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Abstract

The ubiquity of resilience – the process of patterned adjustments adopted by a society or an individual in the face of endogenous or exogenous shocks – across the broad social sciences spectrum is undisputable. Yet, migration scholars have been relatively absent from this vibrant discussion. The present article suggests a theorization of the link between migration, resilience, and security by examining ways in which resilience precedes a socially constructed understanding of international migration as a security issue. The article explores how the surge in worldwide refugee numbers and associated mass migration phenomena were not only interpreted as a shock in post-Cold War France, but also instrumentalised by dominant discourses to underscore the necessity of adopting a particular pattern of adjustments to uphold the status quo against changes provoked by these migratory events. The social construction of refugee movements and mass migration as a significant disturbance requiring France to opt for a resilient strategy has led, ultimately, to the securitization of migration. In a broader sense, the article presents a new lens through which to analyze situations and conditions in which resilience has led to and induced the securitization of migration.

Keywords

Migration, Resilience; Security; Refugee; Politics; France; *Charlie Hebdo*; Discourses;

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Introduction

The ubiquity of resilience – the process of patterned adjustments adopted by a society or an individual in the face of endogenous or exogenous shocks – across the broad social sciences spectrum is undisputable. Psychologists, criminologists, and social workers are all participating in multifaceted debates about resilience; various arguments, factors, rationales and explicantia have been offered to better understand this concept.

A keen interest in resilience is also found in migration studies. In the *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Christian Karner and David Parker (2011) superbly document the critical role of resilience in the peaceful relationship among ethnic communities in the Alum Rock area of Birmingham, UK, and Bogdan Voicu and Mircea Comşa (2014) discuss resilience in the context of immigrants' political mobilisation and voting intentions in the EU. Similarly, references to resilience have been made in terms of the resilience of immigrant women in overcoming challenges faced during their resettlement process in Canada (Rashid and Gregory 2014), of local family capacity to cope with vulnerability and poverty because of the remittances sent back home by migrants family members (Julca 2011), and in terms of migrants capacity to adapt in the face of environmental and climate change (Renaud, Dun *et al.* 2011). While this scholarship has opened up a convincing space for underscoring the relevance of resilience in migration studies, these studies have not sought to unpack or theorise the concept. This is not an oversight; they are simply asking a different set of questions.

In the field of security studies, the concept of resilience is often understood as a viable strategy for contesting a securitized situation that is deemed inappropriate. The securitization of an issue is then seen as the disturbance or the shock in the face of which

a resilient strategy is deployed in order to challenge, counter, and debunk the dominant security-attuned reading of the issue at hand (Balzacq 2015). In short, the security studies literature operates on the assumption that resilience processes occur after – or in response to – security.

The overarching objective of this article is to tell a different sociopolitical story of the connections between international migration, resilience, and security. I do not rebut the proposition that resilience plays a role in fostering peaceful relationships among ethnic communities, nor do I disagree with the argument that resilience is a useful strategy for contestation once an issue has been securitized. Rather, I argue that what is needed now is to pull the pieces together and to suggest a broader theorization of the link between migration, resilience, and security. In particular, I examine ways in which resilience has preceded a socially constructed understanding of international migration as a security issue. In other words, I propose to analyze situations and conditions in which resilience has led to and induced the securitization of migration.

The body of this article will proceed as follows. The first section offers a critical overview of the triangular relationship among migration, resilience, and security, and lays out the argument that resilience induces the securitization of migration. In the second section, I illustrate the preceding set of arguments through an analysis of the social construction of international migration as a security threat in France in the early 1990s. The concluding remarks bring out the original contributions of the article and offer a brief discussion of the recent attacks on the satirical magazine *Charlie Hedbo* in order to highlight the relevance of studying the interaction between migration, resilience and security.

The missing arrow

Few issues have had a greater impact on contemporary world politics and societies than has international migration. It is unsurprising, then, that the last two decades have seen the publication of numerous scholarly works tackling the interconnection of migration and world politics. Scholars have studied the role of migration in foreign policy (Bourbeau 2002, Shain and Barth 2003), in the political economy of remittances (Levitt and Lamba-Nieves 2011) and in globalization and international political order (Castles and Miller 2009).

A dynamic strand of migration studies has focused its attention on the issue of migration stock and associated questions of integration, multiculturalism, and citizenship (Bloemraad 2006, Brubaker 1992, Ellermann 2010, Favell and Hansen 2002). For example, Christian Joppke (2004) has spoken about “the retreat of multiculturalism” and Rogers Brubaker (2001) has proclaimed “the return of assimilation” in comparative immigration policies, while David Ley (2010) has sought to defend multiculturalism during these troubled times for multicultural policies. Heated debates about citizens’ rights to wear a face veil (*niqab*) in public schools and state institutions spread from France to other European countries in the early 1990s (Feldblum 1993, Kastoryano 2002, Meer, Dwyer *et al.* 2010, Schnapper 1994, Weil and Crowley 1994, Withol de Wenden 1998). While it acknowledges the importance of these contributions, this article does not focus on the socio-political architecture put in place to deal with migration stock and diversity, but limits its scope to examining how host societies deal with the arrivals of migrants. In other words, this article concentrates on the reactions and responses that new

inflows of migrants inspire even before questions of integration, assimilation and multiculturalism arise.

Another large (and equally active) facet of the migration literature tackles the issue of state control (or lack thereof) of migration inflow. Some scholars have questioned whether states have ever had control over the movement of people (Favell and Hansen 2002); others have studied the impact of European integration on member states' capacity to control their borders (Guiraudon and Lahav 2000, Lavenex 2006, Thielemann 2005); still others have investigated the increased use of Information and Communication Technologies for border control purposes (Broeders and Hampshire 2013). Some studies contend that the most important question is why states were accepting immigrants in the first place; such contentions have led to one of the most debated hypothesis in migration studies: the gap hypothesis (Cornelius, Martin *et al.* 2004, Freeman 2006, Joppke 1998, Statham and Geddes 2006). Still others have investigated the role of international organisation (Koch 2014) or civil society in these issues (Gleeson 2014). While this scholarship has opened up a convincing space for underscoring the relevance of international migration in world politics, no studies to date have sought to unpack the relationship between migration and security, let alone incorporated a theorisation of resilience into these processes.

Closer to the focus of this article, several scholars have underscored the interconnection between security practices and human rights considerations, and the negative consequences for migrants of the securitisation of migration (Faist 2002, Freedman 2004). Khalid Koser examines the impact of the 2008 financial crisis in conjunction with the securitization of migration in Europe and concludes that the human security of

migrants is significantly at risk; he notes that migrants face growing unemployment, deteriorating working conditions, and increased poverty (Koser 2011). Georgios Karyotis (2011) analyses the consequence of the securitisation of migration in terms of the hidden costs for the host society. Others have assessed how the neoliberal mode of governance-through-security is forcing scholars to study the biopolitics of citizenship (Nyers 2009). Still others have shown that the post-9/11 intensification of concerns about migration and security has slowed down the pace of advancement toward a common EU immigration and asylum policies (Luedtke 2011).

Many others have focused their attention on the *process* of securitizing migration. Employing a Foucaultian/Bourdieuian approach, Didier Bigo (2002) argues that security professionals include migration within security frameworks as part of a larger neoliberal governmentality strategy of social control. Several scholars have highlighted the culpability of the media in the ongoing securitisation of migration. Anastasia Tsoukala (2011), examining media output in France and Greece in the late 2000s, claims that media agents actively formulated security discourses premised on the notion that immigrants threaten socio-collective identity. In sharp contrast, James Hampshire (2011), focusing on political elite discourse, contends that government-led securitisation has indeed occurred in Britain since the attacks of September 11, and that this securitisation has been used to legitimise extraordinary policies, especially in the fields of asylum and migrant rights. In my comparative analysis of Canada and France, I outline the fundamental role played by security practices and contextual factors, underscoring the pattern of engagements of several political and media agents with the securitization of migration (2011). In the same lineage, Ariane Chebel d'Appollonia (2012) demonstrates

that although US elite (and popular) discourses linking migration with security predate September 11, 2001, the terrorist attacks nevertheless considerably transformed the security landscape by breaking down the frontiers of fears and provoking a “security escalation.”

These contributions provide us with sophisticated explanatory models of the securitization “moment” and of the consequences of an already established securitization of migration. Their focus on security is either its present tense (who are the main agents involved?) or in its future tense (what are the consequences for the migrants and for society?). However, these studies are relatively silent on the process leading up to securitization. My objective in this article is to redirect the conversation away from the securitization “moment” to the course of action leading to security. In other words, I want to examine what happens *before* migration is securitized.¹

If migration is a major theme in academia and beyond, resilience, too, is a concept that cut across several disciplines. Psychologists, criminologists, social workers, and ecologists are all participating in multifaceted debates about resilience. In recent decades, two disciplines have been particularly keen to engage with the world through the analytical lens of resilience. Psychologists were among the first scholars to seek to identify the dispositional qualities that allow an individual to recover from or adjust easily to misfortune, adversity, unease, conflict, failure, and/or change (Garmezy 1974, Seery, Holman *et al.* 2010). Biologists/ecologists have also been deeply involved in the

¹ The question of whether migration is actually securitized is an important one. Elsewhere, I have provided a set of indicators to better understand the extent to which migration is incorporated into security frameworks or not, and I have shown that migration is securitized in Canada and France (Bourbeau 2011, Ch.2). On this question, compare Hampshire (2011), Neal (2009), and Boswell (2007).

study of resilience, albeit from a different angle. Researchers in this vein have focused their investigations on three points: (i) the question of persistence and change in natural ecosystems; (ii) the conditions specifying the maximum displacement a system can suffer while still being able to return to equilibrium once a disturbance has passed; (iii) the opportunities for re-organization and recombination that emerge from exposure to disturbances (Berkes, Colding *et al.* 2003, Folke 2006).

Migration scholars have also participated in this debate. References to this topic have been made in terms of the resilience of immigrant women in overcoming challenges faced during their resettlement process in Canada (Rashid and Gregory 2014), of the resilience of migrant workers in China and in Philippines (van der Ham, Ujano-Batangan *et al.* 2014, Wong and Song 2008), of local families' capacity to cope with vulnerability and poverty through the remittances sent back home by migrants family members (Julca 2011), and of migrants' capacity to adapt to environmental and climate change (Renaud, Dun *et al.* 2011). In the *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Karner and Parker (2011) and Voicu and Comşa (2014) contend, respectively, that resilience is a critical factor in the peaceful relationship among ethnic communities in the Alum Rock area of Birmingham, UK, and that resilience can go a long way to explaining immigrants' willingness to vote in the European context. Yet, even though these articles constitute trailblazing efforts in "importing" the concept of resilience into migration and ethnic studies, they have not sought to offer a theorization of either resilience or the relationship between resilience and migration. This is not an oversight; these studies are simply asking a different set of questions.

Although a latecomer to the field, political science has recently started to tackle the concept of resilience. In mapping International Relations scholars who have employed resilience I define resilience as the process of patterned adjustments adopted by a society or an individual in the face of endogenous or exogenous shocks. I highlight the dark and bright sides of resilience when applied to world politics and I argue that while resilience may be in some instances a neoliberal device for governance it has a wider range of meanings as well (Bourbeau 2013, 2015). Some critical theorists (bracketing or politely neglecting the positive aspect of resilience) have put the emphasis on the dark side of resilience arguing that resilience is a “neoliberal rationality of governance” that places the burden of responsibility on the individual rather than on social institutions (Joseph 2013), and a powerful strategy for creating “contemporary regimes of power which hallmark vast inequalities in all human classifications” (Evans and Reid 2013: 10). In sharp contrast, other scholars have focused on the bright side of resilience contending that building resilient local communities is one of the best ways to reduce violence against civilians in contemporary war zones and to deal with the challenges provoked by neoliberalism for social, economic, and political life (Hall and Lamont 2013, Williams 2013).

In security studies, resilience is frequently understood as a viable strategy for contesting a securitized situation that is deemed inappropriate. In this context, the securitization of an issue itself constitutes a disturbance in the face of which a resilient strategy is deployed in order to challenge, counter, and debunk the dominant security-attuned reading of the issue at hand. The collective strategy is not to take the issue out of the security realm (i.e., to de-securitize it) but rather to build social and community resilience in the face of an

increasingly securitized world. Cases of pandemic scares and of conflicts and chronic violence have been investigated in an effort to better understand the role played by resilience as a vector of contestation (Aaltola 2015, Davis 2012).

However, it is important that we also consider the role of resilience as a *precursor* to security – that is, as a process leading to and inducing security. My distinction between three types of resilience — resilience as maintenance, resilience as marginality, and resilience as renewal is useful here (Bourbeau 2013).² Resilience as maintenance suggests one avenue by which resilience can induce the securitization of migration. Resilience as maintenance is characterized by an adaptation in which resources and energy are expended to maintain the status quo in the face of an exogenous shock. Re-affirmation of the value and merit of the status quo will be made repeatedly. A society relying on this type of resilience will deal with endogenous/exogenous shocks with rigidity and anxiety. A resilience-as-maintenance strategy, which aims at protecting the social cohesion of a society, will underscore the negative transformative consequences that are brought about by shocks. This inward-looking strategy gives agents the opportunity, if they are so inclined, to present a novel disturbance as a security threat that requires a strong and immediate response. Resilience as maintenance speaks to the idea of protecting a society's 'way of life' and this objective is made possible by the enactment of security policies.

² Resilience as renewal implies introducing novel vectors of response that will (in an implicit or explicit way) fundamentally change existing policies and set new directions for governance in this field. Redefinitions, however, do not take place in a vacuum but draw on past experiences, collective memory and social history, as well as the windows of opportunity upon which agential powers decide to act (or not). Resilience as marginality is characterized by responses that bring changes at the margins but that do not challenge the basis of a policy (or a society).

Most studies of resilience start with the identification of what is sometimes called a “critical juncture”. Commonly defined as “choice points that put countries (or other units) onto paths of development that track certain outcomes – as opposed to others – and that cannot be easily broken or reversed” (Mahoney 2001: 7), critical junctures are slowly making their way from comparative politics (Soifer 2012) to ethnic and migration studies (Clark and Zahar 2014) and to international relations scholarship (Fioretos 2011). Resilience does not take place in a vacuum, but draws on past experiences, collective memory and social history, as well as depending upon critical junctures at which agential powers decide to act (or not). The meanings of the shocks and critical junctures in the face of which resilient strategies are elaborated are socially constructed. Endogenous and exogenous shocks are interpretative moments; agents must interpret these shocks as politically negative in order for them to become politically negative, and vice versa. As such, international migration is not *inherently* a shock; rather, it must be *interpreted* as a shock or as a turning point by dominant discourses. The importance, saliency, and ‘threateness’ of the shock will often be exaggerated in order to better justify the necessity of implementing measures to uphold the status quo against changes provoked by the events.

In the context of international migration, a society opting for resilience as maintenance will identify international migration as an important security shock threatening the collective identity of the host society. The arrival of a boatload of refugees on the country’s shores, for example, will be interpreted as a security threat to the host society and its social cohesion. Rhetoric and discursive powers will be deployed to portray

international migration as a security problem and practices will be implemented in response.

In tackling the triangular relationship between migration, resilience, and security, my goal is not to make a normative statement about the securitization of migration. I do not want to suggest that migration has been rightfully securitized or that individuals/communities should not resist a securitization that they deem inappropriate. Rather, I want to explore the social mechanisms that were conducive to the presentation of migration as a security threat in the post-Cold War era.

I now turn to the empirical illustration. In the next few pages, I will demonstrate that the surge in worldwide refugee numbers and associated mass migration phenomena in post-Cold War France were not only interpreted as a shock or critical juncture, but that the importance of this shock was instrumentalised by dominant discourses in France. The necessity of adopting a particular pattern of adjustments to uphold the status quo against changes provoked by these migratory events was underscored. The social construction of refugee movements and mass migration as a significant disturbance necessitating a resilient strategy has led, ultimately, to the securitization of migration.

Resilience and the securitization of migration in France

The construction of migration as a security threat in post-Cold War France provides a useful case study to illustrate the relationship between migration, resilience and security. Passionate debates about the link (or lack thereof) between immigration and security concerns have taken place in France over the past several decades. The issue of securitized migration in France has thus received extensive analysis, leading to a rich

availability of sources. Furthermore, the dominant discourse framing the French understanding of international migration has shifted dramatically in the past thirty years. Previously viewed as a solution to economic and demographic problems, international migration began to provoke significant apprehension and mistrust among French citizens and politicians, while at the same time, on-going immigration began to destabilize long-established patterns of socio-cultural identity in post-Cold War France. Examining the process by which dominant discourses in France interpreted international migration in the early 1990s, and the ensuing pattern of adaptation to this exogenous shock, gives us a window into how resilience as maintenance may itself lead to securitization.

For the purpose of this study, I have retrieved and analysed the complete set of speeches made by three elected politicians and members of the French government — the President, the Prime Minister, and the Minister of the Interior — from 1989 to 2001. This selection represents a corpus of research of more than 1,100 speeches. The selection of these particular agents should not be understood as a theoretical statement on who constitutes a securitizing agent. Obviously, numerous other agents could have been studied; the selection presented here has been made for purposes of feasibility, in the interests of conducting an exhaustive analysis of a particular set of powerful agents. I have also collected and analysed all the editorials from the newspaper *Le Figaro* (1989-2001) in which the issue of migration (or its derivatives) was discussed: a total of more than 130 editorials. *Le Figaro* is one of the largest and oldest national newspapers in France, with a daily circulation (weekdays) of about 350,000 copies.

The early 1990s saw unprecedented movements of refugees worldwide. Regional and civil wars (re)surfaced around the world, and had considerable effects on worldwide

migration patterns. Conflicts in the Horn of Africa, Afghanistan, and Rwanda, the first Gulf War, the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia, and the fall of the Berlin Wall brought significant refugee movements. Worldwide, the number of refugees rose from nine million in 1984 to a peak of eighteen million in 1992: an increase of 100 percent in less than a decade (UNHCR 2005). Tellingly, the official number of refugee applications to France actually showed a significant decrease in the period from 1990 to 1996. In absolute terms, the total numbers of refugee applicants in France decreased from 61,000 to 29,000 between 1989 and 1992. The number of asylum seekers as a percentage of the total population of France decreased as well, from 10.7% in 1989 to 5.1% in 1992: a 50% reduction in only four years (INSEE 2005).

Nonetheless, as the next pages will make clear, the worldwide surge in migration gave rise to all sorts of foreboding projections and scenarios, and seared in citizens' minds the fearful image of uncontrollable, unstoppable waves of migrants (including refugees). Rising numbers of *worldwide* migrants fed alarmist tendencies, reinforcing the notion that France was being – or had already been – flooded with migrants; wild claims about massive movements of people fuelled fears of yet more massive displacements. The metaphor of an invasion quickly became the dominant discourse through which the surge in worldwide refugee movement was to be interpreted.

Media agents of the time, and particularly those working for centre-right newspapers, were quick to present the surge in worldwide refugee numbers and mass migration as a shock in the face of which France's social cohesion needed to be protected. As early as May 1990, editorialists were arguing that “we should definitely block family reunification. Unless we do that, the migration flow will never be reversed” (Marchetti

1990) and although “the proportion of foreign people in France is now at six percent – the same as in 1926 – it is still too much for our country, especially when we know that new waves are under way” (Giesbert 1990a).³ Migration was repeatedly cast as a “problem” – in fact, when migration is mentioned it is usually preceded by “the problem of” – and was also said to be “de-structuralising French society” (Giesbert 1990b). In 1991, we find an editorialist arguing that underscoring the threat of the third-world demographic explosion to Western countries (and particularly France) does not make one a “racist.” On the contrary, the editorialist contends, the problem is so significant that it requires collective and immediate attention. “In France,” the editorialist argues, “toughness is *de rigueur*” (Rebois 1991). Likewise in 1991, Giesbert was arguing that since the immigration “pressure” is nowhere near abatement and since the migrant population in certain suburban cities had risen to eleven percent, we should not be surprised “that cities are on some occasions burning” (1991). Another editorialist a year later insisted that the immigration “pressure” was so high that French citizens were rightly wondering whether they had a future as a nation (Lambroschini 1992), and a year after that, Rebois (1993) lamented a United Nations prediction that, “100 million individuals will want to migrate from their country of origin before 2000,” insisting that, “this threat requires exceptional measures.” All these statements led to the strong recommendation that, since “the wave will never stop growing,” the government should see the fight against migration as a “new form of war” (Marchetti 1995, Rioufol 1996).

Of course, media agents were not the only ones to advocate for a strong pattern of adjustments aimed at protecting the social cohesion of French society against the shock

³ Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are mine.

of refugee and migration pressure. Politicians also interpreted the surge in refugee and migrant movements as a shock of considerable significance against which a pattern of adjustments prioritizing the protection of collective identity and the status quo was necessary. As early as January 1990, Socialist Prime Minister Michel Rocard (in office May 1988 to May 1991) was arguing that, “France is no longer an immigration country. I have said it and I am reaffirming it here: we cannot welcome all the misery of the world.” “We cannot,” argued Rocard in May 1990, “receive a massive and uncontrolled flow of migrants” of every sort without significantly and dangerously fracturing France’s “social equilibrium.” He predicted that, “A new and massive wave coming from the South as well as from the East” would hit the nation if France was not vigilant. “I am firmly and clearly stating that the wave has to be contained, and it has to be contained regardless of the means employed to do so,” continued Rocard (1990).

Rocard’s successor, Prime Minister Édith Cresson (May 1991 to April 1992), surprised many fellow Socialists when she admitted in her first Declaration of General Policy in May 1991 that “it is true” that acute and painful crisis in some suburbs require permanent vigilance, and that otherwise these crises could “fracture the social cohesion” of French society (Cresson 1991b). It was also true, continued Cresson, that, “a feeling of insecurity, individual and collective, is strong” among the French citizenry. One of the key strategies Cresson identified to tackle the “problem” of immigration was “controlling the migration flow”; in December 1991, Cresson argued that, “in regards to the problem of immigration [...] France cannot be opened to everyone.” Unless the wave is controlled, “there will be explosions in some cities and suburbs” (Cresson 1991a).

In September 1991, former President of the Republic Valéry Giscard d'Estaing (May 1974 to May 1981) launched a polemic that began with his article entitled "Immigration or Invasion". Migration occurring in the early 1990s was seen as no ordinary migratory movement, but the beginning of a silent and pervasive invasion into France. Reacting to a poll entitled "French are shocked" he argued that the current refugee and migration pressure was so high that it was engendering a profound and significant shift from immigration to "invasion". The intentions of migrants were no longer to assimilate to the great nation of France and thus be proud of becoming French (immigration) but to seek to enter France and quickly but forcefully spread to every corner of the country (invasion) (Giscard d'Estaing 1991). In 1991, then-Mayor of Paris Jacques Chirac (a former Prime Minister and future President of the Republic) made an inflammatory statement about the noise and the smell of migrant families. Chirac spoke of the French worker who together with his wife makes 15,000 francs a month and lives next door to an immigrant family "with a father, three or four wives, some 20 offspring, that receives 50,000 francs per month in social welfare, obviously without working. Add to that the noise and the smell," he went on, "and the French worker cannot help but go insane." Since the numbers are constantly growing and the immigration saturation point – *le seuil de tolérance* – had long been reached, the family reunification policy "must be abandoned" and the "problem of immigration" taken care of, argued Chirac. Adding to the tensions, the former Interior Minister in the Giscard d'Estaing government, Michel Poniatowski (May 1974 to March 1977), used three words to refer to the shock of the surge in refugees and migration pressure: "intrusion, occupation, invasion." "I knew France under German occupation," he continued, "and now I feel the same humiliation because we risk

a change in our identity under outside pressure [...] A million clandestine migrants is equivalent to a hundred military divisions. They may perhaps be un-armed, but nonetheless they are highly threatening to our existence and our identity” (cited in Riding 1991). Needless to say, these were highly charged statements to be issued by France’s political elite.

Other equally strong statements concerning immigration soon followed these forerunners. In November 1991, Minister of the Interior Philippe Marchand (January 1991 to April 1992) stated that “uncontrolled migratory movement would be a threat against [France’s] fundamental national interest” and France’s security (Marchand 1991). His successor, Paul Quilès (April 1992 to March 1993), spoke of the threat of irregular migration on a number of occasions, arguing that regaining control over immigration was essential to maintaining social cohesion in France (Quilès 1992a, 1992b).

The victory of the Rally for the Republic in the legislative election of 1993 solidified the saliency of understanding international migration as a shock, consolidated resilience as maintenance as the preferred pattern of adjustments, and further established the necessity of seeing migration through the lens of security. The early 1990s was no ordinary period in the history of France, according to then-Prime Minister Édouard Balladur (March 1993 to May 1995). In fact, it was “the most difficult period since the war,” and one that necessitated a bridging of the traditional left/right political division in order to tackle effectively the problem (Balladur 1993). Balladur argued that, if measures to fight clandestine immigration were not implemented, then “what is happening elsewhere will happen in France: principles to which we are profoundly attached [will be put] in serious

peril.” “France is an old nation”, he continued, “which intends to survive and remain the same” (Balladur 1993).

Charles Pasqua, Minister of the Interior in the Balladur government (March 1993 to May 1995), pushed for the collective status quo in a systematic and repeated way, arguing that a significant and growing fear of social explosion was all but too real in France. In his first speech as Minister, Pasqua stated that clandestine immigration is a threat to France’s “national cohesion” (1993a). He reiterated this position in several speeches, sometimes speaking in terms of the loss of French identity and sometimes highlighting the necessity to protect the “national community” from threatening “perils” (1993b). The stakes were so high, according to Pasqua, that his bill, which reinforced repressive measures to impede access to French territory and limited the entry and residence of several categories of migrants, constituted the “last chance to save France’s integration model” (1993c).

This proactive insistence on the part of French dominant discourses of the necessity of resilience created a perceived need for increased security. The exogenous shock of massive refugee and migrant pressure was portrayed as a considerable threat precisely so that security discourses and security practices would be called into play (Bourbeau 2014). The construction of international migration as a security issue was carried out most notably at two levels.

First, migration was institutionally securitized — that is, new laws or articles modifying an existing law were passed, providing the government with tools to deal with the “security problem” that was international migration. In July 1992, the French Parliament

passed the *Waiting Zones in Ports and Airports Act* that recognised the existing practice of detaining migrants and which introduced a new Article (Article “35 quater”) to the *Ordonnance* of 1945 (that laid down the basic outline of immigration and naturalisation policy in post-war France). The Article understands detention centres as encompassing both spaces of departure and arrival, and spaces where people are controlled; these centres may be located in international airports, ports, or train stations. The importance of these centres resides in the fact that since they were located in the pre-customs-clearance disembarkation area, the detention facilities were not really part of France but were in an “international zone”; thus, France had no obligation under refugee and human rights law to grant asylum to these individuals. The *Control of Immigration, and the Entry and Residence Conditions of Foreigners in France Act* was enacted in 1993 to reinforce repressive measures that impede access to the French territory and limit the entry and residence of many categories of migrants. France’s Department of Defense published a *White Paper on Defence* in 1994 in which mass international migration was identified as a serious threat to France’s security interests. The *Various Dispositions Relating to Immigration Act* followed three years later – a law that considerably hardened migrant detention provisions and expanded policy powers controlling the flow of international migration.

Second, several security practices were put into place to deal with the threat of international migration. Numerous interdiction measures were implemented, including restrictive visa policies and the use of carrier sanctions for having on board passengers without “proper” identity. Detention centres for refugees and migrants were created in which the procedures, codes of conduct, and apparatus of operation are strikingly similar

to those of incarceration facilities. In the early 1990s, there were about eighty detention centres in France, in which a migrant could be legally detained for a maximum of twenty days. From approximately 4,000 migrant-detainees in 1992, the number grew to 5,000 by 1996, and more than 7,000 by 1998; in 2010, France had 65,000 migrant-detainees (CICI 2012, Cimade 2012, Collectif 2012). In 1994, the location of detention centres in French territory was broadened from ports and airports to include inland train stations. Non-government organisations and other organisations, such as the UNHCR and the Red Cross, were finally permitted partial access to these detention centres only in 1995.

The consequences and importance of having adopted a pattern of adjustments that reinforces collective status quo and leads to the securitization of migration is best captured in how dominant discourses reacted to the so-called *East Sea* affair. In February 2001, the crew of the *East Sea*, a rusting Cambodian-flagged freighter, beached the freighter on the rocks near the tiny port of Boulouris on the French Riviera. The captain fled the boat, leaving it facing land, the propellers turned so that the boat could not return to sea. Crammed into the decrepit and stinking boat were 910 Turkish Kurd migrants – 250 men, 180 women, and 480 children, including 200 children under the age of five. The migrants were packed so tightly that they could not even sit down. After seven days at sea, dehydration and malnourishment were rampant.

The beaching of the *East Sea* resulted in a groundswell of emotions across France. It also brought back memories of Europe's treatment of Jewish refugees when, for three weeks in the summer of 1947, more than 4,500 Jews sat packed in sweltering heat aboard three British prison ships near Marseilles on the French Riviera (Zertal 1998). Once again, France's dominant discourses reacted by adopting a resilience-as-maintenance pattern of

adjustments to this exogenous shock. This time, however, security instruments to deal with this threat to the social cohesion France were already available and did not have to be implemented or even justified. Within hours of the grounding of the *East Sea*, French authorities transformed the military base of Fréjus near Cannes into an improvised detention centre. Turkish Kurd men, women and children were all sent in requisitioned buses to the 21st Marine Infantry Regiment base and detained as illegal immigrants. Because they were denounced by the Socialist government as illegal immigrants, *the East Sea* immigrants were disqualified from the opportunity to claim political asylum. The detention of these migrants on a military base was seen as an appropriate and justified security practice in the face of this exogenous shock. This was indeed a powerful symbol of the state's attempt to securitise refugee and migrant movements on the basis that France, in order to remain the "same old" nation, had to opt for strategies ensuring the status quo.

Conclusion

The focus of this article concentrates on reactions and responses to new inflows of migrants in the 1990s before questions of integration, assimilation and multiculturalism arise. For some French politicians, international immigration occurring in the early 1990s was seen as no ordinary migratory movement, but the beginning of a silent invasion into France. Although as we have seen the surge in worldwide refugee movement had no direct effect on the actual number of asylum applicants to France, it nonetheless gave rise to all sorts of projections, scenarios, and arguments. Notions of "waves" of migrants and fear of the uncontrollable and unstoppable movement of people prevailed as the dominant narrative of the new inflows of migration.

France's dominant discourses on this issue involved reliance on a strategy of resilience as maintenance; they dealt with the exogenous shock of refugee and migrant movements by repeatedly underscoring the potential negative transformative consequences brought about by the disturbance. The importance and saliency of "mass" migration was exaggerated in order to better justify the necessity of implementing measures to uphold the status quo against the changes this migratory movement provoked. Reaffirmation of the value, benefit, and importance of the existing French collective social fabric was made on several occasions. Altogether, these actions gave securitizing agents the opportunity, if they were so inclined, to present international migration as a security threat requiring an urgent and strong response in order to prevent the breakdown of social cohesion and existential threats to the very notion of a French nation. It turned out that there were numerous agents happy to use such a triggering set of events to pursue a securitization agenda.

Students of migration studies are still struggling with many difficult questions associated with the phenomenon of securitized migration, such as how societies navigate through, facilitate, or limit the securitization of migration. Studying the social mechanisms involved in the securitization of migration remains an uphill debate, with many questions being raised but few being entirely resolved. In their search for a better understanding of this complex phenomenon, scholars have found it increasingly useful to expand their tool kit to include various interdisciplinary concepts, including resilience. The question then to what extent this interdisciplinary concept is useful for migration scholars. Tackling head-on this issue, this article demonstrates the usefulness of reading dominant French reactions to inflows of international migrants through the resilience lens, and reveals that

the social construction of migration as a security issue was achieved by invoking a desire in the French citizenry to preserve France's society and cultural identity.

This article has raised the stakes in migration studies by contending that we have arrived at an ideal moment to theorize the relationship among migration, security, and resilience. While this article concentrates on the responses of dominant French discourses to the influx of new migrants in the early 1990s and the East Sea incident of 2001, recent reactions and responses to the January 2015 attacks on the satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo* further demonstrate the significance of resilience in untangling the complex relationship among migration, ethnic communities, and security.

On January 7, 2015, two masked gunmen stormed the Paris offices of the satirical magazine at noon during an editorial meeting. They headed straight for the magazine's editor, killing him and his bodyguard. With military-style precision, they went on to slaughter seven other journalists, a maintenance worker, and a visitor. These acts were carried out as a direct response to *Charlie Hebdo's* most recent cartoon, which depicted the Prophet Muhammad. Within minutes of the attacks, a highly mediatized manhunt began that terminated with the killing of the two perpetrators of the attacks (and of one accomplice who had taken hostages at a kosher grocery store in Paris).

The dominant political discourses on this issue have presented it, almost from the start, as an attack on one of the foundation of the French society: freedom of expression. Securitizing and media agents in France have crafted a narrative of the issue which interprets the attacks as an assault on France's very identity; viewed in this light, resilience-as-maintenance becomes the necessary, undisputable best response to the

crisis. If France wants to stay the country it is then it must ‘bounce back’ from this disturbance and learn to become stronger in the face of adversity. Borrowing psychology’s understanding of resilience as the capacity to positively adapt to profound adversities in a way that is substantially better than expected – in other words, understanding resilience through the lens of Friedrich Nietzsche’s oft-cited maxim that “whatever does not kill me makes me stronger” – dominant discourses in France have vigorously driven home the need for France to become more resilient at this particular time in its history.

President Francois Hollande, in his speeches following the events, contended that these *Charlie Hebdo* editorialists “died for their idea of France: that is to say *freedom*. Today, the whole republic was assaulted because freedom of expression *is* the republic. France is a great nation and she will demonstrate that she can overcome challenges” (Hollande 2015c). “From this challenge,” Hollande stated two days later, “we will emerge even stronger” (Hollande 2015b). Less than a week after the events, he further declared that, “France may be attacked, assaulted and even injured, but our great and beloved nation never surrenders, never breaks up, and never bends to the will of others. She stands, as always” (Hollande 2015a).

Manuel Valls, French Minister of the Interior, stated in his speech to Parliament, “France was hit in the heart. They have tried to destroy France’s spirit, fundamental principle, and universal message. However, France is still standing” (Valls 2015). After speaking of the need to protect the Jewish and Muslim diaspora in France, Valls went on to declare, “we have to say things in the clearest way possible: yes, France is at war against terrorism, jihadism, and extremist Islam.” Valls finishes his speech by reminding his fellow citizens

that “there is something in these events that makes us even stronger.” These speeches and other public interventions by politicians and media commentators highlight the dominant role of resilience in contemporary French discussions of migration, violence, and social adjustment.

In sum, as we can see through French immigration discourse spanning the past 25 years and continuing to the present day, the notion of resilience holds a great deal of potential for renewing the wider migration–security research agenda. By focusing on resilience, we can better understand the constant and complex interplay between persistence and change, reproduction and transformation.

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