of a democratic system as the securitizing actor has deemed it a national security matter that must be dealt with swiftly (Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde 1998, 26). Following, is that the speech act in securitisation reduces public influence over the securitising issue (Filimon 2016, 58). The elites are therefore free to break the existing rules, laws, and procedures to implement special measures. In dictatorships and autocracies, the ruling elite can create an image of being under constant threat without the public even realising it. However, even in these instances, the securitising actor has to convince some group (such as political advisors or generals) that the threat has to be countered (Taureck 2006, 57). In the case of democracies, the ruling party has to legitimize their actions of restraining the public freedom of information (like fear of espionage or panic) (Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde 1998, 28). Importantly, it is not always the state, that is the securitising actor (although this is considered an ideal case), as long as it has authority and power (Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde 1998). Despite having authority over the audience and a significant advantage, the securitisation process is compared by Wæver to negotiations. Wæver, as well as Buzan and de Wilde state that this acceptance requires a series of 'facilitating conditions', containing the form of the speech act as well as the position of the securitising actor and the 'conditions historically associated with the threat' (Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde 1998, 31-33).

Overall, the Copenhagen School's emphasis on speech acts highlights the performative power of language in shaping perceptions of security threats and responses to those threats. This perspective challenges traditional security studies approaches that focus primarily on military power and state interests, and underlines the importance of discourse, language, and norms in shaping international security.

2.2.2 The audience and media support

Moving an issue from normal politics into an emergency can only happen after gaining acceptance from the audience (Diskaya 2012, 2). Even dictators and the authorities of undemocratic countries must reckon with the support of the population, without whom no securitisation process cannot take place (Wæver 1998, 57; Wæver 2014, personal interview). The securitising move is only successful, when the presented problem is accepted as a security issue by a relevant audience (Kabata & Jacobs 2022, 2).

For Thierry Balzacq, the process of securitisation requires two types of support: moral and formal (Balzacq 2010, 9). Moral support is being appealed to by politicians from "both the

public and the institutional body whose attitude has a direct causal connection with the desired goals" (Ibid.). It's the moral support that is needed in situation such as starting a war or getting rid of a threat to the state. Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde write that, public needs to evaluate the move, before giving its support. The scholars state, that the securitising actors "are 'judged' first by other social actors and citizens, and the degree of their following is then interpreted and measured" (Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde 1998, 34). Some states may conduct surveys and support polls in order to effectively measure public support on the issues (Kabata & Jacobs 2022, 3). Moreover, if there is no clear opposition to the securitising process, the actor can freely move the relevant issue to the emergency politics (Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde 1998, 29). While securitising an issue moral support is necessary, however, as Balzacq claims, is not, as securitisation also requires a formal decision, which changes the 'political reality' (Balzacq 2010, 9). That decision is required for the securitisation process to be final because it mandates the actor to adopt a specific policy to counter the threat at hand (Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde 1998, 33). For example, on the state level securitisation process requires an acceptance of the Parliament, or on the international level, a Security Council of the United Nations (Balzacq 2010, 9). Therefore, the moral support (through the public identifying the issue as a security threat) and formal support (the official recognition of the threat) is needed to perform the act of securitisation.

The audience is, according to Ole Wæver, one of the most important parts of the securitisation (Wæver 2014, personal interview). He claimed that in the past to little attention withing the security studies has been on the acceptance of the securitising move. Without that acceptance, as he stated in the interview, "anyone can stand up and say, this or that is a threat" (Wæver 2014, personal interview).

According to the main theorists of the Copenhagen School, one of the actors contributing heavily to defining and identifying something as a threat is the media (Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde 1998, 125). In order to present the issue, the media can often use the simplest possible analogies to appeal to the majority of the audience (such as identifying the conflict as 'us' versus 'them') (Williams 2003, 520). When categorization by ethnicity or religion is involved, it is the media that play the most important role in conveying to the audience the motivation of the securitizing actor (Ibid.).

The CS argues that media are deeply involved in the securitisation process in two ways. Firstly, as a tool for the securitising actor to reach the target audience, and secondly as a part of the audience whose support has to gained for the securitising act to be successful (Buzan 2007,

273). Buzan states that many media organization, have "some interest in the national security and involve themselves in varying degrees in the security policy-making process" (Buzan 2007, 273). In his view, most of the media do not focus only on security issues, but their need to "sell their product to the readers", it makes them biased and they "distort the public view of what is important in national security" (Ibid.). Secondly, without media as the platform that keeps the speech act afloat, the securitisation process would not be as effective. It's through narratives created by the media, that audience get their knowledge and develops an opinion of their own (Mbalyowere et al. 2020, 9). Media are also a useful tool for measuring public opinion, with news agencies conducting pool for their own use (Kabata & Jacobs 2020, 3). Therefore, the media is crucial in gaining audience support and public interpretation of the securitised issue.

Michael Williams (2003) also puts media at the centre of the securitisation of migration process. According to him, the increase in the securitisation of migration must be linked to how migration is experienced by the public. These experiences are created by the media. Williams backs up his words by using a typical example of British media portrayal of immigration issues:

> "(…) nightly images of shadowy figures attempting to jump on trains through the Channel Tunnel between France and the UK, for example, or of lines of ''asylum seekers'' waiting to be picked up for a day's illicit labour".

> (Williams 2003, 526)

According to Valeria Bello, it is images like these that make people seek help at the state level, believing that a threat is on their doorstep or already surrounding them. Such narratives, feed the extremisms and antagonize the audience towards the showcased threat (Bello 2017, 7).

Audience support is a crucial factor in the securitisation process (Wæver 2014, personal interview). The state or other securitising actor has to appeal to the public opinion for moral and formal support in order to successfully realise its security politics. The actor does so through media, which both help him spread the message about the incoming threat, as well as add their own input in the discourse and legitimize action taken to successfully securitise said issue.

2.3   Securitisation of migration

As Monika Kabata and An Jacobs notice in their work, titled "The 'migrant other' as a security threat: the 'migration crisis' and the securitising move of the Polish ruling party in response to the EU relocation scheme", securitisation of migration (not only in Poland) is "not a new phenomenon" (Kabata & Jacobs 2022, 2). The authors point that the notion gained more

attention after the World Trade Centre and Pentagon terrorist attacks in the United States of America in 2001, however it really "boosted" after 2015 migration crisis in Europe (Ibid.).

Securitisation theory argues that security threats are not objective but are labelled as such by a securitising actor (Diskaya 2012, 2). This means that problems become security risks when treated as such in a process called securitisation. Even though the securitisation of migration is a relatively new phenomenon, the issue of migration has been perceived as a security threat over the last few decades. In the theoretical framework of the Copenhagen School, migration is a process constructed and presented as a security issue requiring exceptional measures and responses. In traditional security studies, immigration has not been considered a relevant issue. However, the CS has identified it as one of the easiest to label as a threat by politicians (McDonald 2012, 74).

Similarly, to what was mentioned in the paper on the securitisation process, migration can be identified as a threat by the use of language and discourse (McDonald 2012; Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde 1998; Buzan 1983; 2007). The securitisation process involves identifying migration as a security risk; introducing a securitising actor that can respond to the threat; and justifying exceptional measures to address the threat (Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde 1998, 26).. The language, while addressing the migration, becomes far more violent and based on extremes (Bello 2017, 7).

Migration has become a major political issue internationally (most notable changes arose after 2015 Refugee Crisis in Europe) and the securitisation of migration has been used to justify restrictive immigration policies, border control measures, and detention and deportation of migrants (Oxfam n/d). This is due to migration being perceived as a threat rather than an asset (see: Hafez 2016). For instance, Buzan saw the continuous influx of immigrants as a process that will completely change the structure of the state (Buzan 1983, 91). He also portrays migration as a threat to the societal sector, as the securitisation of immigrants focuses on the 'survival of the society' (Buzan 1983, 90). This survival is, according to Buzan, especially used as an argument by the securitizing actor if the incoming population is of a different culture or ethnicity (Buzan 1983, 91)

After the refugee crisis in 2015, researchers of the subject noticed that the growing populist tendencies oftentimes affect immigrants (see: Boateng et al., 2022; Bello 2017; Jaskulowski 2019). Scholars within the Copenhagen School state that, depending on the society, migration affects different vulnerabilities. Therefore, migration can become a subject of securitisation for

reasons such as the labour market, national culture, religion or even the housing market (Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde 1998, 124). For example, the need to securitize migration may result from identity based on separateness of small numbers of citizens, where even a minor addition to the population is visible. The migration does not necessarily have to be focused on one group or nationality that flows into a country. Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde also mention the progressing homogenization of world culture, that for many is an attack on regional traditions, language, and values (Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde 1998, 124).

The process of securitization of migration consists of portraying migration as a security problem that requires exceptional measures (Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde 1998, 125). This may include presenting migrants as a threat to national security, culture, or national identity (including religious beliefs), and justifying the use of securitized measures such as border controls, detention, and deportation (Stępka 2022, 64). The securitisation of migration is a significant issue in the European Union (EU) and is driven by a combination of factors, including the rise of far-right politics, fears of terrorism and fears of economic insecurity (Ibid., 3).

In the book by Robert Koulish and Maartje van der Woude titled "Crimmigrant Nations: Resurgent Nationalism and the Closing of Borders" (2020), the authors note the increase of "anti-immigrant sentiments and nationalist discourse (…) in various Western liberal democracies", but most importantly they recognise these notions as "being translated into actual policies and practices that contribute to a merger of crime control and migration control, with devastating effects for those falling under its reach" (Koulish & van der Woude 2020, 7). For example, the EU has responded to the securitisation of migration with policies to control migration and protect the EU's external borders. This led to the development of measures such as the creation of Frontex, the EU's border management agency, and the formation of hotspots for the processing and detention of migrants (Mas, Bretonnier & Lighthouse Reports 2022). Following, where social dissatisfaction is high enough, movements arise (such as Vox Party in Spain, AfD – Alternative for Germany or PiS in Poland) and aim to fight against migration, arguing for the defence of the nation, culture or even out of upset over current state policy. If the non-state movements and the government fail to reach an agreement, dissatisfied citizens find or create new influential actors to help them defend their cultural identity (Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde 1998, 124). For the nationalist social movements and right-wing parties being in power, anti-migrant resentments may become a part of the official state legislature (Koulish & van der Woude 2020, 298).

In the societal sector, populations can blame migrants for the decline in their neighbourhoods or public schools, as well as for the overburden of public health services. This can result in further social tensions (Bello 2017, 70). In "Security: A New Framework For Analysis", authors present two reactions that society may have to the migration threat: carrying out activities by communities or an attempt to transfer the problem to the state level (Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde 1998, 122). Due to the ongoing integration of the political and societal sectors, these reactions are very often combined. Therefore, securitisation at the state level is much more frequent than individual actions carried out by groups of citizens (Kabala & Jacobs 2022, 3). Additionally, citizens prefer to ask the state for help more often, because it has a much larger range of tools to limit migration (such as border control, police forces or legislative acts).

Overall, migration and migrants belong to one of the most commonly securitised issues, especially after 2015 Refugee Crisis in Europe. Copenhagen School also portrays migration as an "easy target" for the securitising actor, who portrays it as a threat to the national security, culture, and identity. Oftentimes, securitising process results in legislative changes to the migration procedures, making it more difficult for the migrants to enter the country. Moreover, during the securitisation the state can introduce laws that stigmatise the migrants that already are a part of the society.

2.4   Critiques and limitations of the securitisation theory

Even though the Copenhagen School of securitisation theory is the most relevant to examining the actions of the PiS government during the 2021 Polish-Belarus border crisis, the theory does not lack criticism. The opponents point out that there is not enough focus on the actor being securitised in the frameworks created by the CS, as well as absence of effective tools to study the process (Stritzel 2014, 50; Autrup, Sjeerm & Wichern 2019, 9).

Firstly, CS lacks research on entities against which securitisation is undertaken. According to the assumptions of the Copenhagen School, the most important actor remains to be the party that performs securitisation. This is the main object of scholars' research in this trend (Autrup, Sjeerm & Wichern 2019, 9). Even the public, which is essential to this process, has been relegated to a mere hypocritical mass that can blindly follow or resist authority, with no active influence on the process (Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde 1998, 25). The Copenhagen School does not recognize the securitized object as an object worth investigating and focuses its work on decision-making actors. Critics of the securitisation of migration argue that it creates a false dichotomy between security and migration and that it violates the rights of migrants and refugees (Autrup, Sjeerm & Wichern 2019; Floyd 2007). They argue that migration should be

seen as a complex social and political issue that requires a multi-faceted approach, not just a security issue (Filipiec 2022). In addition, critics argue that securitisation of borders can be counterproductive as they may lead migrants to take more dangerous routes and increase the risk of human rights abuses.

Secondly, the Copenhagen School lacks tools to study the process, successfulness, or practice of securitization. As Holger Stritzel stated in his book "Security in Translation: Securitisation Theory and the Localization of Threat", that despite the popularity of the securitisation theory, the Copenhagen School provided very few ways to research it (Stritzel 2014). According to Matt McDonald, while developing a compact theoretical framework for security, many questions (such as "How do we know that an issue has been successfully securitized?", or "Which audience needs to be convinced of the legitimacy of a securitisation move?") remain unanswered within the framework of the Copenhagen School, (McDonald 2012, 74).

Moreover, as securitisation focuses on discourse, critics such as Thierry Balzacq (2005), state that one must also take practice to account. For him, CS seems to forget that securitising actors' speech acts not always cover their actual actions (Balzacq 2005, 172). Balzacq in his work agrees with scholars of the Copenhagen School, that audience is a crucial part of the securitisation process. However, in his assumptions, the audience is placed in the centre of the successful securitisation (Balzacq 2005, 171).

3 Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The paper uses the theory of securitisation coined by the scholars of the Copenhagen School as a theoretical framework and studies Poland as an interpretative case study (Lijphart 1971, 682). Theory of securitisation was chosen, because provides researchers with a tool to help them explore the design of security by presenting the threat itself (McDonald 2012, 75).

The case study approach was chosen, because of an interest in the, not, as Lijphart states, 'because of the interest in the formulation of general theory" (Ibid.) The paper applies the generalization to the Polish-Belarusian Border Crisis of 2021, rather than trying to improve the securitisation theory itself. This method helps in developing an in-depth analysis of a particular case through securitisation theory and framework. A case study allows the researcher during qualitative research explore complex processes that may be difficult to describe using other research methods (Lijphart 1971, 1.). In the case researched by this paper, on the securitisation of migration in the context of the Polish-Belarusian border crisis, case study analysis is a useful

tool to examine how the Polish government used securitisation to gain moral and formal support and how these activities influenced the migration situation on the border.

Data has been based on the texts collected in regard to their focus on issues present in the discourse in the Polish-Belarusian Border Crisis of 2021. Through the analysis of the oral speeches the paper identifies key themes and assumptions and presents the findings. Case study analysis is the detailed study of one or more cases that are representative of a population or phenomenon. It involves the analysis of detailed information and data from various sources, such as interviews, documents, reports and field observations, in order to understand and explain a given case or phenomenon. The researcher interprets the collected data and tries to explain what factors influenced a given case or phenomenon.

3.2   Data Collection

The paper is based on academic journals and books; news articles both Polish and international concerning the crisis on Polish Belarusian border; official documents from the Polish government; Polish legal acts and laws adopted during and after the crisis; documents prepared by NGOs and human rights organisations concerning the state of the refugees along the border and illegal activities by Polish Border Guard and government officials.

To study the discourse, the paper identifies data as speech acts of government officials who are also members of the Law and Justice party as texts gathered for the analysis. The paper understands texts as oral speeches obtained from transcribed interviews and press conferences, media summaries of interviews and videos. Moreover, the paper applies the understanding of Twitter posts (Tweets) as speech acts, according to the framework from the article "Tweet Acts: A Speech Act Classifier for Twitter" by Soroush Vosoughi and Deb Roy (n/d).

The selection of the texts was based on focus on the subject of migration on the Polish-Belarusian border. Sought text concerned issues like 'border defence', 'migrant threat', 'illegal immigrants' 'crisis on the border (Polish-Belarusian)' or 'migrant crisis'.

Data has been collected through frameworks created in other studies concerning securitisation of migration, namely Baker-Beall (2011) and Kabata & Jacobs (2022). Both works include a method of discourse analysis, where researchers choose the texts based on their focus on the migration and after analysis of the oral speeches they identified key words, assumptions, and phrases (Kabata & Jacobs 2022, 3; Baker-Beall 2011, 65). The process of, so-called, 'mapping the discourse' has been implemented in this paper (Baker-Beall 2011, 2). Finding similar

themes is recommended by other researchers, studying discourse analysis (see: Wodak & Meyer 2001; Duszak & Fairclough 2008; Fairclough 2010; 2014).

The studied speech acts originated between August 2021 and February 2022. This specific time frame was selected because of the increase of illegal attempts to cross the Polish border with Belarus at the end of August 2021, which started the debate about the national and public security (Szczepańska 2022). According to data presented by the Polish Border Guard, the number of attempts of illegal border crossing rose from 242 in July to 3531 in August, with peak in October (17441 attempts) (Ibid.; see: Graph 1).

Graph 1 *Illegal attempts to cross the Polish -Belarusian border in 2021*
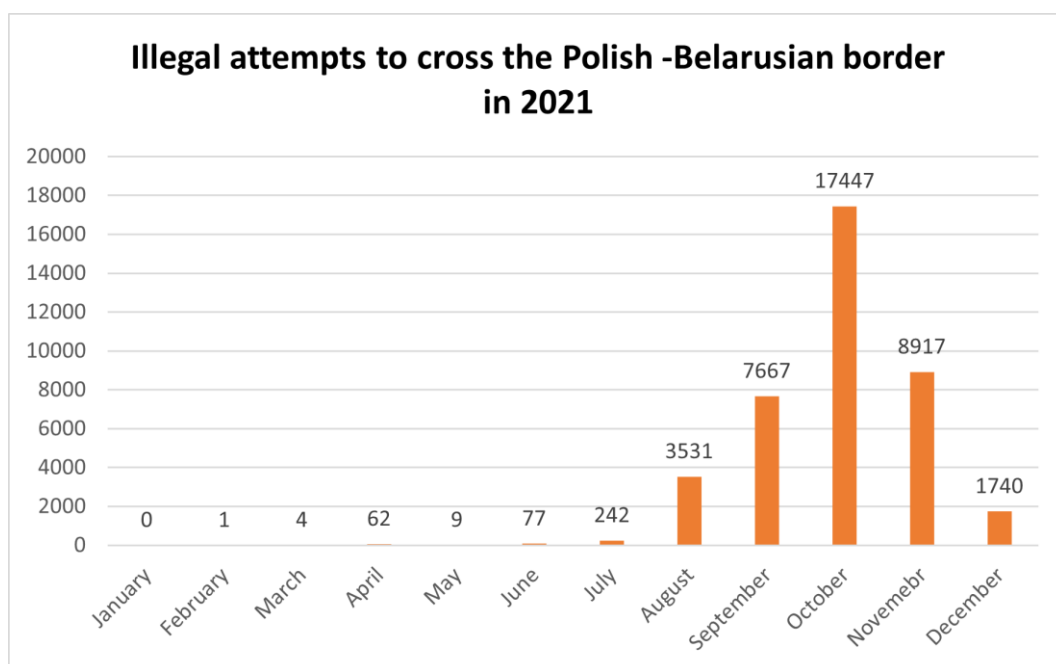
Own design, based on: Szczepańska 2022

Secondly, the paper does not analyse the data after February 2022, because of the start of the Russian invasion on Ukraine. The start of this war shifted the public attention to newly erected crisis in the neighbour country, as well as decreased the assessed threat level of the migration from Belarus. The shift in attention of the government resulted in decrease of the number of press conferences on the border as well as reduced the frequency of the interviews and questions asked by the journalist about the Border Crisis (Żądło 2022).

3.3   Data Analysis

This paper uses Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as a research method in this paper. The method has been chosen, as CDA is commonly used for studying written or spoken language

in relation to its social context (Wodak & Meyer 2001, 2). As Balzacq also states, it is one of the most commonly used qualitative method in security studies (Balzacq 2010, 31). It is particularly useful for analysing the relationship between language and power in social, political, and cultural contexts (Fairclough, 2014). Critical discourse analysis emphasizes the power behind discourse, not just the power within it. It presents how power holders shape the "order of discourse" as well as general social order, and how they control what happens in certain interactions (such as interviews, press conferences or speeches) (Luo 2022; Poutanen 2015, 18). The CDA emphasizes the importance of studying the ways in which language is used to construct and reproduce social inequalities and power relations. It aims to uncover the hidden ideologies and assumptions underlying language use and to reveal how these discourses shape our understanding of the world around us (Fairclough 2010, 59). Moreover, Critical Discourse Analysis helps the researcher in discovering the connection between language and power.

Although, according to the authors of "Critical discourse analysis. Interdisciplinary approach to social communication", the origins of CDA should be sought in linguistics, and specifically in critical linguistics, research in this field has now been taken over by various disciplines from the broadly understood social sciences (Duszak & Fairclough 2008, 10; Wodak & Meyer 2001). They are characterized by interdisciplinary nature and do not reduce their program to language analysis but consider other elements of social processes. Again, the CDA fits perfectly with the understanding of securitisation as a social process, it depends on how the actor frames the threat affects how the issue is perceived by the public (Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde 1998). Moreover, the whole process of securitisation is socially constructed, which means that it is enabled, produced, and maintained through discourse, which CDA analyses (Wæver 2014, personal interview; Wodak & Meyer 2001, 1). Critical discourse analysis conceptualizes language practices as embedded in social practices, and thus related to, but ultimately subordinate to, discursive practices here as specific practices within a wider social sphere. Critical discourse analysis ultimately prioritizes the social sphere and more narrowly conceptualizes discourse as meaningful practices in the societal sector (Stritzel 2012, 552)

Therefore, the paper uses CDA as its approach for analysing how language is used to construct and shape specific social phenomena such as migration and securitisation of it. By examining the language used in the media, political documents, and other relevant texts, the CDA can reveal how certain groups of people are constructed as marginalised "others" (so called "them") while some are privileged or dominant (so-called "us") (Koulish & van der Woude 2020;

Wodak & Meyer 2001). This sheds light on the underlying power relations and social structures that shape these discourses and can help challenge and change them (Wodak & Meyer 2001).

CDA has already been used to study the securitisation process in more detail (see: Ferrari 2007; Poutanen 2015), but it does not dominate the field among researchers. This is due to the fact that the representatives of the Copenhagen School themselves have never indicated how to investigate this issue (Stritzel 2014, 12). CDA will help the paper to examine how the authorities (Law and Justice) used their position and power to create securitisation with migration as its target. As stated by Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde (1998), it is the position of authority that enables the actor to even start the process, which must be supported by a sufficient number of the population in order to be completed. The CDA method aims to help the researcher understand how language is used in real-life situations (Luo 2022; Wodak & Meyer 2001). Discourse, and precisely the speech act, stands at the centre of the theory of securitisation (Filimon 2016, 59). For that reason, critical discourse analysis is the chosen method that will allow this paper to examine how the securitisation process was conducted during the crisis in the Polish-Belarusian border in 2021 (Wodak & Meyer 2001, 4). CS scholars state that without discourse, no securitisation act will be legitimized; without indicating something as a threat, without speech act making is a subject of securitisation, the whole process will have no impact on reality (Wæver 1998; Buzan 1983). By examining the statements of politicians, their speeches; interviews; as well as their tweets, I will analyse the word choice; naming and referencing; modalities; and presuppositions (Richardson 2018, 295).

The methodology of this paper consists of data based on oral speeches (interviews, Tweets, press conferences), collected through 'mapping the discourse' practice, which was conducted through finding similar themes in the discourse during the Polish-Belarusian Border Crisis of 2021. The identified themes are: 'defending the borders', 'national and state security', and 'immigrant threat'. Next, the data has been analysed through critical discourse analysis, as the method helps in analysing the discourse, which, according to the Copenhagen School, is the core of the securitisation theory. Chosen methodology will be also useful in characterising the power dynamics and social structures in the studied case.

4   Case Study: The Polish – Belarussian Border Crisis of 2021

4.1   Background and context of the crisis

Even though the migration crisis on the Polish-Belarusian border started in the summer of 2021, the Belarusian government's actions were part of an ongoing dispute with EU member states.

In 2020, during the presidential election in Belarus, many countries, international organisations, and European Union voiced their concerns over disputed elections and a crackdown against the democratic opposition (ACAPS 2022, 2; The Economist 2021b). Belarusian president, Aleksandr Lukashenko, after dealing with the unrest accused "The West" of trying to undermine his triumph and interfere in Belarusian elections. Following, in 2021, the authorities in Minsk diverted a commercial flight over Belarus and force the crew to land (Ryanair 4798 incident, see: Roth 2021). After the plane landed in Mink, state's secret services apprehended Roman Protasevich, a Belarusian journalist involved in organising the protests against Lukashenko's regime (Roth 2021). As the result, the EU recognized the incident as state terrorism, imposed sanctions on Lukashenka and the most important people in his apparatus of power, as well as closed the EU air space for Belarusian airlines (Eur-Lex 2022).

In response to the sanctions, in 2021, Belarus started promoting opportunities of traveling to the European Union from countries such as Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan (Akal 2021; Umbrasko 2022, 25) (see: Figure 1). The regime aimed to flood Europe with, as Lukashenko stated, "human traffickers, drug smugglers, and armed migrants" and started to grant an excessive number of visas to Belarus and increased the frequency of flights to airports in Iraq, Syria and Turkey (Umbrasko 2022, 25).

Figure 1 *Flights from the Middle East to Minsk*

Source: BBC 2021

After arriving by planes in Minsk, the immigrants were directed towards the border of three EU member states (Poland, Lithuania, and Latvia), and through the use of Belarusian army and services, they were not allowed to turn back. The European Commission accused Lukashenka's regime of giving the immigrants false hope of easy entry into the EU and creating an artificial influx of migration on the borders (Akal 2021, BBC 2021). The report conducted by the Amnesty International shows that foreigners who came to Belarus were "tempted by attractive travel packages" containing information about the possibility of easily entering Western Europe (Amnesty International 2022a).

After arriving in Belarus, they received instructions on how to get to the Polish-Belarusian border and what to do next. Belarusian services promised the migrants, that after reaching the border, they will be taken further into the European Union (Balicki 2022, 78). The reality, however, turned out to be far from the promises of the organizers of the "tours" (Amnesty International 2022a). Barbed wire, barriers and fences awaited them at the border, with officers of the Border Guard and the Polish Police in riot gear and dogs. Every highway, railway or even a pedestrian trail has been closed and fortified with teargas and water cannons (ACAPS 2021, 1; see: Figure 2). The vast majority of migrants came from Iraq and had economic motivations, but there were also large groups that could be refugees from Syria, Afghanistan, and African countries (Wawrzusiszyn 2022, 51). It is worth emphasizing that the migrants were not recorded or identified by the Belarusian authorities.

The crisis on the border has been developing gradually. Initially, there were single, poorly organized groups, attempting to cross the border. Along with the influx of migrants to Belarus, the number of attempts to illegally cross the state border began to increase rapidly (see: Graph 1). Groups of migrants made attempts to force their way into Poland (Wawrzusiszyn 2022, 52). They destroyed the border fence, used branches, sticks and stones, throwing them at Polish officers and soldiers (TVP Info 2021b; Wawrzusiszyn 2022,52). As a result of the incidents, the Polish security services were even injured (Dziennik Gazeta Prawna 2021). The available reports showed that among those crossing the border there were people who did not resemble migrants at all (Rachwalska 2022). This gave rise to the suspicion that there were members of Belarusian groups organizing a border provocation (Wawrzusiszyn 2022, 51; Rachwalska 2022).

Despite the additional measure on the border, some of the groups made it to the other side of the border. However, they were usually quickly rounded up and placed in improvised detention centres, which by standard resembled more prisons than aid camps (Boczek 2023). At the beginning of 2023, the media reported over 217 people who had died trying to cross the Polish border from Belarus since the beginning of the crisis in August 2021 (Boczek 2023). At the time of writing this work, there are still occasional detentions of groups of immigrants trying to bypass guards and the border wall on the Polish-Belarusian border (Chrzczonowicz 2023).

in addition to closing border crossings and strengthening the Border Guard with additional forces and equipment, on the 2nd of September 2021, the Polish authorities introduced a state of emergency in 183 localities in Podlaskie and Lubelskie provinces, all alongside the border with Belarus (ACAPS 2022, 2; Prime Minister's Office 2021). Restrictions included a ban on staying in an area under a state of emergency; a ban on registering and photographing officers of the Boarder Guard, police and soldiers and objects (including border infrastructure) and limited access to public information about activities conducted in this area (Ibid.). Even tough media and journalist protested (Klimowicz 2021; European Federation of Journalists 2021), the authorities concealed the events on the border from the public opinion, allowing only state media to cover the crisis. This, according to the ruling of The Polish Supreme Court was breaking the Polish Constitution (Jałoszewski 2022).

In summary, election fraud; crackdown on the democratic Belarusian opposition; and hijacking the Ryanair 7498 flight has resulted in imposing EU sanctions over Belarus. As a response, Alexander Lukashenko's regime orchestrated a rapid influx of migration on border with Poland, Lithuania, and Latvia (also Lithuania border in summer of 2021. Flown in by planes to Minks, the migrants were pushed towards the border with promises of an easy entry to the European Union. Stopped by the Polish forces, they resolved to using force to break through, which prompted the PiS government to impose the state of emergency.

4.2   Securitisation of the migration on the Polish-Belarusian border

As PiS government controls all of the state's ministries, the Presidential and Prime Minister's Office as well as all state's agencies and military, it is considered by the paper as a securitising actor that holds the position of power (Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde 1998, 40). In the CS framework, state officials are the 'natural' securitising actor, as they are provided with tools to shift the issue from normal to emergency politics. State political leaders can, from a position of power, claim to speak for the state or nation, gain public attention, and introduce emergency measures (McDonald 2012, 73).

From the first reports of migrant groups arriving on the border, the PiS government in Warsaw saw Lukashenka's movements as an opportunity to rally public support (Umbrasko 2022, 25). The Polish government, remembering the success of its anti-migration campaign in 2015, already had a plan of on how to exploit the coming crisis on the border (Strzałkowki 2018; Umbrasko 2022, 25). The paper argues that Law and Justice party carried out a securitisation of the migration through moving the issue from 'normal politics' to 'emergency politics', bypassing democratic mechanisms by imposing a state of emergency and later replacing it with 'special measures'. Securitisation process was carried out by speech acts and influencing the discourse on migration in Poland. According to the framework of the Copenhagen School, securitisation wouldn't be possible without getting moral and formal audience support.

On the 2nd of September 2021, PiS, through President Andrzej Duda, introduced a state of emergency. The government officials justified their decision by putting Poland's security first, and that the state of emergency itself was to prevent "an attempt to destabilize the situation in Poland" (Prime Minister's Office 2021). One of the main changes introduced by the state of emergency was "limiting access to public information on activities carried out in the area covered by the state of emergency, related to the protection of the state border and the prevention and counteracting of illegal migration" (Prime Minister's Office 2021). As many

media and journalist alarmed (Klimowicz 2021; European Federation of Journalists 2021) the authorities sealed off the area completely, allowing only state media to cover the crisis, which according to the rule The Polish Supreme Court was breaking the Polish Constitution (Jałoszewski 2022). To justify the introduction of the state of emergency and counter the allegations that the state of emergency at the border would limit civil and journalistic freedoms, the Prime Minister spoke of "defending freedom" and not about "limiting it" (Szczęśniak 2021). Even though the Polish constitution allows for only a 90-day period of the state of emergency, after that time period, PiS introduced a legislative act, which, "resembled the state of emergency", but it abolished the time limit as well as ignored the democratic mechanisms and customs needed to implement it (Umbrasko 2022, 25; Sitnicka et al 2021). Not only, did the PiS government introduced a state of emergency, but also recognized that preventing migration on the Polish-Belarusian border is a matter of national security. The 'quasi-exceptional' state lasted at the border until June 30, 2022, when the Minister of the Interior (Mariusz Kamiński) announced that the works on the wall on the Polish-Belarusian border are already at such an advanced level that the continuation of other security measures is unnecessary (Chrzczonowicz 2022; Sitnicka et al 2021). All those extraordinary measures were a response to the actions by the Belarusian government.

This action aligns with arguments presented by CS, where an issue is moved from normal policy to security policy (Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde 1998, 26). It is the objective opinion of the securitising actor (in this case, Law and Justice government), which labels the issue as threat. It is important to note, that for Wæver, moving the issue to "panic politics" is connected to "anti-democratic consequences", which also happened during the Polish-Belarusian Border Crisis (Wæver 1998, 56). Bypassing democratic mechanisms in the name of controlling an issue that threatens the state or its citizens is described by scholars of the Copenhagen School as a classic example of the securitisation process (Wæver 1998; Buzan 1983). Even tough state of emergency is seen as a legal way of securing the state it has to be carried regarding the rules the Constitution provides. Even aside from the controversy surrounding the 90-day legal state of emergency, a later law that imitates that state but gives further powers to various government and military officials, strikes at the democratic principles of the rule of law.

4.3 The discourse on the 'border crisis' in Poland

This subchapter analyses the discourse during the Polish-Belarusian Border Crisis of 2021. Through the analysis process of texts discussed in the methodology chapter, the paper will showcase identified themes. I will focus on three main themes: 'defending the borders',

'national and state security', and 'immigrant threat'. The themes were later analysed through the critical discourse analysis, which focuses on the power dynamics in the debate as explained in the methodology chapter. Those three themes are the closest to the security framework coined by the Copenhagen School and the theory of securitisation.

In the Polish public debate, the image of a migrant as a threat to national security has already appeared during the refugee crisis in 2015. The Law and Justice government presented immigrants as a threat not only to the Polish labour market or internal security but also as an attack on Polish culture, religion, and language (Stępka 2021; Newsweek 2015). In addition, the rhetoric used by the conservative government and politicians presented the European Union as an authoritarian external force that imposes its will on Poland and its citizens and does not respect the Polish raison d'état, traditions, and customs (Kabata & Jacobs 2022, 12). As Maciej Stępka notices, along with the escalation of the crisis on the Polish-Belarusian border, "the perception of migration and broadly understood migrants as a threat to citizens and stability has become even stronger in the Polish public debate" (Stępka 2021).

4.3.1 'Heroic defence of the borders'

Since the first reports about possible illegal border crossing appeared, the conservative PiS politicians started claiming the that defending the borders is the greatest duty of the government, state agencies and even ordinary citizens. The integrity of the borders was associated by Law and Justice with state sovereignty, deeply rooted within the conservative values (Heinisch, Werner & Habersack 2019, 163; TVP Info 2021). From the first days of the crisis, Morawiecki (and other government officials) have repeatedly claimed that Poland defended not only its own border, but also the borders of the entire European Union (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość [Twitter], 18.11.2021). This technique primarily intended to help in obtaining support from EU's authorities and member states. However, it was also aimed to show to the Polish public, that the Law and Justice government defends the entire EU (Halemba 2022,3).

The Polish Prime Minister during his meeting with the Prime Minister of Estonia on the 21st of November 2021 stated that "there's a war of a new type on the border" (Bodalska 2021). The introduction of such a narrative is intended to instil fear among the audience who are supposed to accept the securitisation process. The use of the word "war" clearly makes the issue cease to be a subject of everyday politics and requires special exceptional measures, as stated by Weaver (Wæver 2014, personal interview).

Patriotic elements were commonly used by PiS politicians. The Prime Minister of Poland himself - Mateusz Morawiecki, in one of the tweets, described the border as sanctified by the blood of our ancestors" (Prime Minister's Office 16.02.2022 [Twitter]. Morawiecki claimed that defending the border is the highest honour and illegal migration will be stopped "by all means necessarily" (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość [Twitter], 18.11.2021).

The defence of the border was largely identified with the uniformed services that guarded it, such as the Border Guard, police, military police, and the Polish Army. Following, the PiS politicians identified all critiques of their actions on the border as an attack on the Polish state (Interia 2021). The state-controlled media and conservative media outlets quickly coined the slogan „With wall of support of the Polish Uniform" (pol. „*Murem za Polskim Mundurem*") (Halemba 2022, 4), backing up the troops on the border and their service to the country, which quickly turned into a trending hashtag on social media. Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki on multiple occasion has expressed his support to the soldiers and officers guarding the safety of Poland. He promised them "we [the government] will not allow anyone to offend the Polish uniform, your work and the service you perform with such dignity, but at the same time with such efficiency" (Prime Minister's Office [Twitter], 22.11.2021). Moreover, the Minister of Defence, Mariusz Błaszczak, reassured the soldiers of the governments support, by saying "(…)the Polish state stands by your side and is grateful to you", while also claiming that those who oppose the government's action "harm Poland" (Mariusz Błaszczak [Twitter], 03.11.2021). In another Tweet he also continued that narrative, by saying "I stand by all the soldiers on duty at the border" (Mariusz Błaszczak [Twitter], 18.11.2021).

The government officials put the defence of the Polish border on an equal footing with supporting the soldiers. It made it difficult for the opposition and critics of PiS policies to counter the states measurements concerning the migration and gained additional support to the securitisation process on the Polish-Belarussian border.

4.3.2 'National and state security'

Referring to the security of the nation and the state are frequent arguments for starting the securitization process (Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde 1998, 25), which is why the defence of Poland and Poles was identified as one of the main motives of the Polish-Belarusian Border Crisis discourse.

On the official Twitter account of the Law and Justice Party (@pisorgpl), Mariusz Błaszczak stated that for the government, the most important thing is the "common security" (Law and

Justice [Twitter], 08.11.2023). The minister acknowledged that over 9 thousand soldiers are protecting the border with Belarus and stressed, that "[Polish] people living in border areas must feel safe" (Ibid.).

Claims about protecting the state security have been brough out by the PiS leader Jarosław Kaczyński. In his interview for the catholic news agency Sunday Guest (pol. *Gość Niedzielny*), he claimed that the crisis on the border is a "fight for maintaining peace in the country, and also for its independence" (Gość Niedzielny 2021). Kaczyński shared his opinion, that there are "forces out there that threaten Poland" and assured the reader of the paper that the Law and Justice will do everything in its power to secure "[..]our statehood and our freedom" (Ibid.). As "forces" he identified the Belarusian regime along with Putin's Russia as its protector.

To further gain the public support for the securitisation of the migration issue on the Polish-Belarusian border, Matusz Morawiecki posted a video on his Twitter account, repeating the war narrative this time calling it a hybrid war (Mateusz Morawiecki 21.11.2021 [Twitter]). In it, he says "This is just the beginning. The dictators will not stop" (as refereeing to Lukashenka and Putin). According to CDA theory, this is a modality very commonly used to create uncertainty among the public (Richardson 2018). Furthermore, Morawiecki does not explain further what steps the authorities in Minsk may take, which means that the viewer of this video may feel fear of the possible consequences of the conflict escalating (Sitnicka 2021). It is important to explain the meaning of the term 'hybrid war, so this paper, in corelation with claims by the PiS government officials, understands it as "an action conducted by state or non-state actors, whose goal is to undermine or harm a target by combing overt and covert military and non-military means" (Hybrid CoE n/d). According to this definition, sending large numbers of migrants towards the border by the Belarusian regime to destabilise the situation in the neighbouring countries (in the case of this paper – Poland) can be understood as conducting a 'hybrid warfare" (for more information see: Filipiec 2022). Furthermore, Morawiecki emphasized that action of the polish government are meant to stabilise the situation on the border. He stated that it's the Belarusian regime which is using the migrants to their own political goal, by saying "The border between Poland and Belarus is the border between the state of rules and the state of lawlessness, which uses people as human shields to enforce certain behaviours" (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość [Twitter], 10.11.2021).

4.3.3   'Immigrant threat'

One of the most popular securitization patterns used in the migration context is the so-called "politics of fear", based on a discourse saturated with racist, xenophobic, and populist content

aimed at broadly understood foreigners (Niedźwiedzki et al. 2021, 40). As mentioned earlier in the paper, PiS used the same narrative as during the 2015 Refugee Crisis, with state officials spreading unverified, largely fabricated materials about the refugees.

During the combined press conference of the Minister of National Defence (Mariusz Błaszczak) and the Minister of the Interior (Mariusz Kamiński) on 27th of September 2021 (TVP Info 2021a; Rzeczpospolita 2021). The government official presented the media with fragments of videos and photos with zoophilic and paedophilic content, which were supposedly found on foreigners' phones. Defence Minister stated that although political correctness requires not talking about this subject, "we put the security of our homeland above all else" (TVP Info 2021a). The PiS government used the old or falsified recordings to justify transferring the issue of migration on the Polish-Belarusian border to the sphere of security policy (Rzeczpospolita 2021).

At the same conference, both officials presented evidence that people at the border are not peaceful refugees fleeing war, but aggressive attackers. As stressed by Mariusz Kamiński, the government was "examining whether these persons pose a threat to the security of our state and our citizens" (TVP Info 2021a). Kamiński continued, that "20% of illegal immigrants detained in Poland have ties to the Russian Federation; among those detained a person associated with the Islamic State," Stanisław Żaryn, the spokesman for the Minister of Special Services Coordinator, said at the conference (TVP Info 2021b) "We have evidence that some of these people are directly linked to the Taliban or Islamic State", with Kamiński adding, that "One of them is directly linked to a terrorist arrested in one of the European Union countries in connection with preparations for a terrorist attack" (Ministry of the Interior 2021).

The officials also made claims that most of the migrants trying to cross the borders are under the influence of psychotropic drugs. According to the findings of the Polish services "opioids, psychotropic substances and "strange pills" were given to immigrants sent to the Polish border by the Belarusian regime's officers (TVP Info 2021c). Stanisław Żaryn explained that more and more often Polish Border Guard officers record cases of Belarusians providing "various substances" to immigrants: psychotropic drugs, medicines, strange pills, in order - as Belarusians explain to them - to "survive" illegally crossing the border with Poland (TVP Info 2021c).

In addition to statements aimed at demonizing people who cross the border, another procedure justifying the securitisation of the border is also referring to Lukashenko's regime as an enemy.

An analogy of the sides of the crisis fits within the theory of the Copenhagen School, which defines how important it is for securitisation to define the sides of the narrative, most often through a simple analogy of "us" vs "them" (Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde 1998, 125). In this case, the Polish government and the Border Guard are on the 'good side', against aggressive immigrants and the Belarusian authorities ruthlessly exploiting them as seen in Kamiński's statement: "They are completely legal there, in fact, they are invited by the Lukashenko's regime and used as a weapon by him only for political reasons" (Rzeczpospolita 2021; Ministry of the Interior 2021).

As the aforementioned quotes showed, the conference of 27th of September provided ample evidence that PiS carried out the securitisation process during the 2021 Polish-Belarusian border crisis through speech acts by identifying direct opponents (immigrants, the Lukashenko regime) and through the use of xenophobic, racist terms to inspire fear among the audience to gain their support for implementing extraordinary measures (Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde 1998, Diskaya 2012)..

The urge to defend the country from the migration threat was also shared by the Minister of Justice, Zbigniew Ziobro. In an interview for WNP news website, he shared his opinion that accommodating the migrants is not an option. He argued, that if "we [Poland] agree to let the first batch of them in, there will be another thousand following them" (WNP 2021). For the Minister it would be a clear way for Poland to become a "country overrun by refugees" and it's a threat that "Belarus and Russia want to bring to Poland" (Ibid.). Moreover, on his Twitter account Ziobro followed the continued about Lukashenko's aggressive tactics of "putting pressure on Poland and the EU" and warned that lack of border and migrant securitisation will have "dramatic consequences for the country". In the same Tweet he stressed that the migrants are of "an Islamic culture" (Zbigniew Ziobro [Twitter] 29.08.2021), which is another theme in the discourse identified in this paper.

Moreover, on the 11th of November, the annual "Independence March" (pol. *Marsz Niepodległości*) was held to celebrate Poland's independence day. The march has been organized by national groups, supported by state institutions, and the content often has had anti-immigration undertones and attacks on those perceived as "hostile to the Polish state" (TVN24 2021). Also in 2021, most slogans on the march demonized the image of a migrant and said that the lack of border defence is a threat to Polish culture, language, and religion (Umbrasko 2022, 25).

PiS politicians justify the securitisation of the border in order to defend the country against the so called by them 'attackers', which is indicated by Koulish and van der Woude as the main reason for increasing border controls in recent years (Koulish & can der Woude 2020, 7). Moreover, by framing the migrants as dangerous individuals, who are a threat to Polish security. In the discourse during the Polish-Belarusian Border Crisis of 2021, migrants are portrayed as being controlled by foreign power (Belarus and Russia); posing a terrorist threat to the society by having ties with terrorist organisations (Islamic State); and as "uncivilised barbarians" (by spreading false information with xenophobic and racist notions), all of which mean to justify special measures to stop the migration on the border.

4.4   Audience support and media coverage

Gaining support among the audience is one of the prerequisites of a successful securitisation process. In this paper, the relevant audience is understood as Polish citizens who can grant both moral and formal support through the elections (Kabata & Jacobs 2022, 3). In the case of securitisation on the Polish-Belarusian border in 2021, the PiS government had to justify shifting migration from the sphere of normal politics to security policy. In this case, the authorities and politicians focused on two proven mechanisms of, firstly, using xenophobia and secondly, appealing to a sense of patriotism. The paper shows, that both mechanisms were successfully propagated by the state-controlled media: TVP1, TVPInfo, Polish Radio 1 (pol. *Jedynka Polskie Radio – PR1*); and conservative or far-right newspapers and magazines supporting the government: Gazeta Polska, DoRzeczy, Sieci.

Since the 2015 migration crisis, the Polish politics has seen an increase of xenophobic practices (Kolarska-Babińska 2018). Constantly creating an image of danger form the migration, demonizing refugees coming to Europe and dehumanizing them is an element of PiS's policy (Umbrasko 2022, 26). Their narrative has repeatedly insinuated that refugees bring diseases and parasites as well as that the threat to the Polish culture and especially the Polish faith (Newsweek 2015). PiS, as a party firmly rooted in Christian values, often poses itself as the only defender of the Catholic faith in Poland, and the admission of thousands of immigrants professing Islam is perceived as an attack on "Christian civilization"(Umbrasko 2022, 25).

Firstly, According to the study from 2015, conducted by Konrad Pędziwiatr, xenophobia in Poland is centred around stereotypical visions of Islam (Pędziwiatr 2016, 434). The research shows, that over 73% of Poles "hold a negative attitude" towards Muslims, despite the fact that 80% of the respondents do not know any person of the Muslim faith (Pędziwiatr 2016, 428;

Klimowicz 2015). Islamophobia in Poland was intensified by the so-called 2015 Refugee Crisis, during which the PiS government refused to take part in the European refugee relocation mechanism and led an aggressive anti-migration campaign (Kabata & Jacobs 2022, 2). During that campaign, stereotypes about Muslims were used on a large scale, reproduced by politicians and state-controlled media (Strzałkowski 2018, Pędziwiatr 2016, 428). According to public opinion poll from 2021, the views and attitudes towards migrants formed at that time have not disappeared. Almost 70% of Poles did not agree to accept migrants stuck at the border in 2021 or to provide them with a possibility of legal stay in the country (DoRzeczy 2021).

Secondly, patriotism in Poland is a significant factor when describing public opinion in the securitisation process. According to official research, patriotism is important in the lives of Poles, where in a survey conducted by Virtual Poland (pol. *Wirtualna Polska*), over 71% of respondents would describe themselves as 'patriots' (Wirtualna Polska 2022). In another study, conducted by the Centre for Public Opinion Research (pol. *Centrum Badań Opinii Publicznej* – CBOS) the same percentage of respondents answered the question that they are proud to be Polish (CBOS 2018, 2). The CBOS survey also shows that citizens with conservative views (81%), i.e., the majority of PiS supporters, feel proud of their Polish identity more often than people with liberal or leftist views (66%) (CBOS 2018, 3). Knowing how susceptible the Polish public is to the argument of patriotism, in November 2021, the National Bank of Poland released a special coin to celebrate the "defenders of Poland's eastern border" (Umbrasko 2022, 25; Jasińska 2022).

Moreover, it was the significant limitation of access to information during the crisis on the Polish-Belarusian border that allowed government representatives to rally support for their actions. The activities of PiS government are consistent with the considerations of Paul Williams, who wrote that the media during the securitisation process significantly influence how citizens 'experience' migration (Williams 2003, 526). By controlling the main media outlets and prohibiting journalists and reporters from other stations from entering the areas shielded by the state of emergency, PiS gained a monopoly on presenting such a picture of the crises that was most convenient for them.

Firstly, according to the public opinion ratings, a significant part of the Polish citizens approved the proceedings on the border. Kantar Poll Agency (one of the leading poll agencies in Poland) stated in their report, that over 54% of the surveyed people rated the responses of the state institutions as positive (DoRzeczy 2021). The same percentage of people taking part in the study agreed evaluated the government's idea to build a wall on the Polish-Belarusian border,

while only 39% assessed the idea as bad. A year later, according to poll by Social Changes,, 67% of Polish citizen has positively looked at the actions by the Polish government, that stopped the migrants on the border as well with the decision to raise a border wall (Wprost 2022). Another poll, by CBOS, gathered information about how open to an idea of accommodating the migrants are Polish citizens. More than half of the respondents (58%) were against the possibility of obtaining asylum in Poland by illegal migrants, and only 33% were in favour of fully enabling the asylum procedure (CBOS 2021). Most respondents were opposed to allowing illegal migrants to receive the asylum seeker status. When it comes to building a border fence, as many as 66% of respondents were in favour. Only 26% of the respondents were against it and 8% had no opinion on it. Research data showed that PiS had moral support in the public and their actions were there legitimate and backed by the audience's support.

Secondly, as to the formal type of support, the Law and Justice, having a majority in the Polish Parliament, succeed in passing the State of Emergency on the 2nd of September 2021 (Prime Minister's Office 2021). Not only it continued for 90 days, but also after it's expiry, PiS adopted a special law "in defence of borders" which introduced exceptional circumstances similar to the state of emergency, however, not burdened with a time limit. It also introduced a number of special powers and privileges for officials directly involved in actions on the border (Szczęśniak 2021).

Additionally, the Polish government had support of the neighbouring countries also affected by the influx of migrants used by the Belarusian regime (Stachura 2021). Lithuanian, Latvian, and Estonian (not affected directly, but as a closes member of the EU) officials attended joint press conferences and the actions of the services of these countries were constantly coordinated (Bodalska 2021).

All actions undertaken by the PiS officials succeeded in gathering enough support to go through with the securitisation process on the border. Controlling the state media spread the narrative and justified the anti-democratic measures on the border. Circling back to Balzacq's distinction between moral (public) and formal (institutional) support, Polish government acquired both (Balzacq 2010, 9).

4.1 Implications and consequences of the securitisation of migration

The process of securitisation of migration during the crisis on the Polish-Belarusian border had several consequences. Firstly, the aggressive defence of the border resulted in the deaths of over 200 people who were trapped on the border without access to food, water or warm clothes

(Klimowicz 2022). In addition, illegal pushbacks and detention centres were pointed out by humanitarian organizations as practices that violated the basic human rights of migrants. Secondly, PiS government formed an image of itself as a defender of the country's border and sovereignty by obtaining special tools to exert pressure on its citizens and bypassing the democratic mechanisms of national law. The authorities use the phenomenon of forced migration to build their image as a strong party in control of the situation. And this works in a situation where the reality is unstable, there are a lot of problems that the government can't deal with (Chrzczonowicz 2023). Ultimately, the crisis on the border became another element of the polarization of Polish society. The actions of the PiS government have been criticized by many journalists and researchers of the public debate from the very beginning of taking power in 2015.

4.1.1 Human rights violation

Migration issues are always dealt with using legislations, laws, and politics, and the humane and health perspective is overlooked (The Lancet 2021). During the crisis the polish authorities also did not put the safety or wellbeing of the immigrants as their priority. Polish authorities were criticized mainly on two accounts: the conditions in the detention centres (see: Niedźwiecki et al. 2021) and illegal pushbacks on the border (see: Amnesty International 2022a; Grupa Granica 2021).

This crisis has at least several consequences for the people placed in the detention centres (the nomenclature for the detention centres in Poland is "guarded centres for foreigners", but this paper will refer to them as "detention centres" for the ease of reding). Firstly, the filling of the centres exceeded the previous capacity limits, i.e., the number of foreigners for which they were prepared. Secondly, the hasty creation of new centres resulted in the lack of adequate supplies and appropriate conditions for the people staying there. The securitisation of migration is often associated with populist content, defining immigrants as a threat to the country and its citizens. Detention is a less visible but equally powerful form of securitisation (Stępka 2021). By hiding the immigrants from the 'public eyes', securitising actor creates and image of situation being under control, after special measure came into power.

International agencies reported that the polish government is conducting illegal pushbacks on the Polish-belarusian border. (UN News 06.09.21;), understood as "a variety of state measures aimed at forcing refugees and migrants out of their territory while obstructing access to applicable legal and procedural frameworks. (…) In doing so, states circumvent safeguards governing international protection (including minors), detention or custody, expulsion, and the

use of force" (ECCHR n/d). Fiałkowska et al (2021) call the process of pushing the migrants back and forth on the Polish-Belarusian border "a border ping-pong". Although the term may not be very sensitive, it unfortunately very accurately describes the practices of the Polish and Belarusian Border Guards during the crisis (Tidskriften 2022). Pushbacks usually take place in areas where civilians, social organizations or the media have no access (Fiałkowska 2021, 3). After introducing a state of emergency in September and banning unauthorized persons from entering the border area (including independent media), the Polish authorities created just such conditions. "Border Group" (pol. *Grupa Granica*) , a Polish organization created specifically to help people trapped on the Polish-Belarusian border, confirms the occurrence of pushbacks, and even talks about "mass and illegal expulsions of people rounded up in the forests" (Grupa Granica 2021, 4; Klimowicz 2022). Moreover, Amnesty International reported that pushbacks by polish forces were made in "full knowledge of abuses by the other [Belarusian] side" (Amnesty International 2021). Authors of the report showcase examples of migrants being subjected to "intimidations, threats and horrific torture" by the members of Belarusian Border Guard and Army (Ibid.).

4.1.2   Polarisation of discourse in Poland

The entire securitisation process contributed to establishing an image of Law and Justice party, as a defender of the Polish border (Chrzczonowicz 2023). The government presented itself as a defender of national security against the threat of uncontrolled migration. The introduction of the state of emergency helped PiS control the narrative, as only journalists from state-owned media had access to most border regions or detention centres. The lack of access for independent journalists made it difficult to counter the arguments of PiS politicians, and the conducted independent journalistic investigations suffered from a lack of data. Also, humanitarian organizations helping people trapped at the border and trying to help them cross it were turned back and in many cases accused of breaking the law (Amnesty International 2021b; Grupa Granica 2021, 4).

The Prime Minister has often praised the way PiS approached the crisis and mastered the situation on the border. During the inspection of the newly built border fence, he declared that it is "the best proof of the effectiveness" of PiS when it comes to security. He stressed, that "Eight or nine months ago, this border was almost completely open to the provocative actions of Lukashenko and his principal, Putin.", as a proof that PiS government acted fast in the face of a threat, opposed to previous governments of Poland (Chołodowski 2022). Morawiecki continued that the polish services work well, when saying: "It was here that the first attack on

the EU border was to take place, here weakness, impotence, inertia, and inertia of the reaction of the EU and Poland were to be exposed. And we did not give in to these attempts" (Chołodowski 2022). During the speech Morawiecki attacked the opposing parties, especially the second most popular party in Poland, The Civic Platform (pol. *Platforma Obywatelska –* PO), which leader, Donald Tusk, criticized the PiS government over the plan to raise the border fence (Interia 2021).

Remarks towards the political opposition were also present in the Jarosław Kaczynski's interview for the Sunday Guest. He stated that it's the opposition that's being undemocratic. He continued, that they (the opposition) have called themselves 'total' and behave as such. They do not recognize the normal rules of the democratic game, they do not share the opinion that voters decide who governs. In fact, they place themselves above democracy, and if they are not in charge, they will without hesitation go to an unrestrained war against the state" (Gość Niedzielny 2021).

The Polish Belarusian Border Crisis of 2021 became yet another debate that further polarised the Polish society (Keszthelyi n/d). Government officials attacked any critics that pointed out mistakes or unlawful actions during the securitisation of the border.

5 Conclusion

The main research question in this paper is "How can the Copenhagen School be used to gain a better understanding of the Polish-Belarusian Border Crisis of 2021", with additional research question: "How were the Polish public media used in the securitisation process during the Polish-Belarusian Border Crisis of 2021". The aim of the paper was to examine how conceptual framework of the Copenhagen School of Security Study can be used while analysing the Border Crisis in 2021. Through the use of the securitisation theory, the paper argues that PiS successfully portrayed the issue of illegal migration on the border of Belarus as a security threat and claiming to protect the state and its citizens, gained more power and privileges. The paper also proves, that researching migration through the theoretical framework coined by the Copenhagen School of Security Studies gives more insight on how states 'weaponize' migration and use threat of illegal migration in day-to-day politics.

As presented in the Theory chapter, for the scholars of the Copenhagen School the securitisation process is based on a discourse (Kabata & Jacobs 2022; Buzan, Weaver & de Wilde 1998). What Barry Buzan, Ole Weaver and Jaap de Wilde call a 'speech act' moves the issue from the

realm of normal politics to the area of emergency politics. This process can only happen after gaining acceptance from the audience (Diskaya 2012, 2).

Firstly, through speech acts (oral speeches, interviews, media coverings, Tweets, and videos) PiS engaged in the discourse surrounding the Border Crisis and labelled the migration issue as a threat. The paper discussed the Law and Justice government's discourse on the Border Crisis of 2021, which allowed it to successfully securitise the migration issue. The presented analysis demonstrates that additionally to creating a narrative about "migrant threat", PiS stated in their speech act that the Polish state is under attack through hybrid warfare, and the greatest challenge is to defend the Polish borders. The approach of analysing the speech acts in the discourse identified three different themes: 'heroic defence of the borders', 'national and state security', and 'immigrant threat'. In the first theme most of the speeches made by the government's officials concerned the importance of securing the borders and stopping the groups of immigrants. Moreover, the security of the country and its citizens has been identified with the uniformed services on the Polish-Belarusian border. Second theme, national and state security', gathered speeches that aimed to highlight the scale of a threat that illegal migration is to the Polish state. PiS officials claimed that migrants are a tool in 'hybrid war' waged by Belarusian and Russian leader that seek to weaken Poland. Finally, 'immigrant threat' was the theme that was the most commonly used by the government's officials in the Border Crisis discourse. PiS used xenophobic and racist narrative to demonize the migrants and justify the extreme measures to stop the on the border.

Secondly, the government successfully moved the issue from the normal politics to the emergency politics, by implementing a state of emergency. Law and Justice was a securitising actor that hold the position of power. It controlled most important positions in the state (such as the office of the President or the Prime Minister) as well as controlled state's military and services. By moving the issue to emergency politics, Law and Justice justified implementing a state of emergency, giving the state officials engaged in the border crisis additional powers. Moreover, restrictions have been applied in 183 localities in Podlaskie and Lubelskie provinces, all alongside the border with Belarus (ACAPS 2022, 2; Prime Minister's Office 2021). Limitations included a ban on staying in an area under a state of emergency; a ban on registering and photographing officers of the Boarder Guard, police and soldiers and objects (including border infrastructure) and limited access to public information about activities conducted in this area. There are many reported cases when military has refused entry to the independent media outlets (also international) as well as international NGO's providing help for the migrants stuck

on the border. Following, after the 90-day time period specified by the Polish Constitution passed, PiS adopted the laws that granted similar privileges, but without the rules of the state of emergency. Moreover, new laws resulted in Law and Justice having more control over the narrative and spread the information the party wanted to be known to the public.

Thirdly, it gained moral and formal support of the relative audience (Polish citizens) to conduct actions it considered crucial for protecting the country. Moral support was measured in the paper by using the data gathered by two poll agencies (Kantar Poll Agency and Social Changes). Both agencies asked questions concerning the support of the actions of the Polish government on the border. According to Kantar, 54% of respondents evaluated it as positive, compared to 39% of the studied group as negative (DoRzeczy 2021). A study conducted by Social Changes a year later showed that 67% of the responded admitted, that the authorities were right not letting the immigrants cross the border and also stated that building a border was a reasonable undertaking (Wprost 2022). By studying the public opinion, the paper gained insight into the scale of support of the actions by the PiS government, which justify its actions and confirmed the narrative of rising threat on the border. Moreover, Law and Justice gained formal support of the audience, as in controlled the majority of the Polish Parliament. This advantaged allowed the party to adopt new legislature providing needed tools for the securitisation of the migration on the Polish-Belarusian border.

Future research should focus more on the responses to the securitisation process. Especially from the actor that has been labelled as the threat. The Copenhagen School does not recognize the securitized object as an object worth investigating and focuses its work on decision-making actors (Floyd 2007). Research should also focus on the impact of the securitisation on the normal politics, after moving the relevant issue to the realm of emergency politics. Moreover, while studying the speech acts during the securitisation, researchers of the security studies, should also take practice into the account. As securitisation focuses on discourse, critics such as Thierry Balzacq (2005), state that one must also take practice to account. For him, CS seems to forget that securitising actors' speech acts not always cover their actual actions (Balzacq 2005, 172). Another useful approach for studying the Polish state's approach to migration is taking historical context under consideration. It might be valid, to look how years of USSR's influence in the Polish migration policies shaped the perception of migrants and refugees.

In summary, the paper argues that Law and Justice carried out a successful securitisation of the migration during the Polish-Belarusian Border Crisis of 2021. PiS members created a powerful anti-migration campaign, based on the narrative that also proved to be successful during the

2015 Refugee Crisis. The Polish government took control of the narrative and convinced the relevant audience, that countering the threat requires special mechanism, that if are to succeed, need to violate normal, democratic mechanisms. The policies and actions of the Law and Justice succeeded in securitising the border from illegal migration. However, the process resulted in deaths of over 217 people and countless other suffering cold and hunger in the forest surrounded by hostile soldiers.

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