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RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Emergence of a New Security Apparatus in Greece: The Securitization of the Migration/Refugee-Covid-19 Crises Nexus

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ABSTRACT: The aim of this article is to illustrate the securitization processes of the Covid-19 in Greece and the impetus they gave for the anew securitization of migrants and refugees. It is argued that their connectedness became feasible through their discursive presentation as a 'double crisis'. The central argument of this article is that two sub-components of the securitization of Covid-19 were also securitized, individuals and individual responsibility. The article hence posits the argument that these processes resulted in a quadruple securitization. More specifically, the discourse analysis conducted in speech acts of government and scientific actors reveals that migration and the refugee issue, Covid-19, individuals and individual responsibility are successfully securitized as there are all these elements articulated by the Copenhagen School – existential threats, securitizing actors, referent objects, emergency measures and audience acceptance – that make the securitization of each above issue successful. What is introduced and supported here, then, is that these securitization processes prompted the emergence of a new security apparatus in Greece.

KEYWORDS: Securitization of Migration, Securitization of Covid-19, Securitization of individuals, Securitization of individual responsibility, Security apparatus, Greece

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1. Introduction

December 2019 marked the moment when the word ‘coronavirus’ began to make its appearance in the news’ headlines. On December 31, the Chinese authorities notified the World Health Organization of the appearance of an unknown viral pneumonia in Wuhan, culminating in the World Health Organization declaring the 30th of January an international state of emergency, without, though, restricting international travel (World Health Organization 2020).

When Covid-19 made its appearance it transcended normal politics and had profound repercussions in all aspects of life, at a global, national and regional level. It altered the social, economic and political fabric of all humanity and became the departing point for setting in motion harsh controlling and policing mechanisms to serve referent objects such as individual and collective health and the overall well being of societies.

In the case of Greece, security was already a major concern when Covid-19 made its appearance, due to the migration refugee crisis that burst in the country in 2015. Much research has concentrated on the securitization of migration with empirical findings suggesting that both migration and the refugee crisis in Greece for the period 2011-2020 have been successfully securitized (Dimari 2020; Sabchev 2019). However, research on the securitization of pandemics, even though existent, is still nascent as far as Covid-19 is concerned, especially in the case of Greece. In addition the interplays of securitization processes among different issues, such as for instance migration and pandemics are not sufficiently explored, whereas they are almost absent in the Greek case, except for the research of Papadatos-Anagnostopoulos, Kourachanis and Makridou (2020). Last, even though international research has focused on the discursive construction of Covid-19 as a threat, individuals and individual responsibility are left aside in terms of the role assigned to them by political and scientific actors towards the ‘war’ against the virus.

The importance of departing points in securitization processes that lead to the anew securitizations of already securitized issues should not be overlooked, as these processes, can reveal interesting information on how the security political continuum is framed and then implemented at a range of instances. In addition, it is crucial to investigate sub or meta-components of securitization processes so as to decipher patterns that even though at a first glance might seem scattered, nevertheless, when put under a researcher’s microscope reveal a mosaic of security practices, characterized by different target groups, different discourse practices, different stances and different outcomes that constitute a security wholeness. Therefore, it is argued here, that more research is needed to address the afore mentioned research concerns.

This study, hence, constitutes a response to this need. This paper departs from the ascertainment that a new security *apparatus* emerged in Greece as a result of the “*double crisis*” (Message from the Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis to the citizens about the coronavirus 2020) of the migration/refugee issue and the Covid-19 crisis. It is then posited that this *apparatus* constitutes a construct that was generated by the securitization of migration and the refugee crisis in conjunction with the securitization of the Covid-19 or the so-called pandemic (Nunes 2020). Another contribution of this research is the identification of the emergence of two brand new security axes, two branches, sub or meta-components of the securitization of Covid-19, which fall into the theory of securitization as articulated by the Copenhagen School (Buzan, Wæver and De Wilde 1998). These are the securitization of individual people and the securitization of individual responsibility.

After critically applying the established theoretical framework of the Copenhagen School of Security to the case of Greece, the results cast some light on perplexed security processes, their evolution and their connectedness in the Greek case, while at the same time they contribute some preliminary findings to the growing strand of literature pertaining to securitization processes during a pandemic, to the way new securitization attempts respond to already established and drawn lines of securitization policies and to the

shaping of new knowledge regimes informed by major security concerns, articulated by political elite actors and mega-actors such as scientists.

2. Methodology

The ways of speaking do not neutrally reflect the world, identities and social relations of people but, rather, play an active role in their construction and change (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002). Hence, for the purposes of this article, discourse analysis is used, which, according to the Copenhagen School, is the obvious method to study both security and securitization (Buzan et al. 1998). Critical discourse analysis emphasizes the power behind speech and not just the power of speech *per se*, that is, it examines how people with power shape the order of speech as well as the social order in general (Van Dijk 2006). It also explores the means of defining the reality of socio-political challenges, including the spaces, goals and arguments that connect the two (Fairclough 2014). Hence, this paper aims to offer an overview of how the COVID-19 pandemic has been discursively constructed in discourses of politicians and the scientific community in the case of Greece. The central research hypothesis is the emergence of a ‘quadruple securitization’ and of a new security *apparatus* in Greece that interplay between the refugee/migration crisis and the pandemic. Thus, this paper aspires to investigate possible connections between the securitization of these two issues.

In this context, the analysis focuses on speech acts of political elite and scientific actors during the period under examination. The sources investigated were statements by high-ranking officials of the Greek government and accredited scientists who have had consultancy role during the first phase of the pandemic in Greece. Data were extracted via the internet using keywords such as the words Covid-19, health, individual responsibility and names of the respective political elite actors for the examination period, combined with words such as: threat, risk, security, health, public health.

The timeframe of the research is from 26.02.2020 - time when the first Covid-19 case in Greece was reported - to 15.06.2020, when borders reopened (first management phase in Greece). Discourse analysis was performed on 72 texts such as Messages of the Prime Minister and its cabinet, the scientific community and legal texts.

3. Securitization Theory Revisited

The theory of securitization is inextricably linked to the Copenhagen School of Security Studies, which is part of the post-positivist movement in international relations that gained ground after the end of the Cold War (Diskaya 2013). Its analysis of the concept of security is linked to the securitization theory formulated by Ole Wæver in 1995 and fully extended by Buzan et al. in 1998. In his original analysis, Wæver described security as a speech act, with securitization being the form of speech act that renders a particular issue to an existential threat (McDonald 2008). Buzan et al. (1998) argue that securitization is the process that moves politics beyond the established rules of the game and frames an issue either as a special one or as one that needs a different kind of approach. In short, securitization deals with who securitizes, on what issue, for whom, for what reason, with what results and under which conditions (Buzan et al. 1998). The Copenhagen School has introduced five sectors of security: military, political, economic, societal and environmental. Migration is studied in the context of the societal security sector, which revolves around culture and identity. According to Buzan et al. (1998), migration is one of the three perceived risks to societal security, which constitutes, in its turn, one of the five areas of security. In particular, as stated by Buzan et al. (1998), X people are flooded or reduced as a population by inflows of Y people. As a consequence the community X will no longer be what it used to be,

as there will be higher percentages of "others". The X identity begins to change due to the change in the composition of the population.

Other than migration, the pandemics are an issue that has been subjected to securitization processes at several instances and prior to the appearance of Covid-19. As Papadatos-Anagnostopoulos et al. (2020) argue, the tendency to deal with a public health crisis in terms of a security crisis precedes Covid-19. There have been recorded similar trends regarding the management of the outbreaks of influenza pandemic72 and H1N173. A key feature of these trends is the institutionalization of discrimination against parts of its general population, in the name of emergency, and in excess of the principle of proportionality. Indeed, life, in its biological aspect has been widely debated in scientific discussions pertaining to "biopolitical security technologies". According to Dillon (2008: 312), these technologies attempt to regulate the biological existence. The pandemic inflamed such discussions, bringing the issue of process in the securitization debate at the forefront. One notable example is Curley and Herington's (2011) study on the securitization of avian influenza in Vietnam and Indonesia, in which they investigate the influence of legitimacy, referents and audiences both on the external and internal reactions of states to such diseases, focusing, mainly in the interpretation of disease as a security threat. In the same vein, Kamradt-Scott and McInnes' (2012) seminal work on the securitization of the pandemic influenza, casts lights on the securitizing processes that political elite actors resort to and that impact public policy profoundly. Another important research on the issue is Stott, West and Harrison's (2020) who taking as their case study Hungary show how the "in the name of security" pretext can curtail the legitimate democratic *habitus*.¹

4. A Triple Securitization Process in Greece

4.1. Securitization of Covid-19

The first case of Covid-19 in Greece appeared the 26th February 2020. As soon as it made its appearance and after the confirmation of two more cases in Greece on February 27, 2020, the Greek government started taking measures, at local and later national level, in order to limit the spread of the pandemic (Prevention measures against coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 2020). This is a crucial point, as the situation in Greece is now beginning to leave the realm of normal politics. In addition, what is to become a public health crisis is dealt with in a security context.

A number of statements coming from political and scientific actors were full of securitizing speech acts unfolding a security logic that required extraordinary measures to manage the existential threat. Indicative is the statement of the representative of the Ministry of Health, Professor of Infectious Diseases Mr. Sotirios Tsiodras the 25th of February, where he stated that "*we are vigilant and do as much as possible so that we are not worried and to be prepared*". Moreover, he stressed that the virus poses a risk for the elderly and people with chronic health problems (Sotirios Tsiodras: "The coronavirus behaves like a pandemic", 2020), setting in motion a security discourse that would inevitably lead to excess measures. In addition the 5th of March during a briefing of accredited health authors of Greece Professor Tsiodras stated that "*it is very important, that we all understand that here we are united against a virus which is a new flu, it behaves like this, very similar to it and we must deal with it as much as we can*" (Briefing of accredited Health authors by the representative of the Ministry of Health for the new coronavirus Professor Sotiris Tsiodras 5 March 2020).

The above passages show that the Covid-19 *problematique* marks the implementation of new measures to deal with this phenomenon, while it is becoming the subject of political and scientific discussions, with the

¹ For *habitus* as such, see analytically Bourdieu 1990.

referent object being health, in terms of physical hypostasis. Indeed, the 11th of March when the Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis, addressed his first message to the Greek citizens about the coronavirus he stated that *“Our country, until today, has not been hit as much as others. But let us not have illusions: The hardest are yet to come. At this juncture, any complacency is unacceptable. That is why we preferred to take strict preventive measures in time, in order to limit the spread of the virus. And on this road we will continue”* (Message from the Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis to the citizens about the coronavirus 2020a).

So, the development of a security discourse and subsequent policies in the field of management of Covid-19 by the Greek government becomes visible and it shapes as an inevitable and necessary intervention in order to address the challenge of the pandemic.

The 17th of March, when the Greek Prime Minister addressed his second message to the public he repeatedly made use of a highly securitizing speech *repertoire* with references to the threat of the coronavirus and the danger it poses for health. The Prime Minister addressed from the beginning the *“threat of the coronavirus”* *“because as the pandemic continues to spread it causes thousands of deaths in many countries”*. Framing the issue in a war parallel the Prime Minister also stated that *“we are at war. With an enemy that is invisible but not invincible. Because if we succeed in limiting the spread of transmission, we will give the health system time to deal with emergencies. Our first priority is one and non-negotiable: To save lives. Our first concern is man and public health”* (Message from the Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis about the coronavirus 2020).

Securitizing speech acts are all over the above passage. Phrases such as *“we are at war”* *“With an enemy that is invisible but not invincible”*, *“threat”*, *“public health”*, *“thousands of deaths”* served as a legitimizing factor for the development of a restrictive policy which touched the very fundamental rights of the citizens of the Greek territory, such as the lockdown, the monitoring of everyday activities and the forbiddance of circulation.

As a matter of fact, as the situation climaxed and in order to deal with the crisis, the Greek Prime Minister addressed the public the 22th of March for the third time, in order to announce the general lockdown to shield public health. According to the Greek Prime Minister this was, *“perhaps, the last step of an organized Democratic State. Which, however, must be done in time, so as not to be in vain. Because time is no longer measured in days, but in hours. And bold and quick initiatives are needed. In addition, the Prime Minister stated that “According to the Constitution, the state must take care of the health of the citizens and intervene when the exercise of individual freedom exceeds its constitutional purpose and threatens society. And when one’s responsibility proves to be in deficit, then the public interest must be safeguarded. In the name of the collective good, then, I proceed to today’s decision: To protect our Health and all that we have achieved so far in this field”*. In his concluding remarks the Prime Minister stated that *“the Coronavirus does not distinguish between borders or nations, incomes or social groups. It threatens man, whoever he is, wherever he lives. Against him, we are all equal”* (Message of the Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis to the citizens 2020a).

In the above passage, despite the fact that a strong securitization language is used, the Greek Constitution is invoked in order for the Greek government to legitimize the restrictive measures in the conscience of the Greeks. This point of reference in the Constitution and the democratic principles that characterize it has been the main lever at a national level for the successful securitization of the pandemic. Thus, through the security dialectic, the extraordinary measures taken were presented as legal measures that Greece had to take at an individual and collective level of health, which according to the theory of securitization are the referent objects.

The securitization rhetoric by political elite actors and the scientific community kept taking place at the dawn of the general lockdown, prior to the return to normality. Indeed, in his message to the public for the return to normality the 13th of April, the Greek Prime Minister stated that *“the war has not yet been won. Cases are declining, as is the number of patients in the Intensive Care Unit. The slightest rest, however, can*

easily lead to a painful setback. In the time that has passed, we have had, and will continue to have, unfortunately, losses". In his concluding remarks, Kyriakos Mitsotakis, stated that the "*coronavirus does not distinguish between borders or nations, incomes or social groups. It threatens man, whoever he is, wherever he lives. Against him, we are all equal* (Message of the Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis to the citizens 2020b). In the same tone was also the message of the Prime Minister of Greece to citizens of the state the 28th of April where he stated that "*for months now, our country, but also the whole world, has been fighting a battle with an invisible and insidious enemy*" (Message from the Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis to the citizens about the plan for the gradual lifting of the restrictive measures 2020).

What then becomes clear from the above analysis is that through a security discursive strategy, with predication, argumentation, perspectivation and intensification (Wodak 2005) as its central elements, the use of that the pandemic has been framed as a threat to people's lives and to the regular functioning of Greece. Securitizing speech acts can be found all over the messages of the Greek Prime Minister as well as of statements of his government health consultant for the Covid-19, Professor Sotiris Tsiodras, who constitute the securitizing actors. The words "*war*", "*threat*", "*death*", "*stronghold of life*", "*crisis*", all constitute securitizing speech acts, with a referent object individual as well as and collective health.

4.2. Securitization of Individuals

Taking as a starting point the Copenhagen's School theory that securitization constitutes the procedure through which an issue is constructed as a threat to a referent object resulting to the adoption of emergency measures that surpass democratic procedures (Buzan et al. 1998; Aradau 2004), it can be argued that the securitization of individual people does exactly that. During the pandemic, individual people have been framed as a threat through speech acts of political elites, with the referent object being public health. This has led to the adoption of two (among many others) particular and highly debated emergency measures at a global and national level: lockdown and monitoring/surveillance of people's everyday activities.

Indeed, in the course of the pandemic management in Greece, references to individuals as possible transmitters of the disease are implicit in speech acts of political and scientific actors. That was the case from the beginning of the crisis, indicative of which is the statement by the Prime Minister that the state "*intervenes when the exercise of individual liberty goes beyond its constitutional purpose and threatens society*" (Message of the Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis to the citizens 2020a). In the same message, the Greek Prime Minister thanked the majority of the Greek citizens who understood the "*threat*" and stayed home as because, in his words, "*by deserting streets and squares, we banish danger*" (Message of the Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis to the citizens 2020a).

As can be seen from the above passage, the speech acts used by the Prime Minister are marked by words such as "*threat*" and "*individual freedom*". It is the government's firm position that the isolation of citizens at home strengthens public health. In fact, it is indirectly implied that the stay of citizens at home, leads to security, as isolation is the weapon against the common enemy, the disease, which at this point begins to be demonized, leading to a narrative that evil can only be embellished through the abstinent from social contact, as it poses a risk to public health. In this narrative, there begin to appear speech acts such as "*terror*" and "*evil*" demarcating a more harsh securitizing discourse, that preambles new measures for the management of the pandemic in Greece. Indicative here is the Message of the Prime Minister to the citizens, where he stated, that "*the arsenal of restraining measures the government can take is almost exhausted. Evil wants a ring next to it to spread. And this chain of terror can be broken if we take a step back. If we stay home, avoiding all unnecessary contact* (Message of the Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis to the citizens 2020c).

This passage is of particular significance, as the Prime Minister uses words that have very strong connotations. First of all, the word "evil", which is a concept that refers extensively to Greek religious texts, comes to be used at a time when reactions to the closure of churches in Greece are intense and create strong polarizations between science and religion. Thus, the use of this word touches upon the religious feeling of the citizens, as there is an identification between evil and the coronavirus, while, at the same time, it is a securitizing narrative which is addressed to a special portion of Greek citizens, those who put up resistance to the state measures, in tandem with their religious faith. At the same time, the expression "chain of terror" is noteworthy, as now, individual people are framed as chains of terror, in an effort of government to convince people to stay home.

Apart from the Prime Minister, the scientific community, however, had an active securitizing role in relation to the individuals as threats. One such example is the representative of the Ministry of Health for the new coronavirus Professor Sotiris Tsiodras who during an official briefing of accredited health authors made reference to the danger social interactions of individuals poses for public health. More specifically, he stated that "*the new pandemic represents the greatest threat to lives, livelihoods and economies since World War II. It is already rapidly reshaping societies and economies, changing the way people interact, the way they work, the daily routine of life. The risk is huge. Our will to limit the spread of the disease is clear. For this reason, we will not hesitate to proceed with measures of supra-local scope and power, where and if such unacceptable situations continue* [referring to social contact]" (Briefing of accredited health consultants by the Deputy Minister of Civil Protection and Crisis Management Nikos Hardalias and the representative of the Ministry of Health for the new coronavirus Professor Sotiris Tsiodras 2020).

At the same briefing, strict warnings and strong recommendations to those who blatantly "played" with public health were addressed by the Deputy Minister of Civil Protection and Crisis Management, Nikos Hardalias. Mr. Hardalias also stressed that "*it is a pity, again, some few to play with the effort of many. The virus is here, among us, and if some people do not care about the virus and our fellow citizens who are in danger, the Greek State should take measures.*" Mr. Hardalias made a strong recommendation of compliance and stressed that the control mechanisms of the state law enforcement were activated to safeguard public health. For the offenders, he reminded, there would be a fine and for the companies there would be in addition to the fine administrative sanctions, criminal sanctions for their owners (Briefing of accredited health consultants by the Deputy Minister of Civil Protection and Crisis Management Nikos Hardalias and the representative of the Ministry of Health for the new coronavirus Professor Sotiris Tsiodras 2020).

Securitization measures and practices are present throughout the above excerpt. Social contact is portrayed as a "threat" and a situation that needs to be addressed, with clear proposals and strategies. The way in which the crisis management process and its securitization are delivered to the field of security professionals is also visible (Bigo 2000). The pandemic is increasingly considered an emergency situation in which emergency measures must be taken. It is described (without this meaning that it is not) as a real threat and as a problem without a given solution and with unpredictable consequences for the future. Indeed, concluding his briefing, Mr. Hardalias underlined that a new daily life has started that may be different, but remains unprecedented and very fluid, and critical (Briefing of accredited health authors by the Deputy Minister of Civil Protection and Crisis Management Nikos Hardalias and the representative of the Ministry of Health for the new coronavirus, Professor Sotiris Tsiodras 5/5 2020).

Other than the above, the most important move towards the containment of Greek citizens and the dangers posed by individuals when they engage in social contact was the campaign launched by the Greek government and more specifically by the Ministry of Health titled "We Stay at Home" which, referring to a critical point pertaining to social contact of individuals, urged people to stay home in order to protect vulnerable groups of the population (We stay at home 2020).

From the above analysis, it is evident that securitization of individuals and their social contact is a new fact that the management of the pandemic has brought to security understandings in the Greek case. The existential threat, in this case, other than the Covid-19 virus, is the individual and its social contact, whereas the referent object is public health with an emphasis on vulnerable groups. The securitizing actors are political elite ones, such as the Prime Minister and the Deputy Minister for Civil Protection and Crisis Management and scientific ones, such as the representative of the Ministry of Health for the new coronavirus, Professor Sotiris Tsiodras. Discursive strategies employed, were also predication, argumentation, perspectivation and intensification (Wodak 2005). Emergency measures were adopted, which were institutionalized and there is also the acceptance of the public.

4.3. Securitization of Individual Responsibility

‘Responsibility’ is quite a common word in today’s daily life being commonly understood as accountability for one’s own actions. This is also its most ancient and general meaning, only formally defined in the contemporary age, by law, and therefore embracing a legal dimension that still prevails. It was just recently that the word “responsibility” gained a more precise moral dimension (Nenes 2015) during the pandemic, where it also, it is argued here, became securitized, as a sub component of the securitization of Covid-19. Indeed, Covid-19 brought the word ‘responsibility’ to the fore in its individual and social version. Infectious disease specialists and politicians have included it in their vocabulary, in order to awaken self-discipline so as to implement the measures taken by the government.

In the case of Greece early on March the individual responsibility and failure to act as such by citizens was demarcated as the most significant component for the individual and collective health and the overall well being of the Greek society. The first message of the Prime Minister to citizens already used a strong securitization language claiming that “*during crises we heard everywhere ‘where is the state’. Now we have not heard it and everyone must do what they can to not hear it. The state is all of us and we must each do what is due to us. Let us all put our backs to pass this crisis as painlessly as possible*” (Message from the Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis to the citizens about the coronavirus 2020). Thus, it becomes clear, that unless people behave responsibly, the “crisis” will impact all people, because of one person’s irresponsibility, whose implications of individual acts, would harm the overall good of the state.

The Hellenic National Bioethics Commission (2020: 3) also holds the position that the measures taken by the State alone are not enough to shield the public from the pandemic. More in particular, the Commission’s position on the significance of individual responsibility was harmonized with the Prime Minister’s above mentioned message. The Commission’s statement that “*whether these measures are recommendations to the general public or public obligations, the violation of which entails sanctions, the activation of their individual responsibility is a critical condition for the results that the State has taken to serve the public health interest*” suggests that the emergency measures taken by the Greek state are fully dependent on the actual behavior of each and every one Greek citizen respectively.

In general, the issue of individual responsibility was a card played by the Prime Minister during almost all his messages to Greek citizens. Indicative is his statement that “*since we don’t have professional obligations, we do not circulate! We stay at home and read, listen to music, watch movies, communicate with our own, those we love. And in any case we avoid gatherings*” and that “*it is up to all of us and our behavior, ultimately, whether the government needs to take even more drastic traffic control measures*” (Message of the Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis to the citizens 2020c). Yet, the most significant reference to the danger posed by the lack of individual responsibility was made during a message by Kyriakos Mitsotakis where he explicitly

stated, using once again a war metaphor, that “*the greatest weapon against the invisible enemy is our personal behavior*” (Message of the Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis to the citizens 2020a). The same war discourse was used during the message from the Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis to the citizens for the national anniversary of March 25 where he stated that “*the enemy, now, is the pandemic. The patriotism of responsibility is judged on this front*” (Message from the Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis for the national anniversary of March 25 2020). Moreover, concluding his message Kyriakos Mitsotakis stated that “*the care of the State is addressed to every citizen. And he, in turn, takes his own share of the offer. This is the other side of our power in the war against the common threat*” (ibid). These passages, suggest that with the pandemic the terms of the conflict have changed. The enemy is no longer visible, it has no face, shape, name or will. On one side, there is the individual alone and in front of him an impersonal and invisible something, which exists to destroy humanity. The individual, omnipotent in the democracies of the western world, realizes that in order to maintain his power he must suspend elements of his omnipotence, his personal liberties through the faucet of individual responsibility.

Other than the Prime Minister though, the scientific community also securitized individual responsibility. An indicative statement was made by Professor Sotiris Tsiodras during an official briefing of accredited health authors where he stated that “*the burden from the beginning was on the citizen. And we understand and feel this. The weight was on all of us, nothing changes now*” (Briefing of accredited health consultants by the Deputy Minister of Civil Protection and Crisis Management Nikos Hardalias, the representative of the Ministry of Health for the new coronavirus, Professor Sotiris Tsiodras and the Minister of Education and Religions Niki Kerameos 2020).

It seems therefore, that Greece’s management of the first phase of the Covid-19 is characterized by “the governing of conduct and individual responsabilisation” (Nygren and Oloffson 2020: 3), implying, in many ways that failure of citizens to engage in a conduct of individual responsibility constitutes a threat for the common good. In this context, the individual responsibility for the faithful implementation of the measures is invoked in every way, with the same discursive strategies used to frame Covid-19 and individuals as threats. What is implied in governmental and scientific speech acts is that self-restraint is an act of responsibility both to oneself and to one’s fellow man. When individual responsibility is absent, a third party, the state in this case, is forced to enforce this behavior. Non-restraint imposes measures of deprivation of liberty. Therefore, it is implied that if individuals want to be both healthy and free, they should exercise individual responsibility as irrational behavior and exposure to risk actually endangers, in addition to oneself, the corresponding human chain cycles.

6. ReVitalizing Securitization of Migrants and Refugees in Greece

This situation could not have left refugees in Greece intact. Even before the pandemic, health related issues pertaining to refugees were a hot debated issue in the Greek public and political discourse (Dimari 2020). In the course of the refugee crisis in Greece there have taken place several speech acts from political elites that depicted refugees as possible transmitters of diseases, resulting in harsh political responses towards them (Dimari 2020). Indeed, the refugee crisis of 2015 sparked a new momentum in the country’s migration policy making. According to international research (Karyotis 2012; Kalantzi 2017; Lazaridis and Skleparis 2015) migration in Greece was already securitized when the refugee crisis burst in 2015. What is novel though, in the Greek case, is that the refugee crisis was successfully securitized as well, appropriated through speech acts and practices at the same time (Dimari 2020). So, the appearance of the Covid-19 disease added significantly

to this situation. Indeed, the escalation of Covid-19 cases in Greece was linked with the arrivals of refugees in the Evros February crisis (see Papadakis 2021).

In his first message to the citizens about the coronavirus, Kyriakos Mitsotakis, among others stated that he was faced with a big “*double crisis*” adding to it that the government is “*successfully tackling the asymmetric threat of migration*”. The Prime Minister also stated that the “*coronavirus health threat*” would be repelled in the way the migration issue at the Greek borders was handled in February (Message from the Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis to the citizens about the coronavirus, 2020). In the same tone was Kyriakos Mitsotaki’s message the 20th of May where he put the management of Covid-19 in the same security *continuum* as the “*migration storm*” (Announcements by Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis on measures to support employment, the economy and tourism 2020). The position that Greece underwent a double threat was also held by the Greek Minister of Health Vasilis Kikilias who stated that “*Evros faces two crises together*” (Statement by the Minister of Health Vassilis Kikilias after his visit to the General Hospital of Alexandroupolis 2020).

In this context, in the period between 2.3.2020 to 14.4.2020 there were taken twelve emergency measures, either institutionalized or not, in order to tackle the spread of the disease both in RICs as well as in the Greek territory (Papadatos-Anagnostopoulos et al. 2020), the most notable ones being the suspension of the asylum applications, the second of March 2020, and the so-called Agnodiki Plan.

Prior to the suspension of the asylum application the Greek Government’s spokesman Stelios Petsas stated that “*In recent days, Greece is receiving sudden, massive, organized and coordinated pressure from population movements to its eastern, land and sea borders. This move is directed and encouraged by Turkey. These actions are in breach of the obligations arising from the European Union - Turkey Joint Declaration*” (Statement by Government Spokesman Stelios Petsas on the decisions of the Government Council of National Security, 2020). As such, the legislative act for the suspension of the application of asylum referred to the “*extremely urgent and unpredictable need to tackle the asymmetric threat to national security*” (Statement by Government Spokesman Stelios Petsas on the decisions of the Government Council of National Security 2020), citing Article 78 (3) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU), pertaining to persons entering the country illegally, despite the UNHCR’s (2020) statement that:

«*Neither the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees nor EU refugee law provides any legal basis for the suspension of the reception of asylum applications. Article 78(3) of the Treaty of the Functioning of the EU (TFEU) has been evoked by the Greek Government in this regard, however this provision allows for provisional measures to be adopted by the Council, on a proposal from the Commission and in consultation with the European Parliament, in the event that one or more Member States are confronted by an emergency situation characterized by a sudden inflow of third country nationals while it cannot suspend the internationally recognized right to seek asylum and the principle of non-refoulement that are also emphasized in EU law. Persons entering irregularly on the territory of a State should also not be punished if they present themselves without delay to the authorities to seek asylum*» (UNHCR 2020).

As far as the Agnodiki Plan is concerned, the Ministry of Immigration and Asylum of Greece, created this operational plan to deal with the spread of the coronavirus in reception and hospitality structures of third country nationals. The plan was introduced in the Unified Government Policy Plan 2021, in which the justification for the Agnodiki Plan was related to the broader policy of the Ministry pertaining to the control of migration flows through the optimal implementation of asylum and return procedures, while substantially reducing the impact of the crisis on local communities. Therefore the Agnodiki Plan was part of the Ministry’s goal to adopt a policy that enhances border protection, speeds up asylum procedures and provides for a clear separation of refugees from economic migrants tackling, at the same time, the spread of coronavirus in reception and hospitality facilities for third-country nationals. This project also aimed at decongesting and

strengthening local health care facilities, as well as at expanding quarantine facilities in structures (Unified Government Policy Plan 2021, 2020).

The Agnodiki Plan includes various levels of escalation, depending on the risk assessment (Papadatos-Anagnostopoulos et al. 2020). It was activated for the first time on March 23 and concerned exclusively the Reception and Identification Centers of the islands. Its full implementation was completed on March 24 (Ministry of Migration and Asylum, General Secretariat of Asylum Seekers Reception 2020). What is striking though about this plan is its preventive nature, as it set in motion a preventive lockdown which was implemented without any case of Covid-19 in RICs. As a consequence it did not take into consideration the social distancing premise upon which the argument for the lockdown was founded (Papadatos-Anagnostopoulos et al. 2020).

From the above analysis, it is concluded that there was breadth of legislative and non legislative actions implemented for the management of the Covid-19 situation in Greece in relation to migrants and refugees, indicative of the divisive line drawn in relation to their treatment. More specifically, the above measures are characterized by a divisive element that marks a differentiation of policy making towards refugees in relation to Greek citizens (Fouskas 2020). Indeed, despite the fact that during the pandemic crisis of Covid-19, there were international recommendations for the decongestion of refugee camps and the transportation of refugees in the mainland of Greece (IOM 2020) on the contrary, the Greek Government implemented a more severe confinement of refugees in camps in overcrowding conditions (Papadatos-Anagnostopoulos et al. 2020). Asylum procedures were suspended and the restriction of movement for refugees was set in force prior to the restriction of movement for Greek citizens. In addition, the postponement of the monthly payment of refugees and migrants by the UN High Commissioner, until the placement of ATMs in the camps, was a severe measure as it deprived the already vulnerable groups from income sources, living them at limbo (Ibid). What is striking, is that the Minister of Immigration and Asylum himself (Notis Mitarakis) admitted that the measures taken in camps and for the general refugee population were stricter from the general measures that were taken for the Greek citizens (The measures we took in the structures were stricter than the general measures for protection against the coronavirus 2020).

Thus, it becomes conspicuous that the divisive line of “us” against “others” is not only played in public discourses, with discursive strategies such as referential nomination, predication, argumentation, perspectivation and intensification (Wodak 2005). It also becomes a political tool at the disposal of the new security *apparatus* that emerged in Greece during the Covid-19 crisis. Greece begins to evolve in an institutionalized way into a “Fortress” Greece that ceases to attract people who are looking for better living conditions, constructing thus a minefield of prejudices which in turn exacerbates racism and xenophobia. Second, these new measures subject refugees and migrants to *a priori* disciplinary - punitive regimes of surveillance and repression of their rights and leave them exposed to what the French academic Didier Bigo (2008) referred to as the “Ban-Opticon”. In fact, Greece, adopting, in the midst of a pandemic, policies marked by divisive lines, was negatively commented by the European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE), which stated that “*in Greece, the virus is being used to justify new restrictive measures and proposals relating to the situation at its border, such as expanding detention, despite there being no public health grounds for linking the management of the virus and these proposals*” (ECRE 2020). In addition, the Council of Europe’s Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) in its report pertaining to findings from its ad hoc visit to Greece (13 to 17 March 2020) stated that despite acknowledging the significant challenges faced by the Greek authorities in dealing with large numbers of migrants, however, this cannot absolve the Greek State from their human rights obligations and the duty of care owed to all migrants that the Greek authorities detain, which, according to the report are severely violated (Council of Europe 2020).

7. Discussion

The discourse analysis in speech acts of political and scientific Greek actors reveals a successful and multiple-front securitization –which has all these elements required to make it successful: speech acts from political elites, existential threats, referent objects, emergency measures and audience acceptance. In this case, the political elite actors are government officials and the scientific community. A very important finding is that while the scientific community hardly shapes the public debate on immigration issues, it is not the same case concerning those of health. What does this mean given the fact that two different crises share common characteristics from a securitization point of view? This means that when a group is already constructed and categorized as “other”, “foreign”, “alien” and “dangerous” to the public consciousness, it is easier for political elite actors to re-categorize and re-appropriate it according to the position they believe this group has in the overall security policy spectrum, in a “*hazardous play of dominations* (Foucault in Neal 2006, 31-46) and by mobilizing certain categories of securitizing actors in their quest for the justification of excess measures. There are two threats, the migration/refugee issue and Covid-19, with sub-components of Covid-19 being individuals and individual responsibility, three referent objects, that is individual and collective health and the overall society well being, and overall, during the period under examination, there were taken approximately 40 measures (each one including various sub-measures), the most significant of which revolve around the closure of borders and suspension of connections with other countries, the suspension of operation of businesses and workplaces, the suspension of operation of educational units and institutions, the suspension of religious events, the ban of circulation and the general lockdown (Prevention measures against coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 2020).

A first reading of measures taken suggests that the fundamental driver of political responses in Greece has been the emerging and evolving context of highly securitized measures, involving new laws and subsequent major transformations in the relevant regulatory framework, allowing for unprecedented constraints of democratic freedoms in tandem with increased police control and enforcement. In other words, in the case of Greece the pandemic has reinforced a trend that has been evident for years: security being put at the top of the national political agenda leading to institutionalized securitization practices. As far as audience acceptance is concerned, during the period under examination, it became an implicit given, due to the justification strategies of political elite actors which alluded to protection and perseverance of life in its biological form.²

Therefore, it is concluded that the process of securitization for the period under consideration fully complies with the theory of the Copenhagen School, which sets specific criteria in order for the securitization process to be considered successful. Even further, a quadruple securitization is observed in the Greek case: the securitization of Covid-19 with health being the referent object, the securitization of individuals with public health as its referent object and the securitization of individual responsibility with the overall common good being its referent object respectively. Adding this new security political reality to the securitization of migration and the refugee issue, it can be argued that a new security *apparatus* has emerged in Greece, driven by multiple security concerns of political elite actors, with policies adapted differently to different groups, to serve different political interests. In the case of migrants, this reflects how easily vulnerable groups can be subjected to exclusionary politics that result from successful securitization processes that draw from an already established securitization *apparatus*. Hence, this article posits the view that the outbreak of the pandemic in Greece exacerbated the precarious position of these vulnerable groups and at the same time inflamed the political discussions that presented the refugee crisis as one of the greatest challenges in modern European

² Nevertheless, a further research question would be to unpack audience acceptance processes. This would be interesting given the fact that in the securitization field, audience acceptable is a quite under-researched issue.

history, clearly stating that actions to address this challenge would be proportionate (Speech by Prime Minister A. Tsipras during the reading of the government's program statements 2015). The focus or, *verbis alteris*, the referent objects of the threat-discourses on the refugee/migration issue, pertained to the preservation of public order, internal stability and to the crucial aspect of identity. In addition, during the refugee/migration crisis that burst in Greece in 2015, the articulation of a political discourse that constructed refugees and migrants as possible transmitters of diseases was a reality (Dimari 2020). The focus of the new securitization discourse entails the former, with the addition of a new ingredient: the preservation of life in its biological form. In Dillon's (2008, 324) words "*that is how the order of things has become the order of risk, and how risk has become the rule for the conduct of conduct in a new governmental order of securitizing*".

What is notable in the case of Greece, though, is the emergence of two brand new security axes, or sub-sections of the securitization of Covid-19, which fall into the theory of securitization as framed by the Copenhagen School (Buzan, Wæver and De Wilde 1998). That is the securitization of individuals and individual responsibility.

Indeed, the shift of the notion of security and its adaptation to the new global reality of the pandemics in the Greek context is groundbreaking, in terms of security policy formulation. Whereas the Copenhagen School has developed a five sector framework for its securitization theory (Buzan et al. 1998), during the pandemic, individual and public health, as a separate sector, became a distinct and prominently featured sector of securitization. In other words, the referent object is not any more political, military, societal, economic or environmental. It is individual health, in a Hobbesian sense, public health and the overall state well being.

A prominent characteristic of this new security *apparatus* pertains to its theoretical departure from the Aberystwyth School of Security, whose central argument is founded on the premise that emancipation is security and vice versa. More specifically the Aberystwyth School holds the state responsible for insecurities people deal with, asserting that the state is the real threat for individuals (Booth 1991). On the contrary, the new security *apparatus* is driven by the argument that individual people are the threat to individual peoples' lives; it is also driven by the argument that lack of individual responsibility constitutes a threat to the overall well being of Greek citizens.

Thus, from a theoretical standpoint, this new *apparatus* of security, despite the fact that interrelates with both theoretical frameworks of Copenhagen and Aberystwyth Schools of Security, marks a new era in security understandings as it produces new knowledge through the implementation of emergency policies to new types of "surface" threats, such as the Covid-19, at the bottom of which though, lie deeper constructed ones, that is individuals and individual responsibility. In other words, there is a shift of state generated security threats to individual human ones.

8. Conclusions

This article set out to investigate whether Covid-19 has been a pretext to further securitize policies and whether it has fostered the emergency of "a new security *apparatus*" in the Greek case. More particularly, this article, taking as starting point that securitizing moves towards migrants and refugees had been successfully consolidated by the time the Covid-19 pandemic arrived in Greece, posits that the arrival of the disease resurfaced extant divisions and culminated in the anew securitization of refugees as a result of their discursive connectedness as threats. Thus, this article showcased how existing successful securitized issues, when discursively intertwined with new security framings could set in motion new security *apparatuses* that, when appropriated, could stretch the democratic *acquis* of a state.

The dominant theory of securitization as articulated by the Copenhagen School of security was employed to define securitization and the process that underpins it. The *foci* was the societal sector, which is the axis used to study migration. In addition, the securitization of the pandemics was also presented, identifying past instances of securitization of diseases and their underlying processes. Even though the referent objects are different in the securitization of migration and the securitization of the pandemics respectively, one convergence point is the process that underpins both which is constitutive of successful framings of security as regards particular issues. In the case of Greece though, there seems to be a striking and unique phenomenon: the securitization of migration and the refugee crisis in conjunction with the securitization of the Covid-19 gave rise to a consolidated quadruple securitization, as an outcome of two brand new security axes, two branches or sub-sections of the securitization of Covid-19, which fall into the theory of securitization as articulated by the Copenhagen School (Buzan et al. 1998). These are the securitization of individual people and the securitization of individual responsibility.

By using a discourse analysis in 72 official statements by high ranking officials of the current Greek government as well as scientific actors during the period from 26.02.2020 to 15.06.2020, this article identified discursive strategies employed by securitizing actors, such as legitimization in political speech “*enacted by argumentation in form of reasoning and through presented explanations seeking approval of social actions, ideas, thoughts and declarations*” (Reyes 2011: 782) and security discourse entailing referential nomination, predication, argumentation, perspectivation and intensification alluding to war, evil, enemy and other significant metaphors. The focus was from the one hand on speech acts pertaining to Covid-19, while breaking it to two further sub-components, namely individuals and individual responsibility. From the other hand, speech acts were examined focusing on the bounding of migrants and refugees as an already constructed threat which was discursively inflamed through the appearance of Covid-19. The results of the discourse analysis reveal a successful quadruple securitization which has all these elements required to make it successful: existential threats, securitizing actors, referent objects, emergency measures and audience acceptance.

These findings inevitably lead to the question of how the Greek government in its security readings could formulate policies that do not bend or stretch fundamental democratic principles and human rights in expense of existential threats. In other words, and given the fact that currently, there seems to take place an increased polarization and dissatisfaction from the Greek public opinion pertaining to persistent lockdowns and circulation banning, there is raised the question of how to do security policy taking into consideration that there is indeed a ‘boiling point’ of peoples’ acceptance of rights deprivation. It is widely accepted that the securitization of issues is not an optimum solution as it gives ground to excess measures that shift the focus from civil society to intelligence and military agencies, undermining personal freedoms (Rolland, 2020). Adding to this discrimination policies against marginalized groups, whether imprisoned or in welfare structures or immigrants / refugees, poses a threat to the health of the entire population. And this is so, because as it has become obvious, the pandemic, in the Greek case, strikes differently the already established inequalities. As Byaruhanga (2020: 95), asserts “*the pandemic has ushered in alternative securitization measures that would cause a shift in migration and security discourse from human-to-human aggression, notably terrorism, to the contagion of the pathogens like the coronavirus.*”

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