

New Frontiers in European Studies

Guildford, 30 June - 1 July 2011

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Studying the ‘migration-security nexus’ in Europe: Towards which end of the ‘nexus’?

Dimitrios Skleparis

School of Politics and International Relations

Queen Mary, University of London

Email: d.p.skleparis@qmul.ac.uk

*Paper to be presented at the UACES Student Forum 12th Annual Conference,
University of Surrey, Guildford, 30 June – 1 July 2011*

Abstract

This article contends that critical approaches to the ‘migration-security nexus’ are making a noticeable turn in recent years to a ‘migration-oriented’ study of the ‘nexus’. The aim of this article is to review this shift in the critical analysis of the ‘nexus’ primarily, but not exclusively, in Europe. The article is organized as follows: first, it provides a brief outline of the creation of the ‘migration-security nexus’. Then, it summarizes the emergence of the critical approaches to security and the application of the ‘Copenhagen’ and the ‘Paris’ Schools in the study of the ‘nexus’. Next, the article discusses the dangers of studying migration from a security perspective, or what is known as the ‘security traps’ of security studies. In this regard, it continues with a critical assessment of possible solutions to this problem and a review of key studies that empirically engage with these solutions, paying particular attention to their main themes, strengths, and weaknesses. Finally, the article concludes that a key turn to a ‘migration-oriented’ study of the ‘nexus’ is taking place among the critical approaches and evaluates the benefits that occur for the critical study of the ‘migration-security nexus’ in Europe from the perspective of security.

Introduction

Migration was not always used to be comprehended from a security perspective. It was during the 19th century that the need to grasp population movement initially emerged. The rise of the industrial age, the disruptive influence of factories, railroads and economies of scale and the resulting uprooting of tradition changed radically the rules of mobility of people. In 1885 Ravenstein published his famous *Laws of Migration*. By using UK census data from 1871 and 1881 and by focusing on population flows, he put forward seven ‘laws of migration’, which were later extended to ten, that attempted to explain and predict migration patterns both between and within nations. Outside the academy, in the world of bureaucratic politics, migration issues were the exclusive concern of immigration and labor ministries for many years. Meanwhile, both in academic debates and in the realm of bureaucratic politics, the concept of security was associated with military threats against the state.

It was with the end of the Cold War and the demise of bipolarity that the term ‘security’ came to be employed in a broader variety of political and economic contexts, indicating a wide range of different challenges, risks, tensions and threats at various levels and of different orders (Collinson 1999: 303). The end of the Cold War and the great changes that followed it triggered new mass population movements across the globe. This uncontrolled mass migration became the center of attention not only for humanitarian reasons. International migration started gradually to be identified in Europe and the rest of the West as a threat to ‘our’ jobs, housing, borders, and also to broader issues like bodily security, moral values, collective identities, and cultural homogeneity (Faist 2004: 3). This linkage between international migration, on the one hand, and human and state security, on the other, became known as the ‘migration-security nexus’ (ibid). Thus, migration issues, apart from immigration and labor ministries, started to engage the attention of defense, internal security, and external relations ministries (Ceyhan and Tsoukala 2002: 22).

Within this context, security studies, as a subfield of International Relations (IR), fell into a crisis that resulted in the incorporation of various new insecurities into the field of analysis (Huysmans and Squire 2010: 169). Security studies turned some of its interest away from traditional security concerns, to include a broader range of questions related to environment, migration and refugee flows, rapid population growth, increasing unemployment and poverty, human rights violations, food deficits, and transnational criminality (Lohrmann 2003: 5, 17). This new understanding of security in nontraditional terms entailed a focus on non-military

threats in sub-national, national, regional and global levels (ibid: 17). Yet, the ‘migration-security nexus’ can be studied within security studies either from a traditional perspective where security is understood as a value to be achieved, or from a critical standpoint where security is perceived as a knowledge, discourse, technology or practice (Huysmans and Squire 2010: 170). It is to this latter approach that the article turns its attention.

This article contends that critical approaches to the ‘migration-security nexus’ are making a noticeable turn in recent years from a ‘security-oriented’ to a ‘migration-oriented’ study of the ‘nexus’. In this respect, the aim of this article is to present a review of this shift in the critical analysis of the ‘migration-security nexus’ primarily, but not exclusively, in Europe. The list of the approaches that is put forward here is by no means exhaustive, but it is indicative of the plethora of strategies that is available to researchers who want to conduct critical research on the ‘nexus’. In this respect, this article can also be perceived as an attempt to set up a preliminary research agenda for critical approaches to the ‘migration-security nexus’. The article is structured as follows: first, it provides a brief outline of the emergence of the critical approaches to security¹, and it summarizes the application of the ‘Copenhagen’ and the ‘Paris’ Schools in the study of the ‘migration-security nexus’ presenting their strengths and weaknesses. Next, the article discusses the dangers of studying migration from a security perspective, or what is known as the ‘security traps’ of security studies. In this regard, it continues with a critical assessment of possible solutions to this problem and a review of key studies that empirically engage with these solutions, paying particular attention to their main themes, strengths, and weaknesses. Finally, the article concludes that a key turn to a ‘migration-oriented’ study of the ‘nexus’ is taking place among critical approaches and evaluates the benefits that occur for the critical study of the ‘migration-security nexus’ in Europe from the perspective of security.

The Critical Approaches to Security and the ‘Migration-Security Nexus’

In the early 1990s a very important debate took place in security studies, which moved the focal point of inquiry from threats to the rationality or logic of rendering events as security

¹ The term ‘critical approaches to security’ is informed by C.A.S.E. Collective (2006), in which it originally appears as ‘critical approaches to security in Europe’. Yet, due to the heavy criticism that it attracted (see Behnke 2007. See also C.A.S.E. Collective 2007 for the response) the term ‘Europe’ is omitted here.

issues and questioned in particular the meaning of the application of security language in non-military policy areas (Huysmans 2006: 16). The bone of contention was whether the utilization of security knowledge inscribes this particular rationality/logic into a policy area thereby transforming both the way in which issues are rendered visible, and the methods of managing them (ibid: 26). It is from this debate that the critical approaches to security emerged. More specifically, the debate gave birth to the ‘Aberystwyth, Copenhagen, and Paris’ Schools². This article focuses only on the latter two. They maintain that security is not an objective condition, that threats to it do not simply depend on the accurate perception of a constellation of material forces, and that the object of security is constantly changing (Krause and Williams 1996: 242). Moreover, they are trying to answer questions related to the constitution of the object of security and the placing of issues in the security realm (ibid). All in all, the concept of security, and especially national security, is understood by the critical approaches as a particular assemblage of historical discourses and practices embedded in institutionally shared perceptions (ibid: 243). In this respect, the research goal is to examine the processes by which threats are politically constructed (ibid). With specific regard to migration, critical approaches understand security as a constitutive mediator between mobility and politics, which can take various meanings and is able to define the social and political techniques of governance that frame human mobility (Huysmans and Squire 2010: 174). Thus, security comes to be a language and/or an interest, knowledge or professional skill connected to specific organizations, and is always formed in relation to other languages, actors, and practices that challenge it (ibid: 173).

The ‘Copenhagen School’ emerged from the collective research that was carried out in the Copenhagen Peace Research Institute (COPRI) from 1985 to its closure in 2004. These creative processes within COPRI gave birth to the concepts of sectors/referent objects, the regional security complexes, and the securitization theory, the most important contribution of the ‘Copenhagen School’ to the critical approaches to security. The main argument of the ‘Copenhagen School’ is that instead of conceptualizing security as something objective, an analyst should examine the processes by which security agents/actors construct issues as security threats (Karyotis 2007: 2). And the most effective way of analyzing security issues is by studying the discursive practices of security actors in different security sectors (Waever

² The categorization in Schools that is used here is informed by Waever (2004) and serves purely writing purposes. The critical approaches to security are by no means strictly reduced to these three Schools nor to geographical loci.

1995: 54). In other words, security is defined as a ‘speech act’. More specifically, securitization takes place when an actor, usually a political leader, utilizes the rhetoric of existential threat in order to legitimize the deployment of ‘emergency’ measures with the consent of a specific audience, pushing in this way an area of ‘normal politics’ into the security realm (Williams 1998: 435). In simple terms, an event becomes a security issue through securitization, not due to its objective importance as a security threat, but because it is presented as such (Wæver 2004: 13). All in all, empirical research on securitization involves the need to identify the actor that securitizes, the threat that is securitized, the referent objects (the audience) and the consequences of the securitization process, the rationality behind the securitization process, and the conditions under which the latter becomes possible (Buzan et al 1998: 32).

The ‘Copenhagen School’ usually studies migration within the context of the societal sector of security, which is organized around the key concept of identity. To put it in concrete terms, migrants who enter a country are perceived as ‘outsiders’ to an already-existing national identity, and as such they can potentially erode it and ‘threaten’ its existence in various ways, such as criminality, economic instability, contagious diseases, by undermining the state’s ability to control its borders etc.. These issues can be brought up by political actors through public discourses, which can potentially lead to the securitization of migration. These public discourses or ‘speech acts’ are possible securitizing moves only if and when a specific audience accepts them as such. In turn, the acceptance itself on behalf of the audience depends on the form of the ‘speech act’, the position of the securitizing actor, and the conditions historically related to that threat (Wæver 2000: 252-253). The ‘Copenhagen School’ conceptualizes security practice as a particular strategy of (de)politicizing and governing migration, examines the legitimacy struggles over specific methods of governing migration and the legitimizing consequences of using security language in politics (Huysmans and Squire 2010: 173). All in all, it focuses on the nature and effects of applying security discourses in the area of migration (ibid). Many scholars have drawn on the ‘Copenhagen School’ framework in order to study the processes of securitization of migration, both in the context of the EU (e.g. Karyotis 2007; Leonard 2007) and in the context of specific European states (e.g. Diez 2007; Hampshire 2007; Huysmans and Buonfino 2008).

However, this approach also comes with its shortcomings. The most important are the following: first, the 'Copenhagen School' framework suffers from internal tensions and lack of adequate theorization regarding the structure of securitization theory, and in particular, the application of the 'speech act' theory (Stritzel 2007). Second, its narrow focus on public discourses excludes other potential forms of securitization, such as images (Williams 2003), or other silent and non-verbal forms (Hansen 2000), or material practices, knowledge and professional skills (Balzacq 2008; Bigo 2000; 2002; 2006; Bigo and Guild 2005; Huysmans 2004; 2006). Third, it is preoccupied with a one-dimensional concern of securitizing actors that have the authority and are institutionally legitimate to perform a securitizing 'speech act' (Balzacq 2005; Williams 2003). Fourth, it fails to pay attention to the psycho-cultural disposition of the audience and the power of both the speaker and the listeners of the securitizing 'speech acts' (Balzacq 2005; Higashino 2004). Fifth, it ignores the ideational, physical, technical, material, and historical nature of the facilitating conditions that have to be in place in order for a securitization move to succeed (Balzacq et al 2010; Bigo 2006). Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the 'Copenhagen School' overlooks the normative power of writing/talking about security, that is the ability to transform the theorization of security and securitization into actual practices of securitization (see Aradau 2004a; 2004b; Behnke 2000; Ciuta 2009; Eriksson 1999a; 1999b; Huysmans 1999; 2002; Waever 1999; Williams 1999).

Almost in the same period, in the early 1990s, the 'Paris School' emerged from the common research interest in the political construction of security of several researchers and academics with a political sociology, criminology, law, IR and political theory background, mainly based in Paris (C.A.S.E. Collective 2006: 448-449). According to the 'Paris School', security is understood as a positive value, while insecurity is considered to be negative (Bigo 2008: 123). This does not mean that security has a meaning per se. On the contrary, it is socially and politically constructed through the 'struggles for political decisions and justification of practices of surveillance, control and punishment as well as practices of protection, reassurance, worrying and surveillance' (ibid: 124). In this respect, security and insecurity are the outcomes of a process of (in)securitization (ibid). This (in)securitization process has to do with the day-to-day bureaucratic decisions of everyday politics, with routines of rationalization, with various technological and technocratic practices, and with the security knowledge and relations between security professionals (Balzacq 2008; Bigo 2000; 2008; Bigo and Guild 2005; Huysmans 2004; 2006). All in all, (in)securitization indicates the will

of policing agencies and security professionals to manage a wide range of societal issues through the promotion of fear and unease that enables the institutional and discursive linking of different policy areas by means of applying routines, institutionalized knowledge, and technologies in order to regulate these issues (C.A.S.E. Collective 2006). By extension, security is not simply an idea or a concept, but it is also an act that can be identified in our political actions, rhetoric and technologies (Dillon 1996: 16), and it has to be comprehended as both an idea and a practice (McSweeney 1999: 21).

According to the 'Paris School', both migration and security are contested concepts that are used to mobilize political responses (Bigo 2002: 71). Thus, their relation is fully and immediately political (ibid). More specifically, the (in)securitization of migration comes from a plethora of administrative practices, such as population profiling, risk assessment, statistical calculations, category creation, proactive preparation and the distinct ethos of security professional (ibid: 65). In addition, it emerges from the correlation between successful public discourses and the mobilization they create on the one hand, and the specific field of security professionals, on the other (ibid). Thus, the (in)securitization of migration is a transversal political technology, utilized as a form of governmentality by various institutions to manage the unease or to create it if it does not yet exist, in order to prove their role as guardians of security (ibid). In this respect, the (in)securitization of migration is the consequence and not the cause of the development of control and surveillance technologies (ibid: 73), and it derives from struggles within and between institutions for what counts as the legitimate truth that create continuous unease and uncertainty (ibid: 74, 78). Many scholars have drawn on the 'Paris School' framework in order to study the processes of (in)securitization of migration, both in the context of the EU (e.g. Ceyhan and Tsoukala 2002; Huysmans 2000; 2006; Leonard 2011; Neal 2009) and in the context of specific European states (e.g. Diez and Squire 2008; Huysmans and Buonfino 2008; Noxolo 2009).

The 'Paris School' approach, by drawing on Bourdieu, manages to surpass the under-theorized concepts of 'speech act' and securitization of the 'Copenhagen School' (C.A.S.E. Collective 2006: 459). Moreover, by focusing on practices it is more likely to identify the existence of securitization dynamics in cases of persistent or recurrent security threats where the securitization of an issue, such as migration, has become gradually institutionalized (Leonard 2011: 10). Furthermore, its focus on practices has been argued to be more appropriate for the analysis of securitization processes specifically in the context of the EU,

due to the unique political and institutional characteristics of the latter (Balzacq 2008; Leonard 2011; Neal 2009). However, due to its heavy emphasis on the struggles within the field of security professionals, the 'Paris School' framework often ignores those who could be called 'professionals of nothing' (C.A.S.E. Collective 2006: 459), and the multiple and complex methods with which the 'dangerous others' attempt to resist practices of security. Additionally, by focusing on practices rather than principles that bind together political communities, the 'Paris School' dismisses the possibility of re-appropriation and redeployment of terms, practices, techniques, and/or technologies in different contexts (ibid). For instance, several concepts used by security professionals in their discourses, such as democracy, freedom, equality, or even security could be re-appropriated and redeployed by those with no access to the field and no legitimization, such as migrants and/or activists. Finally, the 'Paris School', in contrast to the 'Copenhagen School', is aware of the normative power of writing/talking about security. However, this awareness rarely goes beyond a mere reflection on the need to combine the critical study of the 'migration-security nexus' with a deconstruction of the structural power relations embedded in the dominant security discourses, a broader politicization of migration outside the scope of security and a political empowering of the disempowered.

The 'Security Traps' of Security Studies and How to Escape Them

The 'Security Traps' of Security Studies

Both the 'Copenhagen' and the 'Paris' Schools have greatly contributed to the critical study of the 'migration-security nexus' despite their various shortcomings. However, as we saw above, both approaches stumble on the normative power of writing/talking about security, or what is known as the 'security traps' of security studies. On the one hand, the 'Copenhagen School' fails to identify them, while the 'Paris School', on the other, fails to go beyond the mere reflection on them. Yet, what do we mean by the term 'security traps' and is there a way to escape them?

Security studies have always been the most closely linked field of IR to policymaking. Indeed, the boundaries between theorizing and practicing security are blurry (C.A.S.E. Collective 2006). This interconnection is the hidden force of the creation of 'security traps'.

A 'security trap' concerns both the non-intentional aspect of the consequences of studying a topic from a security perspective, and the fact that these consequences might not agree with the underlying intention (ibid: 460). This means that a researcher who is studying migration from a critical security perspective risks having this issue further securitized by the practitioners of security, as his/her study – unintentionally in this case – not only pinpoints a potential security risk, but also reveals a plethora of possible ways to deal with it. Three key characteristics of the 'security traps' derive from this example (ibid: 461): first, the more one tries to analyze social phenomena from a security perspective in order to ensure 'security', the more one creates – intentionally or unintentionally – insecurity; second, the politics of maximum security are, at the same time, the politics of maximum unease; finally, there is the question of the 'normative dilemma', which can be summarized as follows: how is it possible for a critical scholar that is aware of the previous two features of 'security traps' and willing to escape them, to write about security without contributing to the (in)securitization of a societal issue?

The 'Discursive Ethical' and the 'Consequentialist' Strategies

Several strategies attempted to escape the 'normative dilemma'. Williams (2003) and Wyn Jones (1999) suggested a discursive ethical response to securitization, according to which the securitizing speech act that connects the securitizing actor with the audience must go through a process of ethical justification/legitimization, which renders the securitizing move refutable on ethical grounds. However, by reproducing the study of the 'migration-security nexus' through the security lens, although a less rigid one, this approach fails to provide a broader politicization of the issue of migration and to pay attention to the voices of the disempowered. Furthermore, Floyd (2007) attempted to combine the negative understanding of security inherent in the 'Copenhagen School' approach with the positive understanding of security in the 'Aberystwyth' School framework as emancipation, that is the liberation of individuals from physical and human restrictions, such as the threat of pain, fear, hunger, and poverty which prevent them from accomplishing what they would freely opt for (Wyn Jones 1999: 126). By arguing that 'security is neither always positive nor negative, but rather is issue dependent' (Floyd 2007: 338), Floyd renders the security analyst responsible to evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of each approach according to their consequences to the issue at hand. In simple terms, it is the researcher's duty to be critical and reflective

while studying the securitization of an issue in order to overcome the 'normative dilemma'. However, in this way, Floyd reproduces the inability of the 'Paris School' approach to escape the 'normative dilemma'. Perhaps, what is needed is an analytical step outside the security study of the 'migration-security nexus'.

The 'Desecuritization' Strategy

This is exactly what the 'Copenhagen School' tried to do with the strategy of 'desecuritization'. For Buzan et al. (1998: 29), security is understood as a negative or a failure to manage issues of normal politics. In this respect, a different process of that of securitization is required, which will have the opposite effect by moving issues out of the threat-defense sequence back to the ordinary public sphere, where they can be managed according to the rules of the (democratic) political system (ibid). However, the exact meaning of desecuritization and what it could involve in practice are still unclear. Huysmans (1995) for instance, in his analysis of the securitization of migration in the EU, suggests three different processes of desecuritization: an 'objectivist strategy', which aims to demonstrate that migrants are falsely perceived as a threat to 'our' identity; a 'constructivist strategy', which aims to increase our understanding of the processes through which migrants are constructed as security threats in order to undermine the effectiveness of securitizing moves; and a 'deconstructivist strategy', which aims to give voice to the disempowered migrants so as to interrupt the exclusionary division between 'us' and 'them'. Furthermore, Van Munster (2004) focuses on the securitization of illegal migration in the EU, and particularly in France. Within this context, he puts forward a strategy of desecuritization as an ethical act, which entails an alternative way of politicizing illegal migration and the question of belonging in the emerging European polity from the point of the abject 'others', who are denied the status of citizenship.

Yet, desecuritization attracted heavy criticism. Taureck (2006) accused it for being vague and under-theorized. Floyd (2007: 43-44) criticized it for its false assumptions that all securitizations have by definition negative consequences and all desecuritizations lead automatically back to the ordinary public sphere and the negotiations of the democratic political system. Aradau (2004b; 2006) argued that the 'normal politics/securitization' dichotomy of the 'Copenhagen School' fails to pay attention to the exclusionary and illiberal

features that can be seen even in the most inclusive and liberal communicative procedures. Glover (2010) maintained that the employment of desecuritization as a secondary and trivial normative supplement to the securitization theory renders the latter's analytical account problematic as it tends to ignore the discursive democratic responses to securitization, especially when they derive from disempowered actors. Finally, Huysmans (2006: 142-143) claimed that desecuritization represses the security significance of the issue at hand, which, by extension, leads to the discontinuity of the production of security knowledge. In this respect, desecuritization ends up delegitimizing the ethical, political and/or scientific validity of security knowledge. Thus, although desecuritization moves outside the security study of the 'migration-security nexus' it ends up undermining the analytical power of securitization theory and the production of security knowledge. Perhaps, what is needed then, is a transdisciplinary strategy that neither represses security questions nor allows them to dominate the analysis of the 'nexus', but explores them in connection with broader political and socioeconomic questions. Indeed, conceptualizing migrants, refugees, security practices, and discourses of danger in a broader political and socioeconomic context can de-dramatize security questions. Eventually, however, this can lead to the production of less discipline specific knowledge.

'Critical Political Theory/Sociology'

This strategy is known as 'critical political theory' or 'critical political sociology' and it has been influenced by the 'Paris School'. It understands security as a particular practice, concern and technique that always functions in connection with other political issues (Huysmans and Squire 2010: 175). In this respect, it engrafts securitizing processes in social and societal debates of key political questions (ibid: 176). Huysmans and Squire (2010) present an excellent account of this strategy with specific regard to the study of the 'migration-security nexus'. They argue that in order for a critical researcher to escape the 'normative dilemma', he/she has to place the question of security practice within an agenda that explores the political nature of mobility (ibid: 174). In this way, security becomes one of the many issues that affect, form and restrain mobility, rather than being the focal point (ibid). Thus, critical political theory/sociology analyzes 'security as a distinctly problematic mediator of the relationship between mobility and politics' (ibid: 176). In this respect, they demonstrate two ways in which this can work out.

First, the study of the ‘migration-security nexus’ can be conducted by examining the ways in which exclusionary security practices take away the political agency of specific migrants (ibid: 175). Thus, the focus is transferred to the question of how to make the reinsertion of political agency possible, while security is conceptualized as a method of governing that affects the constitution or destitution of political agency (ibid). This approach engages with challenges to the rationality of de-politicization of exclusionary security practices, which are characterized by a rationality of solidarity and can be understood as constituting political community, governance and belonging in terms that go beyond a territorial frame (Squire 2009: 146). In other words, this approach offers a critical re-conceptualization of migration and citizenship. Rather than perceiving refugees and migrants as passive disempowered victims of exclusionary security politics it focuses on the various political mobilizations through which refugees and migrants constitute themselves as political subjects (ibid).

Several researchers have analyzed citizenship claims as a mobile form of political agency (e.g. McNevin 2006; Moulin and Nyers 2007; Squire 2009). More specifically, McNevin (2009) focuses on the growing political activism of irregular migrants in France, the US, and Australia and interprets it as a form of contestation of citizenship, which may imply new forms of political belonging that move beyond a conventional citizen/non-citizen divide. Nyers (2008) analyzes acts of citizenship with regard to the growing political movement of non-status migrants and refugees in Canada. By examining acts of self-identification as non-status acts of claim-making and rights-taking, and acts of protest in street rallies, marches, and detention centers, he evaluates the normative and political challenges that they pose to established norms of citizenship, belonging, and political community. Finally, Nyers (2003) focuses on the campaign of non-status migrants and refugees in Montreal in order to stop deportations. Through the analysis of their claims and mobilizations he provides an alternative conceptualization of cosmopolitan citizenship from the perspective of the excluded that is located in concrete struggles and radically calls into question deeply held assumptions about sovereignty and border control.

Second, the study of the ‘migration-security nexus’ can address the question of political violence and its political legitimacy (Huysmans and Squire 2010: 175). Thus, this approach calls attention to the political nature of violence (ibid). In this regard, the struggle of refugees against the repressive government in their country of origin or the violence that is exercised upon the body of migrants in host countries is not problematized in terms of trading off

human security against national security (ibid). To put it in concrete terms, what does the violence imposed upon the bodies of refugees, in detention centers for instance, and the resisting violence they inflict on themselves reveal regarding the attributes of the modern state, international politics and the political role of violence in it? Moving in this direction, Edkins and Pin-Fat (2005) examine practices of resistance (i.e. lip sewing) among detainees and asylum seekers in several countries, such as the UK, the Netherlands, and Australia. By conceptualizing sovereign power as a relation of violence they identify two modes of resistance that can challenge it: the refusal to draw lines between forms of life and the assumption of bare life. They argue that both of them have the capacity to reestablish proper political power relations together with their freedoms and potentialities. Several other studies have adopted this approach (e.g. Edkins 2000; Edkins and Pin-Fat 2004).

However, there are further ways in which a critical political theory/sociology of the 'migration-security nexus' can be developed. This article contends that a third approach can study the 'nexus' through the analytic lens of capital-labor relation. Thus, this approach examines the connection of the securitization of migration with a broader politics of labor subordination. It focuses on migrants' agency, where mobility is utilized by migrants as a means. In other words, migrants' subjectivity becomes the focal point, and migration is understood as a political resource through which people attempt to better their lives, when states and other institutions no longer provide the adequate quality of life conditions (Mezzadra 2004; Mezzadra and Neilson 2003; Rodriguez 1996). This approach is based on the key assumption that migration is not a byproduct of socioeconomic and cultural structures, but an essential creative force on its own right capable of escaping the distributions and markings of political sovereignty and fueling social, cultural and economic transformations (Walters 2008). In this respect, security practices, such as border controls, are more than just an attempt to control 'illegal' migration; rather, they are struggles 'to resist attempts by working-class communities in peripheral countries to spatially reorganize their base of social reproduction in the global landscape' (Rodriguez 1996: 2). Accordingly, border controls follow or react to people's decision for mobility, while they do not aim to exclude them, but to include them by changing their status, making them in this way more vulnerable to labor markets. In this regard, '[m]igration can be understood as a strategy of becoming political' (Nyers 2008: 169), as it poses a social and political challenge to controls on freedom of movement, even though only partly intentional and self-conscious (Mezzadra 2004). This approach is known as the 'autonomy of migration'.

Moving in this direction, Tsianos and Karakayali (2010) focus on practices and discourses of border controls in the South-east border region of the EU, and more specifically the Aegean Sea between Greece and Turkey. They re-conceptualize borders and detention centers from 'below' as attempts to regulate the time, rather than the space, where transit migrants move. In this respect, transit migrants are not understood as 'spatially' excluded, but as 'temporarily' included into a global temporal regime of labor, where they are rendered productive and exploitable by labor market forces. This function of border controls is equally shaped by the migrants and their carriers and the policy intentions of the EU. Papadopoulos, Stephenson, and Tsianos (2008) make a similar point about detention centers in the Aegean zone by arguing that they should be re-conceptualized in their 'temporal' dimension as 'speed boxes' that 'decelerate' the speed of people's movement. Finally, Andrijasevic (2010) uses the Lampedusa detention center in Italy as an example of the transformation that the European space, the formation of its citizenship, and the structure of its labor markets are going through. She maintains that detention centers and deportation practices in this region perform a 'temporal' regulation of transit migration, which shapes and organizes European citizenship through the principle of differentiated inclusion.

A forth approach can apply a 'gender' filter in the 'autonomy of migration'. It focuses on migrants in order to investigate how they are produced as political subjects through socio-political, cultural and economic structures, such as gender, in different loci, such as detention centers and borders, in various migration control practices, such as deportation, or in immigration regulation in general. Thus, this approach analyzes 'gender practices/techniques', instead of security ones. It is based on three core assumptions: first, 'heterosexuality and patriarchal social arrangements [are] built within immigration regulations' (Andrijasevic 2009: 389); second, these deeply embedded gender and sexual norms in immigration regulations do not produce the typical dichotomy of inclusion/exclusion, but that of differential inclusion; and finally, the subjects that occur through this differential inclusion are not disempowered victims of migration regulations, but political subjects. In this respect, by taking gender and sexuality as its analytical foreground this approach attempts to examine emerging migrant subjects and the political transformations that they bring in the nature of labor, control, and citizenship.

Alberti (2010) focuses on the detention of 'irregular migrants' in Lesbos, Greece. She analyzes instances of 'gentler detention' of female detainees in the center as practices of

‘gender detention’ that belong to a wider plan of a specific EU ‘detention management’ which aims to depoliticize the political demands of detainees, and stratify their rights in Europe by differentiating their access to labor and citizenship. Andrijasevic (2009) draws on the story of a woman from Moldova who migrated to Italy through trafficking channels for work in the sex sector. She provides a ‘gendered conceptualization’ of border controls, immigration regulations and trafficking policies as modes of normalization and hierarchization of the migrants’ rights to access the EU labor market and citizenship. Finally, De Genova (2009) critically analyzes through a ‘gendered lens’ contemporary deportation practices in the US with regard to an individual female ‘illegal’ migrant worker. Like the previous scholars, he re-conceptualizes deportation as a method of regulation of the migrants’ rights to access the labor market and citizenship. However, he goes a step further by arguing that migrants’ ‘deportability’ places them in a prolonged state of vulnerability that makes them exploitable by labor markets as cheap labor, while at the same time it renders their lives ultimately political and themselves political subjects.

A fifth approach can re-conceptualize borders and detention centers as sociopolitical spaces. It entails that borders acquire their meanings contingently through the practices that take place around and through them, which can transfigure, move, mobilize and deploy them as limit markers in political space (Soguk 2007: 284). In this respect, borders become ‘borderizations’, ‘practices of relationality - made possible in tensions, conflicts, and contradictions as well as unexpected convergences of intentionalities’ (ibid: 286). These ‘borderizations’ emerge as the sites of the ‘political’ as they give birth to ‘insurrectional’ movements, which are the resistance practices of refugees and asylum seekers that target the prevailing hierarchies in national and international politics, and unfold together with border practices (ibid). In the same manner, detention centers can be re-conceptualized as sociopolitical spaces that acquire their meaning through social relations that occur in and as a result of movement (Rygiel 2011a: 4). In this regard, the detention center is a lived space, ‘a space in which people are placed in positions of abjection but also in which people negotiate, cooperate, fight, resist, and ultimately live’ (ibid: 15). This understanding of the detention center enables the emergence of new subjectivities that attempt to fight domination and subordination (Puggioni 2006: 76).

Soguk (2007), by drawing on examples from Europe, the US, and Australia, puts forward a re-conceptualization of borders, according to which the proliferation of border controls, goes

hand in hand with the multiplication of ‘insurrectional’ movements of refugees and ‘illegal’ migrants. Puggioni (2006) focuses on detention centers in Italy. She critically analyzes detention centers as spaces where political life fights against subordination and challenges sovereign power. In this respect, the design, geography and daily administration of detention centers greatly influence the agency that refugees and ‘illegal’ migrants can assert. Finally, Rygiel (2011a) uses detention and the image of the camp as a lens through which to reflect on migrant activism in connection with a politics of citizenship and mobility control. By examining the detention center in Calais, she investigates the camp as a sociopolitical space and way of life, exploring both the ways in which detention functions as a politics of control, and the ability of migrants to enact themselves as citizens by making claims of political belonging.

A sixth approach can provide a political analysis of irregularity through the lens of a politics of mobility that is formed in the relations between migration and control (Squire 2011). It re-conceptualizes migrants’ irregularity as a political condition that is produced through political struggles, rather than as a de facto status and/or a problem (see De Genova 2002). These political struggles ‘emerge where the movements and activities of national, international and/or transnational agencies come into contact with the movements and activities of migrants and citizens’ (Squire 2011: 7). Thus, irregularity is conceived as a key stake within a contested politics of mobility in which both migration and its control play a vital role, and as an ambivalent condition as it is produced through various processes of (ab)normalization, and ambiguous practices of resistance, contestation, appropriation and/or re-appropriation via divergent political forms (ibid: 8-9). In this regard, migrant agency often comes to the center of attention of an analytics of irregularity (ibid: 15). All in all, this approach privileges citizenship over security, politics over government and resistance or contestation over domination by working at the intersections of mobility, citizenship and security (ibid: 15-16).

Rygiel (2011b) focuses on e-borders in the global North, especially the Canadian-American Smart Border and the UK e-border program. She uncovers the way in which e-borders govern bodies in motion using a discourse of authority, which entails the irregularization of both borders and bodies through the intensification of surveillance over them, and their disappearance through their digitalization. Within this context, migrants emerge as ‘unruly’ bodies able to challenge the disembodied discourse of authorization of a politics of control through movements and counter-acts that constitute an ‘insurrectional’ politics of migration.

Moreover, Nyers (2011) explores the concept of irregular citizenship by drawing on the case of a Canadian citizen in order to highlight the gradual break down of the dividing line between ‘secure citizens’ and ‘threatening migrants’. He examines both practices of ‘unmaking’/‘irregularizing’ citizenship by the state and acts of ‘self-irregularization’ by activists that challenge the racialized disaggregation of liberal citizenship and the exceptionalist practices of control in favor of another way of being political.

A seventh approach can re-conceptualize surveillance technologies as technologies of empowerment of the marginalized, which brings migrants’ and activists’ agency in the focal point of analysis. This approach is based on two assumptions: first, surveillance technologies are contingent and their meanings indeterminate; they are inherently social formations, inseparable from their contexts of design or use, and deeply embedded in social practices, institutions, and materialities (Monahan 2008: 218). And second, surveillance technologies possess a political dimension, which entails that they engender power relations, while they are capable of producing certain social and normative orders (ibid). In this respect, surveillance technologies are agents in their own right, capable of contributing to the creation of certain truth regimes (ibid). Thus, this approach dismisses the simplistic dichotomy of the inherently negative/positive nature of surveillance technologies, opting for a relational understanding, which entails that the positive or negative character of surveillance technologies depends on one’s place in the system and the extent to which one’s own status and values are being affirmed or undermined (Monahan et al 2010: 107). In this regard, “empowering surveillance” can be those surveillant practices that favorably alter one’s position in larger sociotechnical systems’ (ibid). Moving in this direction, Walsh (2010) re-conceptualizes surveillance technologies and practices as capable of challenging exclusionary or repressive acts of security, promoting instead protection and care to the disempowered. By focusing on the US-Mexico border he examines how sophisticated surveillance systems are used by activists in order to monitor and resist both state agencies and vigilante groups and to directly assist migrants in danger.

‘Critical Migration Studies’

Finally, Guild (2009), influenced by the ‘Paris School’, has put forward the strategy of ‘critical migration studies’, which emerges as a separate strategy from critical political

theory/sociology, although they both share many similarities. In its core lies an increased preoccupation with the individual migrant in the study of the 'migration-security nexus'. Critical migration studies avoids treating migration as a 'flow' or 'wave' of people between states, focusing, instead, on how individual movement is framed in specific ways. In other words, this strategy provides a political study of the 'nexus' through the focus on migrants and their experiences in order to reveal the ways in which different types of migrants are produced as a security practice by states and/or supranational structures, and to uncover 'the construction and deconstruction of assumptions about migration, identity, and security' (ibid: 5). Thus, it seeks to question the established knowledge regarding migration, and the actors who are entitled to define the political with regard to migration (ibid: 2). In this respect, migrants are understood as active subjects fighting to acquire authority and voice against the system in which they find themselves. Moving in this direction, Guild (2009) examines the relationship between the foreigner and security regarding individual and collective security and the claims around both. She pays particular attention to the way in which the mobile individual or the individual in search of identity constitutes a source of friction between states and the way in which it becomes visible in the international system through its claims, based on international rules, that mobilize the international dispute resolution mechanisms.

Conclusion

This article has demonstrated how critical approaches to the 'migration-security nexus' are making a noticeable turn in recent years to a study of the 'nexus' outside the scope of security. Yet, although, at first sight, the strategies of critical political theory/sociology and critical migration studies suggest an analytical move beyond the 'nexus', with a more careful examination, one can clearly observe that these strategies shift the balance of the study of the 'nexus' from its 'security end' to its 'migration end'. This happens because both of them bring back in, in one way or another, migrants' agency. However, this reinstatement does not take place merely in a reflective form; rather migrants' agency is reinstated in practice through the study of acts of resistance, contestation, solidarity, appropriation and/or re-appropriation against practices of securitization, criminalization, control, abjection and/or exclusion by various state and/or non-state actors at national, regional, and international levels. All in all, one can argue that these strategies prioritize the study of the politics of mobility instead of the politics of (in)security, which leads to more 'migration-orientated',

rather than 'security-orientated', critical approaches of the 'nexus'. But how does this prioritization work and what are the potential benefits that occur for the critical approaches to the 'migration-security nexus' in Europe from the perspective of security?

As mentioned earlier, inherent in critical political theory/sociology (and in critical migration studies too) is the key assumption that security is a political technique of framing that structures social relations and always functions in connection with other political issues, which in the case of the 'migration-security nexus', have to do with mobility. However, as Squire has noted with regard to irregularity, a politics of mobility is shaped in the relations between migration and control, and more specifically, in the political struggles that are born when the movements and activities of agencies meet the movements and activities of migrants and citizens. Thus, the politics of mobility are understood as contested, and the political issues at hand that are examined with regard to mobility are conceived as key stake, ambivalent and conditional, produced through both migration and its control, or else, through both practices of (ab)normalization and resistance. In this respect, migrants' agency comes to the center of analysis as an actual practice shifting the focus of the study of the 'nexus' from its 'security end' to its 'migration end', or else from the politics of (in)security to the politics of mobility. All in all, it enables us to understand how the abject and excluded have the potential to act as 'key protagonists in global struggles concerning freedom of movement, social recognition, workers rights and the right of asylum' (Nyers, 2008:160). Indeed, this analytic is present in all above mentioned strategies: the first approach examines the political issue of citizenship or belonging as it emerges ambivalent through the friction between the politics of control and the politics of migration; the second approach focuses on the political issue of violence; the third one analyzes the political issues of both the capital-labor relation and citizenship, while the fourth one applies a 'gender' filter in these same issues; the fifth approach explores the political issue of space; the sixth one examines the political issue of irregularity; the seventh one focuses on the political issue of surveillance technologies; and, finally, critical migration studies, by applying an 'individual migrant' filter, analyzes the political issues of migration, security and identity.

In conclusion, what are the potential benefits that occur for the critical approaches to the 'migration-security nexus' in Europe from the perspective of security? First, a 'migration-oriented' political approach brings back in migrants' agency, or else, the understanding of migrants as political subjects. In this respect, it can complement the one-dimensional focus of

the 'Copenhagen School' on political elites, and it can 'correct' the 'Paris School' disregard for the disempowered. Second, it makes possible the redeployment and re-appropriation of terms, practices, techniques, and/or technologies in different contexts. For instance, the seventh potential approach of critical political theory/sociology has demonstrated how surveillance technologies, usually employed by security professionals for the exclusion and criminalization of migrants, can be re-appropriated as technologies of empowerment by activists in order to provide protection and care to migrants. In this regard, another shortcoming of the 'Paris School' can be rectified. Finally, it enables researchers to escape the 'normative dilemma' as the analytical lens moves from the 'security end' to the 'migration end' of the 'nexus', or else, from the politics of (in)security to the politics of mobility. More specifically, a 'migration oriented' political approach functions as a reaction force to the action force that creates 'security traps', that is the interconnection between theorizing and practicing security. Indeed, by bringing back in migrants' agency and by enabling redeployment and re-appropriation, it establishes a research ethos that operates within spaces of study that bridge academic and activist milieus. In this respect, it exercises an opposite and equal force to the study of the 'nexus', which neutralizes the one that creates 'security traps'.

However, in order for these benefits to occur, scholars that adopt the critical approaches to security must turn their attention to the critical research on the 'migration-security nexus' that is conducted outside of Europe too, and particularly in North America and Australia, where various studies present excellent 'migration-oriented' political analyses of the 'nexus'. And finally and most importantly, they have to come to terms with the fact that they will have to sacrifice the production of discipline specific knowledge for a more holistic transdisciplinary one. In other words, they will have to break their ties to a significant extent with security professionals.

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