

“Let us not forget that there is no security
without energy security!”

The Energy Union – A case of securitization? Analysing the
role of the European Commission in the creation of the
Energy Union

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Abstract

Energy and energy security have in recent years made it to the top of political agendas across Europe. In this context, this thesis examines the relationship between the securitization of energy and the creation of the Energy Union, which has been described as one of the most ambitious EU projects since the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community in 1951. Using a combination of securitization theory and discourse analysis 21 speeches were analysed in order to examine to what extent the Commission acted as a securitizing agent in order to promote further integration. The analysis identified two discourses on energy, one of which contained elements of securitization. This showed that the Commission strived to securitize the 'supply of energy', which was described to be threatened as a consequence of the EU's dependency on Russia as the main supplier. The result of the analysis is in line with previous research, which has shown that securitization has previously been used by the Commission to promote further integration.

Key words: EU, Energy Union, securitization, energy, European Commission

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1 Introduction

“How many of us, as European citizens, turn on the gas to cook something and reflect that we are part of an enormous geopolitical and environmental picture? But we are.”

Natalie Nougayrède in the Guardian, Feb. 27th 2015

Historically, energy lies at the heart of European integration. It was the decision by the Founding Six to pool the production of coal and steel under the supervision of a supranational body that resulted in the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1951 - the embryo the European Union (EU). With the creation of EURATOM in 1958, a second supranational European body was created in the field of energy policy. But since the 1960s the integration process in this policy field has been slow, with few substantial institutional innovations (Maltby 2013:436; Trombetta 2012:13; Westphal 2006:52) and energy has thus been a policy field in which member states have affirmed their sovereignty. Geopolitical events on the Eastern border of the EU in the mid 2000's did however seem to create a new impetus for cooperation in the field of energy, which resulted in some progress.

In April 2014, Donald Tusk, at the time prime minister of Poland, published an article in the Financial Times in which he called for the creation of a European Energy Union (Tusk 2014). Tusks main motivation for the creation of such a union centred around Russia and the dependency on Russian gas¹, as indicated already in the title of the article (*“A United Europe can end Russia's Energy Stranglehold”*). The dependency on Russian gas makes Europe weak, Tusk argued. Apart from strengthening the negotiation power and put in place mechanisms for energy solidarity, Tusk also argued that Europe should make full use of its fossil fuels. The idea of an Energy Union was a few months later presented by Jean-Claude Juncker, the new President of the European Commission elected in July 2014, as one of the

¹ The EU imports 53% of its energy, with Russia being the main supplier. Imports of gas are expected to further increase between 2030-2040 (International Energy Agency 2014:9)

new Commission's key priorities. The Energy Union has been described as one of the most ambitious institutional innovations in the field of European energy policy since the creation of the ECSC (Sefcovic 2015c). Previous research has shown that the framing of energy as a security threat has been used as strategy to promote further integration. Is this also the case of the Energy Union?

1.1 Problem definition and research question

The main problem area of this thesis is the increasing prominence given to energy and energy security in international politics, and more specifically the securitization of energy and its role in European integration. Many scholars who have studied the process of integrating energy policy in the EU has made a connection between the securitization of energy and increased integration, and so this thesis aims to contribute to this field of research by examining to what extent energy has been securitized in relation to the Energy Union.

Since the European Commission (hereafter "the Commission") made the creation of an Energy Union a top priority, it is interesting to investigate how the Commission has framed the issue of energy in relation to this project. Has it continued the process of securitizing energy? And if so, what has been securitized? The study is also partly related to the nexus between climate change politics and energy security. In recent years the growing awareness of climate change and its consequences has begun to challenge traditional views on energy security, which has traditionally been focused on reliable access to fossil fuels ('security of supply')(Dyer&Trombetta 2013:10). For example, in Tusk's article the extraction of domestic fossil fuels is presented as a solution, thus arguing that security of energy supply should be given priority over climate change policies.

To this backdrop, the aim of this thesis is twofold. The main aim is to analyse the role of the Commission in the launch of the Energy Union using the theory of securitization and discourse analysis; has it acted as a securitizing agent, and in that case, what has been 'securitized' and what is identified as the main threats? The second aim is to contribute to the literature on the contemporary discussion on the (re)conceptualization of 'energy security' by providing an account for which aspect of energy security that has been securitized by the Commission. These two ambitions are not conflicting, but rather interlinked and

complementary as the discourses on energy relates to the role of the Commission in the framing of energy. The questions this thesis aim to answer are therefore the following:

- *To what extent has the Commission acted as a securitizing agent in the creation of the Energy Union? If so, what is the main identified issue, what has been securitized and what is presented as solutions to the issue?*

1.2 Definitions

Energy security

Even though energy security has in recent years become a ‘buzz-word’ in international politics there exists no clear definition of its meaning. As an example, Sovacool et al (2011) have identified 45 definitions used by different actors in different contexts. ‘Security of supply’ has traditionally been the dominant conceptualization of energy security, and the two concepts have for a long time been used synonymously (Dyer&Trombetta 2013:9). Sovacool points out that the ambiguity of the concept has some strategic value for policymakers and other stakeholders, as it enables them to put forward and justify many different policies and actions by adopting different definitions of ‘energy security’ (Sovacool et al. 2011:3). For example, Tusk argues that the EU should allow member states to make full use of its domestic fossil fuels in order to promote ‘energy security’. The security of supply is thus given prominence over energy policies aiming to reduce CO2 emissions. Conversely, a conceptualisation of energy security emphasising the importance of sustainability and the relationship between energy use and climate change could be applied in order to promote other kinds of policies than those put forward by Tusk.

In this thesis, ‘energy security’ is therefore not given a specific definition by the author. Instead, the reader should bear in mind the ambiguity and flexibility of this concept and the implications this might have for what policies that can be put forward by an actor applying a certain definition of it.

1.3 Structure

The thesis is divided into six chapters. The following chapter introduces the theory of securitization and its components. Discourse analysis as a method and how it is related to and combined with securitization theory as well as the empirical material analysed are presented in chapter three. The fourth chapter provides a brief outline of the issue of energy and energy security in international politics and the role of energy in European integration, in order to provide a contextualized background to the Energy Union. The fifth chapter provides the results of the analysis. The results are discussed in the sixth concluding chapter.

2 Theoretical framework

In this section I will introduce the theory of securitization developed by the so-called Copenhagen school, which forms the theoretical framework of this thesis. Thereafter I will describe how the theory is used in this study. The following chapter on methodology will further elaborate on how securitization theory relates to discourse analysis, and how the analytical framework was constructed.

2.1 Securitization theory and its origins

One of the first pieces on the theory of securitization was published in the book “On Security” in 1995 (Lipschutz 1995). In his chapter “Securitization and de-securitization”, Ole Wæver set out to criticise the broadening of the concept of security since the end of the Cold War, and aimed to introduce a new way of conceptualising security that differed from most other re-conceptualisations of the concept (Wæver 1995). Wæver argued that it is a mistake to assume that ‘security’ is something that exists prior to its articulation, that it is “already out there” (Wæver 1995:46). It is also a mistake to re-conceptualise security by incorporating an increasing number of phenomena such as the environment or immigration, into the security discourse (ibid). According to Wæver, this way of *broadening the security agenda* is not the same thing as *reconceptualising* the concept of ‘security’. Instead, Wæver argued that the concept of ‘security’ is better understood as a *field of practice* and it is these practices that need to form the foundation for a reconceptualization of the concept of security. By studying the concept of security “from within” by focusing on its core features (survival and defence), we are better able to understand how the *same practices* – related to survival and defence against an existential threat - are put in action in new ways and on new arenas. Security as a concept is thus according to Wæver to be understood as a specific *field of social interaction* as opposed to a certain state or main objective (to ‘be secure’). This field is associated with certain actions and codes used by the different actors operating in the field. Securitization is the name of the process during which an issue is moved into this specific field of action

labelled 'security' (Wæver 1995:49-51). These assumptions constitute the core of securitization theory.

In 1998 Wæver published together with Barry Buzan and Jaap de Wilde the book "Security – A New Framework for Analysis" in which the authors gave a more detailed description of the theory (Buzan et al. 1998). The main assumption remains the same: security is defined not as an objective phenomenon "out there", but rather as a social construction. More precisely, security is considered a *self-referential practice*; the issue presented becomes a security problem when presented as such (Buzan et al. 1998:24). This statement is a clear indicator of the theory's social constructivist foundation and its emphasis on the importance of language.

2.2 Key concepts

Securitization is according the Copenhagen School to be understood as *a process* during which an issue is framed as a matter of security. This process entails certain key actions and actors that will be described more in detail below. These are the *speech-act*, the *referent object(s)* and the *securitizing agent(s)*.

The *speech-act*, a concept borrowed from language theory, is the actual activity (utterance) in which an issue is framed as a security problem and constitutes the key mechanism of the securitization process (Buzan et al. 1998:26). It is during the speech act that the issue is framed as a matter of survival; that there exists an existential threat that needs to be dealt with urgently, otherwise it will be too late. One can describe the internal dynamics of a speech-act to be dominated by this rhetorical construction of a storyline based on an existential threat, a point of no return and a possible solution to the issue (Buzan et al. 1998:33). The sense of emergency and urgency are crucial aspects of the speech-act.

The *referent object* is the object that is described as being threatened; its mere existence is put into question by the threat. In classical security studies the referent object has traditionally been the state and its sovereignty, but following the logic of securitization virtually anything can become a referent object in a securitization process (though some objects are more difficult to successfully securitize than others) (Buzan et. al 1998:36). The nature of the referent object will also determine the nature of the existential threat; the threat is challenging

the security (the survival of) the referent object, but the very nature of the threat depends on the referent object (Buzan 1998:21,27). For example, in the context of state security where the referent object is the state, war is an existential threat (the sovereignty of the state is securitized). In the environmental sector the stability of the climate could be the referent object and the threat could then be, for example, the burning of fossil fuels.

The *securitizing actor* is the actor who performs the speech-act and in doing so aims to securitize a specific issue. A securitizing actor can be an individual or a group (government, political party, interest group etc)(Buzan et. al 1998:40). Sometimes the securitizing actor and the referent object can be the same (such as an authoritarian regime securitizing the survival of the regime itself), but this is usually only in the case of national security (Buzan et. al 1998:40). In some cases individuals can be studied in their role as representatives for certain collectivities. Accordingly, texts presented by individual Commissioners will in this thesis therefore be considered as representative for the Commission as a whole rather than the specific individual or Director General.

2.3 A successful securitization or a mere ‘*securitizing-move*’?

The three components outlined above form the core of a securitization process. However, in order for an issue to be successfully securitized it is not enough to have a security actor pointing to an existential threat against a referent object in a speech-act. In order for the securitization process to be successful the *audience* that the speech-act is aimed at must accept this framing of the issue (Buzan et al. 1998:31). If they accept that the survival of the referent object is existentially threatened, the securitization process is successfully completed. If they don't, the speech-act can only be understood as a *securitizing-move*: an attempt by a securitizing actor to securitize an issue. In this thesis, the Commission is the (potential) securitizing agent and the member make up the audience. Accordingly, in order for the Commission to successfully securitize energy the securitizing move would have to be accepted by the member states.

2.4 The consequences of securitizing

What does an actor gain from securitizing an issue? Buzan et. al holds that securitization is a continuation of the process of politicizing an issue. Once an issue is securitized, the options for how the issue should be managed and ultimately resolved widen significantly; in the context of an existential emergency the involved actor(s) can claim the right to use extraordinary measures, e.g. to bypass or potentially break the rules of the ordinary political process (Buzan et. al 1998:23-24). One of the main benefits is that an issue that has become successfully securitized will become prioritized above other issues, which also prompts the mobilization of resources and – in some cases – the society at large. This is put forward as one of the main reasons that securitizing has sometimes been used as a tactic in order to prompt action when it comes to addressing certain environmental issues (Buzan et. al 1998:29).

The use of the securitization as a strategic tool can thus be considered a political choice, as it enables a different conceptualization of the issue than if it had not been framed as a security issue, which consequently opens up for new solutions and ways of dealing with the issue. Playing the securitization card therefore results in clear political consequences if done successfully (Wæver 1995; Buzan et. al 1998:29-30). Balzacq, another author within securitization studies, especially emphasizes the strategic use of securitization and argues that “there is a need to consider securitization as a strategic practice”. Accordingly, Balzacq argues that a speech-act should be considered a *perlocutionary act*, which means that it is an act aiming to evoke certain reactions (e.g. feelings, beliefs, actions) from the audience in question, making them more likely to accept the framing of the issue and the solutions presented (Balzacq 2005:174-75).

Certain scholars have shown how the securitization of energy has resulted in the creation of new institutional arrangements at both a regional and global level (see for example Trombetta 2012; Natorski&Surrals 2008). In this context, Trombetta argues that when defining what is to be considered ‘extraordinary measures’, one needs to apply a contextualized approach (Trombetta 2012:8-9). She points out that according to De Wilde (2008), a successful securitization challenges normal politics and is able to bring forth new forms of politics, which can take the form of *new forms of governance* (De Wilde 2008 quoted in Trombetta

2012:10). Translated to a European context, an ‘extraordinary measure’ can thus be a shift of competences from the member state-level to the EU level, resulting in a gain in competences for the Commission, or policies that in another way leads to deepened integration. Other scholars have investigated the role of securitization for further EU integration in other areas such as migration (Huysmans 2000; 2006) and police and intelligence cooperation (Balzacq 2008).

2.5 Securitizing theory in this thesis

The aim of this study is to identify whether the Commission has acted as a securitizing agent or not. Consequently the aim is not to argue whether a potential securitization process has been successful or not. As a result, this thesis does not study how the Council or the European Parliament has responded to the proposition of the Commission. This decision naturally has consequences for the empirical material selected for the analysis as well as the conclusions drawn from the analysis. It would not be possible to come to a conclusion that the Energy Union is the *result* of a successful securitization project or not, since in order to do so it would have been necessary to include other actors in the analysis (the *audience*) and to analyse if they have accepted the securitization move or not. However, this is not to be considered a problem due to the fact that the Energy Union is not yet fully established, and many political decisions are yet to be made. The Energy Union as a completed institution does not yet exist and can therefore not form the unit of analysis for a study. The aim of this study is therefore to investigate whether the launch of this project can be considered *to be a part of a securitization process*. Consequently, what is studied here is the initial phase of the securitization process: the speech-act. This brings us back to the Commission as the principal actor to analyse, since it is the Commission that has the official ownership of this institutional innovation and therefore is the (potential) securitization-agent.

3 Method and Material

The analysis was conducted through a discourse analysis. In this chapter I will first present discourse analysis as a method and thereafter discuss how and why discourse analysis is a suitable method to combine with securitization theory. In the third section I will explain how I have constructed my analytical framework. Finally, the empirical material will be presented.

3.1 Discourse analysis

Discourse analysis should not to be understood as *one* single homogenous method. Instead, discourse analysis can be considered a group of analytical approaches sharing a certain set of epistemological and ontological assumptions stemming from social constructionism and post-structuralism (Winther-Jørgensen & Philips 2000:7,10). The main shared principle is that language is not neutral. Instead, our language consists of different patterns of *discourses* that help us make sense of reality – our language therefore *constructs* the social world. Even if there exists a “realness” - and actual world - we can only make sense of this reality and give it meaning through the use of language. Consequently, our language is never a mirror of an objective reality – in describing it we give it a certain meaning (Bergström & Boréus 2005:305; Winther-Jørgensen & Philips 2000:15).

A *discourse* can in general terms be defined as a specific way of understanding and making sense of reality, or certain aspects of it (Winther-Jørgensen & Philips 2000:7; Börjesson & Palmblad 2007:13). Discourse analysis is thus a *method* to study these discursive patterns that make up our ‘reality’ in a certain context, as well as a *theory* about the role of language in the construction of our social world (Winther-Jørgensen & Philips 2000:7,10). As a discourse analyst (as for any other person), it is not possible to ‘detach’ oneself from the discourses we ourselves draw upon, and it is therefore not possible to distinguish an objective ‘truth’ and

claim that some discourses are more true than others. The role for the analyst is instead to study material that has already been produced and in that way distinguish certain discursive patterns they contain and in turn the social consequences generated by those ways of depicting a certain phenomenon or event (Winther-Jørgensen & Philips 2000:28).

3.1.1 Discourse analysis and the study of politics

Hajer argues that the use of discourse analysis is well suited for the study of politics and policy-processes. He points to the fact that policy-making is not only about finding solutions to a certain problem; it also involves the *definition* of a certain problem in a way that makes it possible to find solutions to it - and the definition of a problem can never be taken for granted (Hajer 1995:2-3, 22). To define a problem therefore potentially inherits political conflict, since different actors might have different ways of conceptualizing the problem in question. Consequently, policy-making can be understood as a 'problem closure': the issue needs to be understood in a specific way in order for policy makers to find a solution to it (Hajer 1995:22, 43). Put in other words: the discourses actors draw upon in order to make sense of the issue that is presented to them will affect the solutions considered adequate to address the problem (and to even consider it a problem or not). In the context of this thesis this means that the discourses on energy will have implications for the identification of the problem and the solutions. Is energy security to be considered an issue that needs to be given outmost priority amongst the EU leaders? What is the cause of the perceived issues, and how can they be resolved? Are issues related to energy a matter of security requiring extreme measures (increased competences for the EU level) or should it remain mainly a national concern?

3.1.2 Discourse analysis and securitization theory - an integrated perspective

Winther Jørgensen & Philips argue that discourse analysis can be combined with other theories and methods, as long as the ontological and epistemological foundations of discourse analysis (as outlined above) are respected (Winther-Jørgensen & Philips 2000:10,141-142). In this aspect, combining securitization theory and discourse analysis is not an issue since they

both acknowledge the importance of language in the way we make sense of reality, and that this in turn has consequences. Furthermore, as stated by Buzan et. al: “[T]he way to study securitization is to study discourse” (Buzan et. al 1998:25). Securitization theory forms the basis for the analytical framework in this thesis, which helps to identify and separate the different discourses. When not combining discourse analysis with other theories, this can sometimes be difficult (Winther-Jørgensen & Philips 2000:136).

3.1.3 Construction of the analytical framework

All research should strive to achieve high intersubjectivity, which means that the research process should be as transparent as possible (Esaiasson et. al 2012:25). When presenting the results of the analysis it is therefore important that the reader is able to follow the logic in how the analysis was carried out, which in turn enables them to evaluate and possibly question the results (Winther-Jørgensen & Philips 2000:139-140).

In order to achieve high intersubjectivity, the discourse analysis carried out in this thesis is structured around an analytical framework based on securitization theory. As stated by Buzan et. al, securitization theory does not have to be translated into measurable indicators like most other theories. This is due to the conceptualization of securitization as a process that can be studied by identifying a speech-act, that is, manifest articulations (Buzan et. al 1998:25). However, the theory has in this thesis been operationalized into three questions around which the analysis will be structured and carried out, inspired by the analytical framework used by Malmvig (2006:351). These three questions are based on the main components in a speech-act: an *existential threat* to a *referent object*, and a *sense of urgency* to address the issue (Buzan et al. 1998:33). The problem-solution dimension also relates to the conceptualization of energy security - by identify the main issue identified in the discourse it will be possible to distinguish which aspect of energy security that is emphasised. The discourses will be identified and separated according to the answers they provide to these analytical questions. These questions are as follows:

- *In what way are issues related to energy depicted as a problem? (As ‘existential threat’ or not)*
- *What/Who is considered affected by these issues? (Identifying the referent object(s))*

- *What is being presented as possible solutions to the problem? (Promotion of 'extraordinary measures' or not by a sense of urgency)*

As indicated in the first question, it will be noted *how* an issue is depicted as a problem. As stated by Malmvig (2006) paraphrasing Berenskoetter (2005), in a EU context a security threat is seldom referred to as a 'security threat', but rather a 'security *challenge*' or 'security *problem*' (Malmvig 2006:351). Accordingly, an issue will be considered depicted as a security threat if there is a clear connection between an identified issue having serious consequences for an identified referent object and a sense of urgency is evoked (the issue requiring urgent action).

3.2 Material

Since this thesis aims to study the official discourses used by the Commission to promote the creation of the Energy Union, only official material from the Commission was selected. If the aim had instead been to study the potential discursive conflicts in the negotiation process between the different institutions it would have been necessary to include various kinds of unofficial internal documents as well as documents from the Council and the European Parliament (Malmvig 2006:352-353).

The empirical material analysed comprise of the official framework strategy of the Energy Union and 21 speeches held by the Commissions president Jean-Claude Juncker, Miguel Arias Canete (the Commissioner for DG Energy and DG Climate Action) and Maros Sefcovic (the Vice President for the Energy Union). Speeches were chosen as the main material as they provide good examples of how the Commission has chosen to promote this new project for various stakeholders. In order to be selected for analysis, the speeches had to contain the term 'Energy Union' to ensure explicit references to the project. The speeches were selected through a detailed search on the Commissions press release database and cover the period of April 1st 2014 to March 31th 2015. This was considered a particularly interesting period in this initial process of the Energy Union project since Tusk's article that first presented the idea of an Energy Union was published on April 21st 2014 and the European Council held its first meeting on the framework strategy of the Energy Union on March 19th 2015. This period therefore covers the drafting of the project, its launch by the newly appointed Commission

and culminates in the presentation of the Framework Strategy in February 2015 and the first debate of this strategy by the European Council.

4 Background

This chapter will provide a brief description of the increased priority given to energy in international politics as well as a brief outline of the role of energy in European integration. The last section highlights the relationship between the securitization of energy and progress in the field of integration in the energy field in the past ten years.

4.1 Energy and energy security in international politics:

The increased priority given to the issue of energy security in the EU could be said to mirror an international trend. After the two oil crises in the 1970's, the issue lost in salience but following events in the beginning of the millennia, energy made its way onto the top of the political agendas once more. Rising prices in oil and gas between 2002 and 2007, attacks carried out against oil facilities and political unrest in major oil-exporting countries such as Nigeria and Venezuela highlighted the risks associated with a high dependency on energy-imports and the fragility of the market of supply. Furthermore, the concept of 'peak oil' - that the production of oil (as well as gas) were to hit a high in 2015 and then decrease - signalled a potential future scenario of energy scarcity, at the same time as the demand for energy would increase as developing economies continued to grow (Youngs 2009:1-2).

In a European context, it was notably the so called 'gas-wars' between Russia on the one hand and Ukraine and Georgia on the other in 2006, 2007 and 2009 that brought back the attention of European policy makers to the issue of energy and energy security. When Russia in 2006 decided to cut gas supplies to Ukraine - a major transit country for Russian gas to the European market - it caused a 30% decrease in gas flows to the EU member states (Youngs 2009:22). Former External Relations Commissioner (2004-2009) Benita Ferrero-Waldner described the 2006 Russian-Ukrainian gas conflict as "a wake-up call, reminding us that energy security needs to be even higher on our political agenda" (quoted in Youngs 2009:24).

As a consequence of the most recent conflict between Ukraine and Russia over the annexation of Crimea, gas supplies to the EU were once again threatened, especially during the winter of 2014 (IEA 2014:7).

4.2 Energy and European integration

With the creation of the ECSC and EURATOM in the 1950's, the two most important sources of energy at the time – coal and nuclear energy – formed the base of a nascent common European energy policy. However, as the energy mixes of the member states changed from mainly coal to gas and oil, no further integration of energy policies was achieved. As the European project continued to develop, little further progress was made in the field of energy, leaving energy at the national level. The oil crises in the 1970's created some impetus for cooperation in energy related matters, but this was mainly achieved outside the European project, most notably by the creation of the International Energy Agency (IEA) (Trombetta 2012:12-13). The lack of integration led to the member states developing rather diverse energy policies and pursuing different strategies to ensure the supply of energy (Maltby 2013:437-38). This development resulted in very different energy mixes amongst the member states (Vogler 2013:631).

With the Single European Act in 1986 leading the way for the creation of an internal market in 1993, the first foundation was created for the Commissions ambition to create an internal energy market (Maltby 2013:438). In 1988 the Commission launched the project with the communication 'The Internal Energy Market'. The negotiation process on the topic was however slow, with many member states showing reluctance to liberalize their energy markets. After almost ten years, the negotiations resulted in two Directives in 1996 (on electricity) and 1998 (on gas). This so-called 'First Energy Package' was followed by a second one in 2004 and a third one in 2009 (Trombetta 2012:14). However, the implementation of the Directives proved to be weak (Westphal 2006:52) and the Commission launched several infringement procedures against member states failing to comply (Maltby 2013:440). In an assessment report released in 2009 the Commission concluded that the market still showed several weaknesses in its functioning. Still, the vision of a fully functioning internal energy market has remained the Commissions main ambition as a way to improve energy security within the Union, but this has shown difficult to achieve due to

resistance from the member states (Vogler 2013:631).

In the beginning of 2000 the Commission attempted to bring back the discussion of a common EU energy security policy to the EU agenda with the Green Paper ‘Toward an European Strategy for the Security of Supply’. The Green Paper was an attempt to mobilize support for a more integrated energy policy with regards to concerns over energy of supply, but it failed to mobilize any significant support or political mobilization from the member states (Trombetta 2012:16). During the first years of the new millennia, little attention was given to the question of energy.

4.3 Securitization leading to further integration?

The revitalization of the debate on energy and energy security in the European context after the gas conflicts in 2006 resulted in some development towards further integration in the field. In March 2006 the Commission published the Green Paper ‘A European Strategy for Sustainable, Competitive and Secure Energy’, in which the Commission called for amongst other things the completion of the internal energy market, increased solidarity amongst the member states and a more coherent approach in the EU’s external energy relations. It also outlined a more updated conceptualization of ‘energy security’, combining dimensions of environmental and economical concerns with the more classic notion of security of supply (Trombetta 2012:18). The call for further integration in the wake of the gas crises was to a certain extent welcomed by the member states, but they continued to assert their sovereignty in deciding over the national energy mix. Despite this rather positive response, many member states national strive for energy security through bilateral agreements (notably with Russia) showed to be in conflict with one another, revealing how divided the Union was in terms of energy policies (Natroski&Herranz-Surrallés 2008:72). The Lisbon Treaty signed in 2007 marked another milestone as it officially made energy a shared competence between the EU and the member states, but still grants the member states a great deal of discretion in deciding on their own energy policies, such as the energy mix (Trombetta 2012:20-21). The Commission role was further empowered with the 2009 Internal Gas Market Directive and the 2010 Security of Gas Supply Regulation, which granted the Commission the right to give its

opinion and recommendations on energy infrastructure investments in the member states (Maltby 2013:441).

Some scholars have described the period between 2006 and 2010 as a remarkable period in terms of energy integration in the EU, considering the developments that were made during the period in relation to the previous slow development. Natorski&Herranz-Surrallés (2008), Trombetta (2012) and Vogler (2013), have all shown how the Commissions discourses on energy have been characterised by various degrees of securitization. It is therefore interesting to investigate if the Commission has also been used securitization as a strategy in the launch of the Energy Union.

5 Analysis

In this section the analysis of the empirical material will be presented. I will first describe how the analysis was conducted, and thereafter the results will be presented. Each discourse will be presented separately and quotations from the texts will be presented throughout the analysis in order to achieve a high level of intersubjectivity.

5.1 Analytical strategy

The analysis was carried out in two stages. In the first stage, each document was analysed separately. The document was first read closely in order to give a general impression of the content and then read once more with the help of the analytical questions presented in section 4.3. The questions based on securitization theory formed the lens through which the content of the document was analysed. By identifying the answers to the analytical questions, the discourses were identified and separated.

Since the aim of the analysis was to determine if and to what extent the Commission had acted as a securitizing-agent, I specifically searched for articulations that described the nature of the issues related to energy (as an existential threat requiring urgent attention), what was considered threatened by the issue (identifying the referent objects), and if a sense of urgency was expressed. In relation to this, I also noted what was being presented as the main issue and the solutions to addressing the problem.

In the second stage the results from the analysis of the different articulations noted were grouped together according to the patterns that were discovered during the analysis. This helped me distinguish the two discourses drawn upon by the Commission to describe the role of the Energy Union, the main problems it seeks to address as well as the proposed solutions, and why the creation of an Energy Union is important.

5.2 Result of the analysis

The analysis distinguished two discourses on energy. The discourses identify and emphasize different issues related to energy, and also emphasise different aspects of potential solutions, which relate to the creation of the Energy Union in different ways. Only one of the discourses was classified as a securitization discourse, and since the aim of the study is to identify and describe what has been securitized rather than what has not, the security-discourse will be described and analysed more in detail than the non-securitized discourse. The two discourses are presented separately below.

5.2.1 The Climate and innovation discourse

The *climate and innovation discourse* is centred on the future of the EU in a world in transition towards decarbonised economies (economies based on renewable energy rather than fossil fuels) and the EU's role as a leading actor in the climate change regime. This discourse is to a larger extent focused on the future as opposed to the second discourse, which is more focused on the present. As the analysis showed that this discourse did not contain elements of securitization it will only be briefly outlined.

The normative dimension of the need to tackle climate change is not very prominent, but is mentioned in some of the texts. One example is the following quote, which appeals to the responsibility towards future generations:

“It is about **guaranteeing that my children** in Bratislava, **and all of our children across Europe**, and the children of their children, **never need to pay the price for the environmental mistakes of their preceding generation**” (Sefcovic 2015a, emphases added)

What is given most attention in the climate responsibility discourse is the need for the EU to lead the transition towards a decarbonised world economy, which would benefit not only the planet but also the European economy. Leading the decarbonising process would also strengthen the EU's role as a leading actor in climate change by acting as a responsible role model leading the way.

“We are still leaders in innovation and renewable energy, but **other parts of the world are fast catching up** and **we have already lost ground** when it comes to some clean, low carbon technologies.“ (COM 2015:3)

“**[T]he Energy Union will make our energy system fit for the future**, fit for a low-carbon and sustainable economy.” (Sefcovic 2014b, emphases added)

The main issue related to energy in this discourse is thus that the EU is not advancing fast enough with the transition towards a decarbonised economy and that the Union risks losing its leading position in the development of the technologies that will lead this transition. As a consequence, the European economy and the EU’s role as a leading actor in climate change could be put into question in the long term. Research and innovation in renewable technologies is promoted as a way for the EU to maintain its wealth and competitiveness with rising economies such as China and Brazil, as well as the promotion of energy efficiency.

Even though the competitiveness of the EU in terms of research and innovation is described as important for the EU and an issue in need of attention, it is not described in terms of securitization. The storyline of an existential threat and a point of no return is not evident, and the connection between research and innovation and the survival of the EU economy is not made in terms of an existential threat. The lack of security articulations resulted in the discourse not being considered a security discourse – it does not indicate that the Commission acted as a securitizing agent.

5.2.2 The Dependency discourse

The second discourse is centred on dependency and vulnerability, and contains several securitization elements. The Commission emphasises that the EU is too dependent on energy imports, and that this dependency makes the EU vulnerable. Furthermore, the EU has not managed to translate its role as the world’s biggest energy importer into a corresponding influence on the global energy markets which makes the Union a weak actor on the global energy market. Energy prices in Europe are affected negatively as a result of the dependency on a few suppliers in combination with an increasing demand in energy worldwide. The

elevated prices have resulted in ‘energy poverty’ and weaken the competition of EU business and thus the EU economy.

❖ *In what way are issues related to energy depicted as a problem?*

‘Energy poverty’ is a concept that is brought up in many of the texts and constitutes the most normative feature of the dependency discourse (describes as something that is “unacceptable”).

“Like many in Europe we will sleep in our warm homes tonight, while **an unacceptably high number of European households will not be warm enough**, simply because their residents cannot afford proper heating. Ladies and gentlemen, 10% of our households [are] **energy-poor!**” (Sefcovic 2015a, emphases added)

European businesses are described to be suffering negative consequences of the elevated energy prices as it distorts the competition with companies in other parts of the world. In this aspect, it is not just the import-dependency that is an issue but also the so called ‘shale-gas revolution’ in the US, which has made the US almost independent in terms of energy supply (at least in the mid-term), which has resulted in lowered gas-prices for American consumers. EU businesses are currently paying gas prices that are up to three times higher than for American companies, which is described as a “huge burden” (Sefcovic 2015a).

“While **Europe’s dependence on fossil fuel imports is increasing**, outside Europe, indigenous production of oil and gas is leading **to a widening gap between industrial energy prices**, in particular with the US.” (Sefcovic 2014b, emphases added)

Another problem related to energy that is highlighted is the discrepancy between the EU’s role as an energy importer and its role as an actor in that same sector. Even though the EU is the world’s largest importer and consumer of energy, the Union has not yet managed to translate this into a corresponding influence on the global energy market. As a result, the EU is a weak actor in the field of energy, which enhances the vulnerability. The Commission therefore points to the importance of the EU to be able to speak with a united voice when it comes to energy:

“A **stronger and more united EU** can **engage more constructively with its partners**” (COM 2015:6, emphases added)

“We are the **biggest customer in the world** and that costs us €400 billion a year. We **need to speak with one voice** to lay down a more assertive European Energy Diplomacy” (Sefcovic 2014a, emphases added)

In the dependency discourse it is the geopolitical aspects that show the highest level of securitization. The dependency on Russia is depicted as the main threat to the security of supply, and thus the EU citizens and economy. The dependency on Russia is furthermore depicted as a problem in urgent need of attention.

“I believe **we must be serious** about **reducing our reliance on Russia**” (Arias Canete 2015c, emphases added)

“**We are the biggest energy importer in the world.** /.../ Every year, we import more than €300 billion of crude oil and oil products alone, **of which one-third from Russia.** /.../ **27% of the gas** we consume in the European Union is **imported from Russia**, and **some of our Member States pay a high price for this, also literally.**” (Sefcovic 2015b, emphases added)

Many of the solutions presented as a part of the Energy Union are connected to the geopolitical situation. The fact that Russia in particular is portrayed as a threat is further emphasized by the Commission frequently referring to ‘events at the eastern boarder’ and singling out member states ‘in the East’ as being especially ‘vulnerable’ or threatened.

“**[I]f the price for energy from the East becomes too expensive, either in commercial or in political terms**, Europe should be able to **switch very swiftly to other supply channels**” (Juncker 2014a, emphases added)

“**We should do more than just talk about it, we should act on it!** /.../ **And we have a geopolitical context** – however unfortunate in itself – **in which not doing anything is simply not an option.**” (Sefcovic 2015b, emphases added)

Russia’s use of its role as an energy-exporter as a political weapon is thus depicted a severe issue that needs to be dealt with. Europe is described to rely “too heavily” on imports and that

this is an issue since energy is treated not only as a commercial good, but also as a political weapon. Explicit references are made to events in the EU's neighbourhood in the texts, with a particular focus on the events in Ukraine. The situation in Ukraine is used to exemplify why Russia is described an unreliable energy-exporter, which, as previously outlined, has been an increasing concern in the discussion on European energy security since 2006. The description of Russia using its role as an energy-exporter as a political weapon is also brought up in several of the texts, sometimes also in less direct terms.

“The current geopolitical situation on our eastern border – however unfortunate in itself – has put Europe’s energy security even higher on the agenda.”(Sefcovic 2015b, emphasis added)

“The fact that most of our energy comes from outside Europe, notably from a few countries which use their energy supply as a political bargain puts us at constant risk for disruptions.” (Sefcovic 2015a, emphasis added)

“Energy is key for our security. We face today in Europe the urgent need to strengthen our resilience to supply disruptions. The situation in Ukraine has highlighted our vulnerabilities and the need to improve security of supply. Diversification of routes and suppliers is key in order not to be at the mercy of individual suppliers. Let us not forget that there is no security without energy security!” (Arias-Canete 2014b, emphases added)

The quote from Arias-Canete is clearly a securitization move as it links energy to security in a very clear way, describing energy as a prerequisite for ‘our security’ (however, was this ‘security’ refers to is not further elaborated upon). The quote further connects the situation in Ukraine, and thus the EU’s dependency on Russia to the issue, as being the main cause of the threat to the supply of energy. Once again, it is the supply of energy that is securitized. The referent object could be interpreted to be the EU, referred to as a collective unit (“energy is key for *our* security”).

A sense of urgency is expressed in different ways. For example, the Commission stresses the importance of “speeding up” certain energy-infrastructure projects to better connect member states, especially in the East:

“We will speed up critical infrastructure projects and monitor them much better” (Sefcovic 2015c, emphasis added)

“**Without decisive action**, many Member States **will remain dependent on a single supplier** that **does not view the sale of gas as simply a commercial issue.**” (Arias Canete 2015c, emphases added)

Another factor that is also often pointed out is that the EU is badly prepared to different challenges related to energy.

“Europe is finding it is **often ill-prepared for the global challenges ahead**, be it with regard to /.../ **the scarcity of natural resources, /.../ the cost of energy/.../**” (Juncker 2014a, emphases added)

❖ *What/Who is considered affected by these issues?*

The referent objects in the discourse can be found at different levels. At a higher level it is the member states, especially the ones on the Eastern boarder, which constitute the referent objects. Especially the Baltic states are singled out as being especially vulnerable, which adds to the geopolitical dimension of the securitization feature of the dependency discourse. EU citizens and the European economy (businesses and industries) are the most prominent referent objects, threatened by high energy-prices (leading to ‘energy poverty’ and distorted competition) and an insecurity of supply. This is well illustrated in the following quote:

“Energy is **indispensable**. It is the **lifeblood** of our **citizen’s livelihoods**, of our **economy**. Yet, **we have all grown used to paying high energy-bills** as if it were a fact of life, to **recurrent threats** to our **energy supply** in winter. /.../ Yet, **far from enough has been done to tackle these issues.**” (Sefcovic 2015c, emphasis added)

This quote does not contain the explicit articulation of a ‘security threat’, but by describing energy as the ‘lifeblood’ of the citizens and the economy the underlying assumption is that the two referent objects are highly dependent on the supply of energy and that this is endangered by high energy-prices and the supply of energy being threatened. Access to energy, described as a prerequisite for a functioning economy as well as the wellbeing of the citizens, is directly linked to the risk of high energy-prices and a potential threat of disruption of supply. In securitization terms this could therefore be considered a securitizing move: the *supply of energy* is being securitized, the referent objects are the *EU citizens and economy* and the threats are *high energy prices and the possibility of a disruption of supply*.

Energy security in terms of ‘security of supply’ is presented by the Commission as a *shared* problem that needs to be addressed *collectively* rather than separately by each member state and therefore requires EU-level solutions. The discourse also clearly stresses the importance of ‘solidarity’ between the member states. This is to be achieved by enhancing the capabilities of storing energy (especially gas) that can be transferred from one member state to another in case of a disruption of supplies.

“Some of our Member States are **more vulnerable** than others, but in the end **energy security of supply concerns every EU country.**” (Sefcovic 2015b) (Emphases added)

❖ *What is being presented as possible solutions?*

The solutions presented in the dependency-discourse are related to making the EU less vulnerable in terms of energy supply and to reduce the import-dependency. The main solutions related to the first objective are diversification of suppliers, sources and routes; the completion of the internal energy market and enhanced solidarity-mechanisms between the member states.

The internal energy market is presented as the backbone of the Energy Union. With greater interconnectedness and a liberalization of the market, energy prices will fall as a result of greater competition, and the EU will become more resilient in case of a sudden interruption of supply. The diversification of supply, both in terms of suppliers, sources and routes are also important solutions in the dependency discourse. The Commission argues that the EU should deepen their cooperation with already existing partners, as well as developing new partnerships with countries such as Turkey and Algeria (Sefcovic 2014).

Strengthening its role on the global energy market would also reduce the EU’s vulnerability, as it would allow for member states, as well as the EU as a whole, to better withstand pressure from its suppliers during negotiations. The Commission therefore proposes that the EU should “explore common purchasing of gas” (Sefcovic 2014). This would require the member states to grant the Commission increased competences, as bilateral gas contracts would have to be approved by the Commission at an early state of the negotiations. The benefits from speaking with a united voice is summarized in this quote:

“[we should] **better coordinate our messages to resist undue pressure from third countries** and to **avoid market distortions.**” (Sefcovic 2014b, emphasis added)

Two other solutions that are promoted as ways of reducing the import-dependency and vulnerability of the EU are the promotion of the use of renewable energy and increased energy efficiency. An increase of the share of renewable energy in the member states energy mixes and facilitating the exchange of electricity generated from the same technologies would result in both a decreased import-dependency resulting in a strengthened security of supply as well as lower prices for European consumers.

“[targets set on the share of renewables in the EU] will contribute to **reduce** the EU’s trade deficit in energy commodities, our **exposure to supply disruption and volatile prices of fossil fuels.**”(Sefcovic 2014b)

In the dependency discourse, connections are often made between the import of gas and the potential of reducing the gas-import dependency by promoting energy efficiency:

”**Security of supply** means – and I would even say: it means first and foremost – **becoming more energy efficient**, knowing that **for every 1% improvement in energy efficiency, EU gas imports fall by 2.6%!**” (Sefcovis 2015b)

The pooling of resources, interlinking of infrastructure and uniting of negotiation power are all part of the proposed features and capacities of the Energy Union. An internal energy market, enhanced solidarity mechanisms in the event of a sudden disruption of supply and united negotiation power with a strengthened role for the Commission would all most likely require a deeper integration. As pointed out by Trombetta, an ‘extraordinary measure’ in an EU context can be the deepening of European integration, and so achieving these proposed solutions (the creation of the Energy Union) could be considered an extraordinary measure (Trombetta 2012:10).

To summarize, the dependency-discourse contains several securitization articulations as outlined above. Energy security in terms of *security of supply* is in this discourse described as essential for the wellbeing of EU consumers and citizens and thus something that needs to be protected. The main referent objects are the *EU economy and citizens*, but at a higher level the

member states (especially on the eastern border) and the EU as a political unit are also depicted as referent objects. The threats to the security of supply stem from the EU's *dependency on energy imports* and *the EU's weakness as an international actor* on the global energy market. The main threat identified is the dependency on Russia, the main supplier of energy to the EU. More specifically, it is Russia's *use of energy as political weapon* that poses a risk to the security of supply, since it puts the EU at "constant risk" for a disruption of supply or volatile prices. A sense of urgency is invoked, mainly by referring to the situation in Ukraine, which conveys the message that the EU is now at an even greater risk of facing a disruption of supply in the near future. The solutions presented are a combination of speeding up the implementation of already existing legislation as well as new institutional innovations. Many of these proposed solutions, such as the completion of the internal market for energy, increased solidarity between the member states (both in terms of harmonising energy policies as well as supporting each other in case of a disruption of supply) would require a deepening of EU integration in the area of energy policies, which can be interpreted as extraordinary measures in an EU context. It would also assert the influence of the Commission in monitoring the member states compliance with already existing legislation, such as Directives and Regulations related to the completion of the internal energy market. The potential new role of the Commission in the purchasing gas is especially interesting, as it would drastically change the relationship and power balance between the member states and the Commission with regards to bilateral negotiations on gas imports with third parties.

6 Discussion of results and Conclusion

To what extent has the Commission acted as a securitizing agent in the creation of the European Energy Union? If so, what is the main identified issue, what has been securitized and what are the solutions presented to solve the issue?

6.1 Discussion of results

As the analysis showed, the Commission has acted as a securitizing agent in the creation of the Energy Union in the sense that it has strived to securitize the supply of energy. Reliable access to affordable energy is described as a prerequisite for the well-being of the EU's citizens and economy, and that this is in different ways threatened by i) the EU's energy-import dependency in general, ii) the dependency on Russia in particular and iii) the EU's rather weak role as an actor on the global energy market. A sense of urgency is evoked by describing for example how the EU would otherwise remain at the "mercy of individual suppliers" and that the geopolitical situation on the eastern border makes "not doing anything/.../ simply not an option".

The role of Russia in the securitization discourse is prominent, with the situation in Ukraine being used by the Commission to paint a bleak picture of a hostile geopolitical context in order to mobilize support from the member states to cooperate further in the field of energy. The conflict is used to create a sense of urgency by presenting the scenario that the situation might escalate in a way that would further disrupt the delivery of gas to the EU, and that even if this particular conflict would be resolved, Russia has once again proved that it is not a reliable partner and that there is therefore a constant risk that energy will be treated as a political weapon rather than a commercial good also in the future. By singling out Russia as a specific threat and at the same time emphasising how 'energy security' is a shared problem that affects the Union as a whole, EU-level solutions are presented as the only effective way of balancing and facing this threat. This could be interpreted as an indication that the

Commission saw the conflict in Ukraine as a window of opportunity to push for further integration, as it once again put the question of energy as the top of political agendas across Europe (Tusk's article is an example of this). It is thus possible that the geopolitical situation provided a context that facilitated the securitization-move, which would explain why other authors have previously discovered a level of securitization from the Commission in relation to the previous gas-crises.

In relation to the solutions presented, it seems like the Commission has mainly used the 'securitization-strategy' to promote already existing policies. The sense of urgency and the existence of a threat to the security of supply are used to highlight the importance of compliance with and implementation of legislation already passed, but that certain member states have been slow to implement. Presenting this as solutions to a security threat might have the effect that it creates a greater interest amongst the member states that, for example, the internal energy market needs to be completed. This could result in some member states putting pressure on other member state to deliver better results on enforcement, as well as legitimating a greater influence for the Commission in its monitoring role. If this is considered to be a major development in terms of integration can however be discussed.

One novelty presented by the Commission that would without question result in deeper integration is the "possibility to explore common purchasing of gas". If the Commission succeeds in obtaining a prominent role in member states gas-negotiations with third parties (being informed at an early stage of negotiations, codifying the need to approve new contracts, demanding more transparency between the member states), this would be a major gain in competences for the EU-level in the field of energy. More transparency between the member states would also most likely facilitate future harmonizing of energy policies.

One could discuss the impact of the securitization of the supply of energy in relation to climate change ambitions. Securitizing the security of supply might result in a stronger emphasis of this dimension of energy security in relation to e.g. the transition to renewable technology, if this transition does not become a part of the securitization-discourse on energy. The analysis did however show that energy efficiency was promoted as a way of breaking the EU's import dependency, so maybe this is already happening. In that case, maybe securitizing a more 'climate-friendly' notion of energy security could be a way to promote the

decarbonizing of the EU economy? This is definitely a topic that should be explored by further research.

6.2 Conclusion

The Commission has acted as a securitizing agent to the extent that it has strived to securitize the supply of energy to the EU. The main threat identified is the import dependency, with an emphasis on the dependency on Russia. Many of the solutions put forward by the Commission in this discourse would to various degrees result in further integration of energy policies. This indicates that the Commission is using securitization as a strategy to promote EU-level solutions, which has been suggested by previous research. As the security of supply is the dimension of energy security that is securitized, further research should investigate how this might affect the relationship between energy and climate change policy (such as the promotion of renewable energy and energy efficiency).

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