THE SECURITISATION OF OTHERS:

FEAR, TERROR, IDENTITY

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ABSTRACT

In an era characterised by multiculturalism and migration, identities inevitably overlap; this overlapping sometimes creates a sense of invasion, and this "invasion" invites conflict. With this reality in mind, this paper examines the notion of the securitisation of Others, whose aim is twofold: a) to construct Others as recognised threats to the dominant identity; b) to obtain special powers/take extraordinary measures to tackle that "menace". Yet, this process differs from a normal securitisation (the Copenhagen School) as there may be no utterance about the Other, which can be concealed to avoid unpleasant outcomes (e.g. the Paris riots). As a result, the process has to be carried out through a parallel convincing securitisation intrinsically related to the Other. Said otherwise, the securitisation of Others should be presented as if the emphasis is on what rather than on who. Although there is no utterance of the Other, it is inferred as the real target of the securitisation because of its intrinsic relation, either natural or constructed, with the what. This omission, nonetheless, is supported by reality but, above all, by the shared knowledge of both what and who. Hence, its value —and dangerousness— is enormous not only for politicians and policymakers but also for people with hidden, illegitimate agendas. Since the securitisation of Others can conceal the real "threat", actors can target Others silently and pretend they are securitising another matter (e.g. Muslims via terrorism; Mexicans via illegal immigration in the US) without the risk of being labelled racists; instead, they will be reckoned as "patriots" concerned with the security of their peers.

A well-known scholar called the present “the age of terror” (Ikenberry, 2002a). It is, certainly, a very compelling motto. Rather than for its direct reference to terrorism, it is accurate because modern societies live in constant fear. We are terrorised. At all times we are reminded that threats could emerge in any form, at any time, and from everywhere… and we are receptive. “In a time of rampant securitizations” (Nyers, 2004: 213), it would be better, perhaps to call current times “the era of securitisations”: virtually anything *is* a security concern. The interesting thing, though, is that the abstraction “national security” has become as elastic as it can be confusing itself more often than not with “national identity”. Indeed, actors around the world increasingly speak security taking for granted that identity *is* the referent object, the entity that must be saved for a nation to survive.

This paper sets off with the firm conviction that this amalgam of fear, securitisations and identity encourages the securitisation of identities and, as a consequence, of Others, which risks becoming —or has already become— a regular feature of politics. But what is the securitisation of Others? This is precisely the question that triggers this piece of writing and the one it attempts to answer. At first sight, it evokes a pessimistic scenario since the securitisation of Others could create local and global uneasiness as its goal is to construct Others as recognised threats to the dominant identity in order to obtain special powers/take extraordinary measures to tackle that “menace”.

Yet, this process differs from a *normal* securitisation proposed by the Copenhagen School (CS) as there may be no utterance (speech act) about the Other, which is concealed to avoid unpleasant outcomes. As a result, the process has to be carried out through a parallel convincing securitisation intrinsically related to the Other. Said otherwise, the securitisation of Others should be presented *as if* the emphasis is on *what* rather than on *who*. Hence, its value (and potential for havoc) is enormous not only for politicians and policymakers but also for people and groups with hidden and/or illegitimate agendas and interests. Since the securitisation of Others can conceal the real *threat*, actors can target Others by pretending they are securitising another matter (e.g. Muslims *via* terrorism); instead of being reckoned as xenophobic, they will be conceived as patriots concerned by the security of their nation... and all this without violating the status quo.

To avoid any possible confusion, it is necessary to stress that in spite of the evident contradiction posed by the absence of the utterance, the securitisation of Others relies greatly on the theoretical premises elaborated by the CS. For that reason, securitisation is understood throughout this piece as "the discursive process through which an intersubjective understanding is constructed within a political community to treat something as an existential threat to a valued referent object, and to enable a call for urgent and exceptional measures to deal with the threat" (Buzan & Wæver, 2003: 491). The process of securitisation should be understood as a *speech act*, in which "security is not of interest as a sign that refers to something more real; the utterance *itself* is the act. By saying it, something is done (as in betting, giving a promise, naming a ship)". In other words, something becomes a security concern as soon the leaders declare it to be so (Wæver, 1995: 54-5).

Accordingly, the first step of a process of securitisation is to present an issue as an existential threat (*securitising move*). The proposed issue needs then to be addressed by someone (a *securitising actor*) who recognises it as an "ultimate threat" and then labels it officially "a security issue". The securitisation is accomplished only if and the audience accepts the proposed issue as an existential menace (Buzan *et al.*, 1998: 25-42; cf. McSweeney, 1996; Balzacq, 2005). By furthering a securitisation, the securitising actor hopes to take a given matter outside the terrain of "normal politics" —alleging it is not possible to tackle it through the conventional ways anymore—, in order to legitimise the breaking of rules and/or the additional powers amassed (Buzan *et al.*, 1998: 23-5).

Following these premises, how could anyone securitise anything without mentioning it, as the securitisation of Others suggests? In order to undertake this challenge, the paper proceeds in four parts. The first is an introductory overview. The second part examines the theoretical underpinnings of this process. The third section analyses one case —the alleged securitisation of Muslims in the West— in order to illustrate the *indirect* securitisation of Others. Lastly, the paper draws some conclusions. A word of caution is obligatory: rather than being understood as a prescriptive blueprint (e.g. "How to securitise Others successfully"), this article should be taken as a descriptive work which aims to depict what seems a very treacherous tool in contemporary global politics. By detecting this phenomenon, the aim is to promote the desecuritisation of Others, if such a thing is possible.

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I.- Defining securitisation of Others

The history of the world is plagued with examples in which Others have been securitised. It is not new at all. Western thought "has always thematized the other as a threat to be reduced, as a potential same-to-be, a yet-not-same" (Godzich, 1986: xiii). Indeed, "Western philosophy is in essence the attempt to domesticate Otherness" (Rodolphe Gasché quoted in Neumann, 1999: 3; see also Laplanche, 1997: 653). Edward Said's *Orientalism* (2003a) documented those attempts in a very compelling way. Why then study the securitisation of Others now? The current global context provides the answer: multiculturalism and immigration. The latter, for instance, is growing dramatically. In 2005, it was estimated that there were 200 million migrants in the world (UN, 2002: 11; HSC, 2005: 86; IMO, 2005/06/22). In an era characterised by multiculturalism and migration, identities inevitably overlap; this overlapping sometimes creates a sense of invasion, and this "invasion" invites conflict.

The increase in human mobility blends with another feature of our days. As Gilles Lipovetsky (1992) suggested in the early 1980s, in postmodern societies "seduction has become the general process that tends to regulate consumption, organisations, information, education, customs" (Ibid.: 17).[1] This seduction also includes language (Ibid.: 22). Hence, words must be softened. When talking about the invasion of Iraq, George Bush said: "I learned some lessons about *expressing myself maybe in a little more sophisticated manner*" (White House, 2006/05/25, stress added). He was actually talking about seduction. Yet, this seduction goes beyond political correctness. It is used at the socio-political level not to avoid hurting the feelings of, say, minorities, but to perpetuate the status quo or have political gains, depending on the circumstances. When someone goes beyond that seduction to be "real", the entire social fabric is shaken, locally and/or externally.

In November 2005, riots erupted all over France after two teenagers of African descent died electrocuted when, apparently, hiding from police in a power station. The violence increased after the minister of Interior Nicolas Sarkozy called the rioters —most of them inhabitants of the *banlieues* (suburbs)— "*racaille*" (rabble) and vowing: "The *louts* will disappear. We will clean this estate [the *banlieues*] with a Kärcher" vacuum (*Guardian*, 2005/12/23: 13). One analyst said Sarkozy was fully conscious of what he was doing. Following his presidential

[1] Translation is my own, as well as all subsequent translations.

ambitions, he was pursuing an electoral strategy because "he feels that if there is such an immense gulf between politicians and voters in France, it is because *the elite does not know how to speak to real people*. *That's why he calls problems by their real name*" (*Guardian*, 2005/11/11: 17, stress added). In the midst of the riots, Sarkozy's popularity surged dramatically (TF1, 2005/11/16).[2] To be so blunt may have political advantages after all, although at the expense of national/global tranquillity.

It follows that "to call problems by their real name" is neither welcomed nor encouraged in today's multicultural world. Indeed, in an age when for good and bad multiculturalism is a reality, we need to be extremely careful with language. In other words, we must seduce. Seduce with pluralism and tolerance. To proclaim social, racial or ethnic hierarchies is, of course, out of question. But even to promote patriotism and nationalism could be seen as an attempt to move towards supremacy. Yet, worse than that, to patronise a minority, a religion or another culture could have devastating effects as the *cartoongate* showed. The mindset we are impelled to adopt, then, is one governed by seduction. "All humans are equal" seems to be the motto of our times, notwithstanding it may sustain a blunt fallacy not only because alterity is believed to be a core constitutive element of the Self and, as a result, of our identity (see, for instance, Lévinas, 2006; Todorov, 1984; Kristeva, 1991; Ricœur, 1992; Laplanche, 1997; Sartre, 1958: 221-302; Frosh, 2002: 393-99), but also for the sheer inequalities we attest everyday.

For those who are not interested in complying with this mindset, and even for those interested in achieving more powers through a questionable method, the value of the securitisation of Others (as well as its dangerousness) is enormous. As it can be a *silent* process, politicians and policymakers, as well as people and groups with hidden and/or illegitimate agendas and interests, can utilise the securitisation of Others to conceal the *threat*. Thus, any agent can simultaneously securitise the *real menace* and be presented as someone who is concerned by the security and survival of his/her peers without being reckoned a racist, an extremist or a nativist; to the contrary, the securitiser may even be praised as patriotic. The rationale is that, to avoid unpleasant outcomes, the Other can be disguised in *another* convincing securitisation intrinsically related to the Other who is wanted to be securitised. Said otherwise, the securitisation of Others should be presented *as if* the stress is on *what* rather than on *who*.

[2] In another poll, possible voters thought Sarkozy was "realistic" and "more than ever a potential presidential candidate" (BBC.com, 2005/11/15).

Even if this sounds a tautological statement, it is not. Some could even argue, wrongly, that the emphasis of *any* securitisation is always on *who*. Certainly, in international relations securitisations have traditionally emphasised the *who*. Disguised in economic, military, political or societal clothes, according to the occasion, Others have been (and still are) blamed for domestic and, in some extreme cases, global maladies. National leaders regularly securitise Others at home or abroad to, among other objectives, foster nationalism and identity, gain public support whenever it is needed (e.g. to wage a war, to win an election) and also to distract the masses from internal affairs (e.g. high inflation, poor economic performance). We can rightly say, consequently, that the Other is an intrinsic figure of political discourse and, as such, a political construction.

Nonetheless, this discursive prominence of the Other does not mean that *all* securitisations are dependent on *who*. On the contrary. Following this line of reasoning, it would be possible to grasp major securitisations like terrorism as the securitisation of *who* because, at the end, people —in this case "terrorists"— are the threat. This argument is erroneous. To begin with, in most of the cases it is extremely difficult to determine who the terrorists are. This is why, actually, the securitisation arises: as we ignore how, when, where and whom will carry out the attack, special powers are conceded to the authorities, who, in return, promise to protect us and discover the risk before it is too late. This difficulty in recognising "terrorists" stems from the fact that "terror is a tactic, not the adversary" (Hutchings, 2004: 70) and is "used in different ways by different movements" (*NYT*, 2004/09/05: A1). Consequently, the emphasis of the securitisation of terrorism should be on *what*, on the tactics of terror. In theory, any person that resorts to this tactic is a menace; not because of *who* he is but because of *what* he does. The same can be applied to other mainstream securitisations (e.g. drugs trafficking, smuggling, immigration, piracy): it is the *what* that counts; the *who* is secondary. In the securitisation of Others, on the contrary, the logic is inverted: no matter *what* he does, but *who* he is. The case of an experienced British Muslim officer who was sacked is perhaps the best example at hand: despite of *what* he did (epitomise security, law and order), he was considered a "menace" just because of *who* he is (a Muslim) (see *Independent*, 2006/11/07: 1-2).

The conundrum here is that these securitisations highlighting *what* can all shift their emphasis to *who*, that is, to turn into securitisations of Others. How do we know then which is which? There are in principle two simple and straightforward steps to identify a securitisation of Others. First, by establishing if there is a clear connection between *what* and *who*: if the *what* in a securitisation is strongly related to a *who* (e.g. a minority), then we must be extremely cautious since it may be a securitisation of Others. This *what-who* connection can be determined relying on the historical and present contexts. Second, by assessing the scope and possible consequences of the securitisation. If a minority, an ethnic group, a religion, a culture turns out to be the most affected by a securitisation, then we can correctly assume that the target was not *what* but *who*.

The following illustration can serve to elucidate this point. French minister of interior Sarkozy advocates new powers to foster "skilled immigration". His reasons: "The most qualified migrants, the most dynamic and competent ones head to the American continent, whereas *the less qualified immigration or not qualified at all moves towards Europe*". And goes further: "Neither France nor its European partners can be satisfied with a situation where *the elites of developing countries* move massively towards the United States and Canada, while the European continent receives *an under-qualified immigration*". This is why he proposes a model in which skilled migrants live in France (or the European Union) for a maximum period of three years, when they should return to their countries of origin to contribute to the national development. In this way, Sarkozy hopes to build "a network of Francophile elites in the world" (*Le Figaro*, 2006/02/09: 14).

The sense of urgency is perceptible in his words. Conscious that France alone cannot achieve its goal of "selective immigration", he claims it is "*urgent* to establish, on a European scale and beyond, with the countries at the OECD, an 'ethics of return'". The securitisation is clear:

> We are vis-à-vis with a *decisive issue*. France, like its European partners, *cannot rely on the fluctuations of global flows of intelligence and competence. Our dynamism, the modernization of our economy depend on it*. We *must* support the arrival of skilled workers … *which the French economy needs* (Ibid.)

The accent, it seems, is on *what* —skilled immigration— the motives being economic competitiveness and, maybe, expanding France's way of life and global influence through "Francophile elites" in developing countries. Sarkozy's proposal suggests that skilled workers are welcomed, whilst under-qualified migrants are not. Given the fact that in the past years nearly half of France's immigrants have come from Northern Africa, many of them from Muslim countries,[3] and that Sarkozy seeks to privilege "economic migration" and discourage "familial immigration" (*Le Journal du Dimanche*, 2006/02/05: 3; see also *IHT*, 2006/02/10: 3; *Sunday Times*, 2006/02/12: 25), a feature of Muslim migrants, it is possible to identify a connection between this securitisation and a minority, namely, between *what* and *who*. This link is even more evident when Sarkozy says that his "contract of reception and integration" —another measure included in his immigration reforms and to which all migrants would have to adhere— ponders that all newcomers will have "to learn our language obligatorily, to respect our laws and, among them [should prevail] the equality between men and women" (*Le Journal du Dimanche*, 2006/02/05: 3).

It follows that Sarkozy's concern may go beyond qualifications to include too the migrants' way of life and beliefs. Said otherwise, his uneasiness may not only be about the lesser skills immigrants may possess but also about their identity and, above all, its effect on France. All in all, considering recent events such as the Paris riots and Sarkozy's role in it, plus his political declarations,[4] it is safe to say that this securitisation is intended specifically to stop the immigration of North Africans/Muslims, the most likely to be affected, and not precisely because of their lack of skills. Notwithstanding he is used "to call problems by their real name", Sarkozy —as many other politicians around the world— recurs to a *silent* securitisation of Others, securitising without mentioning. In this way, he achieves his goals and does not overtly challenge social and political stability.

[3] According to population statistics, migrants from Africa have accounted more than 40 percent of total immigration to France in recent years; in 2002, this figure was 45.85 percent, and in 2004, 42 percent. In 2002 most of these migrants came from Muslim Maghreb countries such as Algeria (13.6%), Morocco (12.7%) and Tunisia (4.4%), and also from Turkey (3.7%); altogether, these four countries amounted 34.4 percent of total immigration that year. Data obtained from INED, 2004: 3, 17; Borrel & Durr, 2005.

[4] For example, in 2004 he said: "Whether I like it or not, Islam is the second biggest religion in France. So you've got to integrate it by making it more French" (*Economist*, 2004/11/13).

II.- Theoretical underpinnings

In order to advance on more solid grounds, it is required to explore the theoretical assumptions and concepts underpinning the securitisation of Others. As its name implies, this process is constituted by two elements: a securitisation and an Other. Its logic, then, is embedded by a blend of security and identity. This symbiosis has always been critical to form the Self (Campbell, 1998: 43-51; Dillon, 1996: 13-4). Since "identities are the basis of interests" (Wendt, 1992: 398), states —as religions and cultures— need discourses of "danger" to "provide a new theology of truth about who and what 'we' are by highlighting who or what 'we' are not, and what 'we' have to fear" (Campbell, 1998: 48). It is therefore unsurprising, even if "seldom noted, […that] fear is the first emotion experienced by any character in the Bible. Not desire, not shame, but fear" (Robin, 2004: 79).

The rationale that moves the securitisation of Others —or, rather, that sustains its rhetoric— is precisely fear of outsiders: their mere presence in itself is considered —by the securitiser and his/her audience— a threat to the continuity and development of the insiders' identity. This logic is fostered by a mindset embedded by the Precautionary Principle: even if there is no proof of the alleged *attack* on "our" identity, "we" must do everything to avoid that this *attack* evolves into *occupation*.[5] As a result, the sense of "invasion", both physical (territorial, economic, political) and imaginary (societal, cultural), is particularly high and therefore so is the urgency to act.

As any other securitisation, the aim of the securitisation of Others is to gain extraordinary powers and/or take special measures but in this case is specifically to defend an identity. Identity is invariably, then, the instance to be protected —that is, the referent object. Herein, a clarification is required in order to avoid any misunderstanding. To begin with, this proposal does not intend to locate the securitisation of Others solely at the societal sector (or at any other). Such idea would have narrowed the scope of this kind of securitisations by disregarding the threats posed by Others at the political level, and deeming them nonexistent at the economic and military levels, something absurd per se. Rather, this assumption points towards the

[5] The Precautionary Principle entails "a willingness to take action in advance of scientific proof of evidence on the grounds that further delay may prove to be ultimately more costly to society [...] Precaution is not simply the *prevention* of manifest or predicted risks that have been scientifically proven. Rather, the Precautionary Principle goes *beyond* the notion of prevention in the sense that it insists that policy makers move to anticipate problems before they arise or before scientific proof of harm is established" (Jordan & O'Riordan, 1999: 24).

versatility of identities, those “intangible and often contested social constructions of who ‘we’ are” (Dalby, 1990: 107).

Being a highly malleable abstraction, identity can take unlimited, unexpected forms: from industry (*IHT*, 2005/07/21: 1), to relics (*Crónica de Hoy*, 2006/01/10), buildings (*IoS*, 2006/04/09: 19), archaeological sites (BBC.com, 2004/10/15), sports (*IHT*, 2006/03/18: 1), food (*Independent*, 2005/10/19; *NYT*, 2006/02/28; *USA Today*, 2006/03/16), corporal weight (*Independent*, 2006/04/22: 19) and a large etcetera. This flexibility allows the securitising agent to attach identity to *any* issue. Thus, virtually anything can be interpreted as an attack to/defence of identity depending on the context and the political motivations. Hence, the claim that whenever identity is the object to be protected we should assume that a securitisation of Others might be developing. This notion, far from considering identity as something fixed within a given sector, implies that the mere invocation of identity is by itself the first condition necessary for a securitisation of Others to be; the second would be its link to security and the urgency to act.

At this point is pertinent to remind that behind any securitisation there is always a political choice (Buzan *et al.*, 1998: 29). Certainly, security is intrinsically political (Buzan, 1991a: 11-2; Dillon, 1996: 1-35; Behnke, 2006: 64). Therefore, as Jef Huysmans hinted, “enunciating security is never innocent or neutral” (1999: 26). The same can be said about identity: its invocation should always raise suspicions. Certainly, given the fact that identity is a discursive practice, we must be very careful. First of all, because discourses are essentially political involving the construction of antagonisms; power is, therefore, a constant in discourses (Howarth & Stavrakakis, 2000: 3-4). Additionally, discourses represent the interests of particular actors (Griggs & Howarth, 2002: 103). To suppose, then, that the issue at stake in the securitisation of Others is *only* identity is to be extremely naive. As a result, we must always bear in mind not only the fact that identities are discourses but also the risks of idealising national security (Buzan *et al.*, 1998: 29) since “power holders can always try to use the instrument of securitization of an issue to gain control over it” (Wæver, 1995: 54).

Depending on the circumstances and conditions of every case, then, Others can be clearly related to at least four of the five security sectors set out by Barry Buzan (1991a: 116-34): societal, political, economic and military. The connection between Others and environmental

security, the fifth sector, is theoretically possible though blurred mainly because environmental concerns are by and large conceived —in most cases incorrectly— as a fight between humans and nature (Deudney, 1991: 466-8; Buzan *et al.*, 1998: 80-1). This is why many see climate change as unique threat "because *there is no enemy to point your guns at*" (*Observer*, 2004/02/22: 3, stress added). Yet, the case of gypsies in the British countryside, accused of despoiling the environment wherever they settle their caravans (*Daily Express*, 2005/04/07: 22; *Guardian*, 2002/06/05: 2), demonstrates the link is possible even if less common. The recent description of massive immigration as an environmental danger in Britain (OPT, 2006/05/30) suggests that Others could be connected more often to this sector in the future.

The securitisation of Others could happen at either the national or international levels. Accordingly, we have to differentiate between internal and external Others. An internal Other may be a minority living within a country, whilst an external Other is usually another nation but can also be personified by outside ethnic groups, like in the fight sparked in 1994 between the Hutu and the Tutsi that wrecked Rwanda and Burundi; by civilisations, as between the alleged clash between the West and "Islam"; or by sects, as in the case of the intra-Islam historical antagonism between Sunni and Shiite Muslims. In the US, for example, Mexican immigrants could be considered the internal Other, whereas some Muslim countries (e.g. Iran, Syria) would be the external. Yet, as occurs often with domestic and international affairs, it is rather difficult to draw a clear line between internal and external Others. Following the same instance, many Americans would consider Mexicans living in Mexico the foreign arm of the internal Other, whilst Muslim-Americans could largely be regarded the "local branch" of the external Other.

Attempting a definition, then, it is possible to describe the securitisation of Others as the process through which an Other —that is, any group of people either within or outside a given society— is recognised as a threat to a dominant identity for its alleged cohesion around a certain culture, race, religion, ethnicity, beliefs and/or way of life. Its highest aim is achieving special/additional powers in order to defend this identity, which perceives the presence/attitudes of that Other as a risk for its own future, welfare and development. The target of these securitisations is always a *who* even if it may be presented *as if* the stress is on *what*. In the present multicultural age, it becomes extremely difficult —at least in inclusive, diverse, democratic societies— to directly securitise Others. It is not impossible, though. This is why a distinction between *indirect* and *direct* securitisations should be made.

III.- Indirect and direct securitisations

So far, only the indirect securitisation has been tackled. This model, as established in the "skilled migration" case analysed in section I, is characterised by concealing the Other behind another related securitisation that highlights the *what* but is intended to target the *who*. Although there is no utterance of the Other —or the *implicit subject*—, it is inferred as the real target of the securitisation because of its intrinsic relation, either natural or constructed, with the *what* —the *explicit object*. In contrast, the direct model is basically the one proposed by the CS: the speech act —in this case the Other— should be uttered, meaning that the *who* is conspicuous at all times.

Based on empirical evidence in both domestic and global current affairs, it is possible to say that the *indirect* model is utilised mainly —though not solely— by state/governmental institutions and politicians. In contrast, the direct securitisation of Others is rarely seen in politics nowadays being mostly utilised at the societal level by the media, associations, movements, and common people. In consequence, even if it is not a golden rule, indirect securitisations would normally be *top-down* —from the state to society—, whilst direct securitisations would be *bottom-up*, from society to state. In principle, then, there are four different formulas: a) indirect, top-down; b) indirect, bottom-up; c) direct, bottom-up; d) direct, top-down. In the era of seduction, though, the latter is unlikely to happen at the political level. Anyhow, the actors, audience, circumstances, conditions, and scenario will all determine the kind of securitisation.

Top-down securitisations find their rationale in the assumption that the incessant production of discourses of insecurity (see Weldes *et al.*, 1999: 1-33) —and of securitisations, as a result— is embedded in the nature of the state. As Campbell suggested, the persistent enunciation of danger is the state's "condition of possibility": since states are never-finished entities, they have an endless necessity of reproduction; by promising security to its people, the state constantly redefines and legitimates itself. Yet, if a state succeeded in its project of security, it would be digging its own grave as its *raison d'être* would become meaningless. Paradoxically, then, by failing in the task of providing security (and by creating new threats and securitisations), the state is assuring its own survival as an "impelling identity" (Campbell, 1998: 12-3, 43-51, quotation from p. 12).

On the other hand, bottom-up securitisations rely on the assumption that, in the post-Cold War world, "the principal focus of the new insecurity is society rather than the state" (Wæver *et al.*, 1993: 2). If we concede that today "society" is the focus of insecurity, then it would be logical to assume that society must define by itself what poses a potential threat against its existence. Even if the state remains the most salient actor in the security domain, retaining its prerogative of resorting to legitimate violence, it no longer holds the monopoly of securitisations (see Buzan *et al.*, 1998: 24, 119-24). What is more, if we consider that in some instances the state can be regarded as *the enemy* of its own citizens (Booth, 1991: 318; Dunne & Wheeler, 2004: 20), it makes more sense to talk about bottom-up securitisations. All in all, "society" —in the form of small entities (e.g. the media, private organizations, civil movements, minorities, ethnic groups, and so forth)— is now determined to speak security by itself. This entails that the security agendas of state and society could go at times in different directions, and sometimes clash (Wæver *et al.*, 1993, 1-58, 185-99).

Due to space limitations, and because it is the most complex of all, only a case of an indirect, top-down securitisation will be assessed below. Before advancing to that stage, however, a brief review of the other models is put in place herein. The indirect, bottom-up model is, in theory, the same as the indirect, top-down with the sole exception that it arises within society instead of within the state. It is utilised mainly by actors/groups that are trying to press the government in order to increase the security around their identity, which, somehow, they feel is under attack (e.g. illegal immigration). This is why the real audience is at the state level, even if an actual audience within that community is required for endorsing the securitisation. In any case, the securitising group feels so vulnerable and frustrated, that it is ready to take some actions by itself because that way they hope the authorities "understand" the gravity and amend the situation. That would be the main objective; their end, though, is to "save" their identity.

The main particularity of the direct model is that the utterance of the Other is explicit. It is basically a normal process of securitisation in which an actor explicitly securitises an Other and then the audience accepts/rejects it as a legitimate threat granting/denying special powers to act upon it. It is important to note that the actor may be either a representative of the state (direct, top-down) or a member of society (direct, bottom-up). Just a few decades ago, direct securitisations of Others were rather common at the state/political level as the discrimination against Jews in Nazi Germany and of Blacks during South Africa's, and the US, apartheid era

remind us. Nowadays, however, it mainly arises at the societal level by a certain community or group who embrace an indirect securitisation so vehemently that their interpretation takes it to extremes.

The mechanism at work in a direct securitisation is that the securitisers "uncover" the *implied subject* in an indirect securitisation, naming it and, in this manner, converting it into the *explicit subject*, namely, into the focus of the securitisation. Accordingly, the *who* becomes the exposed threat superseding the *what*. In the case of the indirect securitisation of Islam examined below, the stress is on the referent "terrorism" (the *explicit object*), whilst "Muslims" is the *implicit subject*. The action of "uncovering" the *hidden* Other —that is, transforming "Muslims" into the *explicit subject* and thus turning the indirect securitisation into a direct securitisation— occurs whenever an actor, impelled by the sense of urgency (and/or political ambitions), is ready to name the Other, no matter the consequences, relying on the shared knowledge on *who* and *what*. In this instance, due to the characteristics of the social construction "Islam", the securitising actor *realises* that "Muslims", not "terrorism", are the *menace*. Even if they are seldom mentioned in the official discourse, the securitiser *knows* Muslims *ought to be* the perpetrators of *any* terror. Consequently, he/she alerts the audience about the imminent threat. By saying "Muslims", the act is done, paraphrasing the CS.

Moved basically by misled perceptions and stereotypes, and in many cases by "fresh evidence" about the Other's "evilness", the audience (e.g. a town, a movement, an organisation, a community) is urged to recognise the "invasion" and defend their identity. The imminence of the "menace" is so great, that the audience is prompted to act. The underlying wisdom is that nobody else will perform this task on their behalf —not even the government—; if they do not act now, they risk losing their identity and way of life. Simultaneously, then, the message is also addressed to the authorities. Unlike the indirect, bottom-up, in which the authorities act as a "parallel audience", in the direct, bottom-up model the intention is not to put pressure on the government. Rather than requesting their intervention to control "the menace", it is merely a warning that they are about to act no matter what.

Indeed, one of the common denominators in a direct, bottom-up securitisation is that both securitiser and audience feel so alienated from and frustrated with the government's policies that they could not expect it to do something. Therefore, the authorities are seen as an obstacle.

In contrast to the indirect, bottom-up, where the securitisers still expect something from the authorities, in the direct model no hope is left. Accordingly, the direct, bottom-up securitisation usually contravenes the official position of the state and, in many cases, breaches the law. Largely, the authorities would tolerate the situation either because it presupposes that the securitisation has a certain amount of legitimacy or because of political reasons —impeding it will result in an unpopular movement affecting even more its position among this or other groups alike. The state will, in any case, condemn their acting and intervene to avoid the situation getting out of control.

To sum up, the indirect, top-down model is the most subtle but at the same time the most dangerous for its *silent* feature can *unofficially* target a minority, whilst the indirect, bottom-up would be in the middle, tending to become radicalised if the problem persists (i.e. to turn into a direct process), and the direct models (top-down, bottom-up) the most extreme of all entailing violence almost always and having a great potential for disruption.

Indirect securitisation of Islam

The success of "Islam" as a securitisable Other is enormous because, due to its modern construction, Muslims (*implicit subject*) can be related to many contemporary key security and political issues (*explicit objects*). Consequently, whilst in the West some could securitise Muslims *via* migration (*Daily Telegraph*, 2005/04/15: 17), others could do it through extremism (*Sun*, 2006/02/20), security reasons (*Times*, 2005/10/13: 35), institutionalism —e.g. the defence of laicism (Al-Jazeera, 2004/09/02), freedom of speech (*Herald*, 2006/02/18: 7; *WP*, 2006/02/19: B1), respect for the law (ANSA, 2005/06/04), human rights (*Guardian*, 2005/10/10: 18)—, feminism (*Gazette*, 2005/03/11: A1) and/or religion (AP, 2001/09/15; US Newswire, 2001/11/19; *Miami Herald*, 2006/03/14: 3; AP, 2006/03/15). Anyhow, the abstraction "Islam" usually works in the Westernised world as the alter ego of terrorism. Despite the many attempts to detach one from the other, whenever terrorism is invoked, "Islam" is implicit even if there will be no specific utterance at all of either "Muslims", "Islam", nor "Islamic". This omission (i.e. the absence of a speech act), nonetheless, is supported by the shared knowledge of "Islam", that is, the Western construction "Islam".

Since the first contacts between Christians and Muslims, in the mid seventh century, Islamic faith was perceived as the "prime external challenge" to Christendom (Wheatcroft, 2003: 39). From the start, Christians constructed "Islam" as a brutal, irrational, aggressive Other (Qureshi & Sells, 2003: 1-47; Wheatcroft, 2003: 39-59; Neumann, 1999: 39-63). Thirteenth-century crusader Oliver of Paderborn's words attest it: "Islam began by the sword, was maintained by the sword, and by the sword would be ended" (quoted in Daniel, 1960: 127). Subsequently, it was labelled a pseudo-prophecy, whilst Mohammad was regarded a false prophet and a deceiver (Daniel, 1960: 47-73; Esposito, 1991: 37-46), being epitomised as the Antichrist himself (Wheatcroft, 2003: 55).[6] Important historic events such as the Moorish occupation of a great portion of the Iberian Peninsula for almost eight centuries (711-1492), as well as the ascension of the Ottoman empire —with the ensuing sieges of Vienna (1529, 1683)— nurtured the portrait of a hostile, expansionist Muslim Other.

Modern anti-Muslimism,[7] then, is nourished from that initial mix of fear and hatred that Christians sensed towards Muslims since the very beginning. The basis of both anti-Muslimism and Islamophobia can be found in what Said called "Orientalism" (see Said, 2003a: 1-73; 2003b: 84). The contemporary Western depiction presents a sophisticated, more-than-ever furious "Islam" that has traded the sword for bombs. The prevalent data, indeed, does not help to detach terrorism from Islam so easily: of 261 "terrorist organisations" identified in the world during the twentieth century, more than half (142) were Islamists or related to Islam in a way.[8] Moreover, of 42 "terrorist groups" existing today, according to the US, 64.5 percent (27 groups) are Islamists (Counterterrorism Office, 2004), and four out of six "state sponsors of terrorism" have Muslim majority (Counterterrorism Office, 2004/10/20).[9] It is therefore unsurprising that the FBI's 24 most-wanted terrorists are all Muslims.[10] These facts, nevertheless, are not a

[6] It is noteworthy to stress that while the Christian mainstream has tended to demonise Mohammad, this inclination changed somewhat during the Enlightenment, when the Muslim prophet was admired by many Christians, who even questioned whether he was the true prophet (Robinson, 1996: xv).

[7] "Anti-Muslimism" is used in preference to "Islamophobia". Since the stress of the securitisation of Others is on *who*, anti-Muslimism is more accurate since it refers to attacks against Muslim individuals not against their faith (Islamophobia) (see Halliday, 2002: 128-30), even if sometimes it is impossible to make such a differentiation.

[8] These numbers should not be taken as definitive; they only serve as a guide. The account and classification was made following the names, countries of origin, and features of the groups listed (see TRC, Terrorism.com; see also NCTC, 2004/04/27: 113-60; Naval Postgraduate School, 2004/06/17).

[9] These are Iran, Libya, Sudan and Syria; the other two countries are Cuba and North Korea.

[10] Curiously, none of these 24 individuals —not even Osama bin Laden— is wanted for 9/11. Most of them are linked to the 1998 bombings of US embassies in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, and Nairobi, Kenya, and for the 1996 bombing of the Khobar Towers military housing complex in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia (FBI).

license to comprehend terrorism "as if most Muslims are terrorists or most terrorists are Muslims" (Halliday, 1999: 892); actually, only a very tiny minority of Muslims are terrorists.[11]

The Islamic Revolution in Iran, in 1979, was definitive in consolidating "Islam" as the alter ego of terrorism. This "return of Islam" (Said, 1997: L), possible in itself due to the Islamic revival of the 1970s (for a thorough overview see Murden, 2002: 133-53), fostered two important developments: the emergence of Islamist terrorism, which began with the 444-day seizure of US embassy in Teheran (Boroumand & Boroumand, 2002: 300-7); and the issuing of the first jihad against "infidels" in modern times after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan (Gunaratna, 2003: 86). With the hostage-taking crisis in Teheran, Americans *understood* —thanks to the "necessary illusions" provided by the media (see Chomsky, 1989: 105-36)— that Muslims represented a menace for US national security and interests (Halliday, 2002: 109-10; Said, 1997: xi-xii; Gerges, 1997: 69-71).

Given these circumstances, as soon as he got into office, Ronald Reagan securitised "international terrorism" without any hesitation (see Reagan, 1981/01/20; *WP*, 1981/01/29: A1).[12] Nonetheless, international terrorism escalated to its highest peak ever during the early 1980s, a situation that had permanent repercussions for the image of "Islam". Americans, for instance, conceived Muslims as "uncivilized", "barbaric", "cruel", "extremist", "fanatical", "irrational", and so forth (Gerges, 1997: 70-1; Muscati, 2003: 253-4). This perception, however, did not emerge in the 1980s but in the early 1970s, when Americans already equated Islam with terror (Dajani & Michelmor, 1999). The root of this feeling could be found in US media coverage of the Yom Kippur war (1973) and the OPEC oil boycott (1974) that turned "Islam" into news; after these events Muslims —mainly Arabs— were caricatured as greedy oil producers or potential terrorists (Said, 2003a: 284-93; 1997: 28, 36-55).

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[11] Daniel Pipes (1990/11/19) has argued that "survey research and elections suggest that dyed-in-the-wool fundamentalists in most places constitute no more than 10 percent of the Muslim population". Another commentator questioned: "What proportion of Western Muslims is hot for jihad? Five percent? Ten, 12 percent?" (*Chicago Sun-Times*, 2006/04/02). None of them provides a source for these estimates, though. Most calculations account more than 1.2 billion Muslims worldwide. Even if an utterly exaggerated 10 percent of Muslims practiced terrorism —that is more than 120 million people!—, it still would be a very small percentage of that population, since 90 percent would remain non-terrorist, which is the vast majority (see Halliday, 2002: 64-8).

[12] It is noteworthy that despite Islamist terrorism's ascendancy during the 1980s, US political discourse largely linked Communism and the Soviet Union to international terrorism (see Chomsky, 1989: 113-5; *NYT*, 1981/03/29: A4; *NYT*, 1984/04/21: A1).

After the Cold War, "Islam" seemed for Western policymakers the natural, perfect candidate to supersede the Soviet Union not only because of its historical and geopolitical credentials (Mortimer, 1991: 10-3; Buzan, 1991b: 441-2), but also for its intricate relation with terrorism —that made it a convincing peril (Campbell, 1996: 167; see, for instance, *NYT*, 1996/01/21: 1). In spite of its *merits*, the "selection" of "Islam" as the coming Other was not a straightforward task. US Scholars and statesmen led the search for an enemy. Bernard Lewis (1990) was one of the first in identifying "political Islam" as the next threat, but others distinguished Japan (Huntington, 1991: 8-13, 16), Russia (Kissinger, 1994: 808), China and East Asia (Halloran, 1996) as potential foes. Robert Kaplan (1994) went further by identifying all sorts of menaces from ecological devastation to the spread of anarchy. Separately, the Pentagon imagined new threats (*NYT*, 1992/02/17: A1). In these searches, even "killer asteroids" were contemplated (Campbell, 1996: 167).

In the meantime, the negative perception of "Islam" strengthened in the US in the 1990s after the 1993 bombing of the WTC in NY (see Knight, 2004: 266-8), but especially in April 1995, when "Islam" was unreasonably blamed by the media —and, as a consequence, by the population— for the attack of a federal building in Oklahoma City; around 200 attacks against Muslims were accounted in the aftermath of the attack. Later it was known that Timothy McVeigh, a supremacist white American, was the author of this terrorist attack (see Said, 1997: xiv; *NYT*, 1995/04/21: A26). Seven years after the explosion, with complete evidence that no Islamic organization participated in the attack, and in spite of McVeigh's confession and execution, Americans still *knew* that the terrorist hand of "Islam" in the persona of Iraq was behind the bombing of the Murrah building (see *Evening Standard*, 2002/10/21: 1). This picture of a violent "Islam" continued to be nurtured even more after the terrorist acts against US embassies in Tanzania and Kenya in 1998. Yet, 9/11 was the final *proof* needed.

Since it has been built as synonymous to terrorism, there is no need to mention it anymore: it is *inferred* that "Islam" *is* behind *any* terrorist attack. Whenever there is a terrorist attack, *people just know* Muslims *ought to be* behind the deed. This is why a copy of the Qur'an, an Arabic manuscript or a recorded tape with Arabic chants left behind a bombed site are all reliable, incontestable evidence that "Islam" was the author. The suggestion that "Islam" is the alter ego of terrorism is supported by this reality. It is revealing, for that matter, that the British government kept silent about the fact that neither al-Qaeda nor any other Islamist organisation

was behind the 7/7 bombings (*Observer*, 2006/04/09: 1-2; see also *Sunday Times*, 2006/03/29: 1). The interesting question here is why the authorities were so ambiguous in this respect and why they keep fostering the idea that the UK is under continuous danger posed by "an international terrorist network", namely al-Qaeda.

This doubt may find an answer in the fact that albeit mainstream Western political discourse has not officially securitised it (with some notable exceptions), "Islam" has in effect been indirectly securitised *via* terrorism. Italians Silvio Berlusconi and Umberto Bossi, the assassinated Dutch politician Pim Fortuyn, French Jean Marie Le-Pen, Austrian Jörg Haider, Danish Pia Kjaersgaard, and Belgian Filip Dewinter are indeed among the exceptions. All these characters have adopted the clash of civilisations discourse mixing it with populism, racism, xenophobia, anti-Muslimism and nationalism (see *Times*, 2001/09/27: 13; *Guardian*, 2002/05/14: 16; Marranci, 2004: 107-8; *Slate*, 2002/04/26; see also BBC.com, 2002/05/14; *Guardian*, 2002/05/09: 15; *The Nation*, 2002/05/27; Zaslove, 2004: 61-81).

In the US, on the contrary, the conciliatory official discourse was more evident since 1992, when George Bush Sr. defined an enduring American policy towards Islamic civilisation known as the Meridian House address (Gerges, 1999: 83-5). Edward Djerejian, the official who delivered that speech, then said: "The US Government does not view Islam as the next 'ism' confronting the West or threatening world peace. That is an overly simplistic response to a complex reality. The Cold War is not being replaced with a new competition between Islam and the West. It is evident that the Crusades have been over for a long time" (Djerejian, 1992/06/08). Bill Clinton, following the principles set in the Meridian House address and his own agenda of multiculturalism, rejected any possibility of a clash between Islamic and Western civilisations saying, "We respect Islam" (Gerges, 1999: 86-104, quotation from 86).

Bush Jr.'s position has been quite the same. In the aftermath of 9/11, he urged Americans to respect Muslim-Americans in order to prevent retaliations (White House, 2001/09/13). A few days later, he even suggested that "Islam is peace" making thus a stark distinction between "terrorists" and "Muslims" (White House, 2001/09/17). Furthermore, during the 2004 NATO summit in Turkey he rejected any civilisational clash exhorting the EU to accept Turkey as a new member (White House, 2004/06/29). In October 2005, Bush was even clearer: "Some call this evil Islamic radicalism; others, militant Jihadism; still others, Islamo-fascism. Whatever it's

called, this ideology is very different from the religion of Islam" (White House, 2005/10/06). On the other hand, it is crucial to stress that, even if in a lesser degree, Bush has also resorted to confrontationalist discourses,[13] as in the speech in which he termed the war on terrorism a "crusade" (White House, 2001/09/16). However, his official discourse shows no major confrontationalist features and, therefore, should be regarded as mainly conciliatory.

Despite this reality, the Orientalist picture of Muslims and Islam forged in the media since the mid 1970s constitutes the tacit link required: images of bombings, attacks, terrorists, killings, and violence remain in Westerners' collective memory as intrinsically Islamic. This is why the construction "Islam" can itself be regarded as a discourse of "danger" in the West because it evokes terrorism, violence, cruelty, bloodiness, threat, evilness. Therefore, whenever "terrorism" is uttered, the evocation of Islam/Muslim is implicit, albeit these referents would be omitted. Drawing on Alexander Wendt, "social structures have three elements: shared knowledge, material resources, and practices" (1995: 73-4). The notion Islam-as-the-alter-ego-of-terrorism fulfils the requirements to become a social construction as it has a shared knowledge ("Islam is a wicked religion, preaches hate and incubates terrorism"), material resources (arms, *nuclear weapons*,[14] suicide fighters, mujahidin), and practices (Islamist terrorism, Islamophobia, hatred attacks against Muslims). As a result —paraphrasing Wendt—, "500 British nuclear weapons are less threatening to the United States" (Ibid.: 73) than one solitary Muslim.[15]

The pre- and post-9/11 Muslim's experience in the West serves not only as an undeniable evidence for the latter assumption, but also hints the magnitude of the securitisation of Muslims in the West. Indeed, September 11th, the "war on terror", and the growing wave of terrorism in Iraq after the US-led invasion have turned life for Islamic devotees around the world —principally in the West, but also outside it— even harder: massive, indiscriminate detentions —at least 1,200 Muslims have been detained in the US and 600 in Great Britain as of 2004— (*Observer*, 2001/12/09: 4); harassment; official repression; intimidation; hatred attacks; and anti-Muslimism (e.g. one year after 9/11 racism towards Muslims in the US rose 1,700 percent

[13] See (Gerges, 1999: 20-36) for a thorough explanation of confrontationalist and accommodationist interpretations of Islam.

[14] As was the American-British justification for invading Iraq.

[15] US denial of entry for Yusuf Islam, formerly Cat Stevens (*WP*, 2004/09/22: A10), and scholar Tariq Ramadan (*WP*, 2004/08/28: A25) could illustrate this point.

(HRW, 2002: 15; UPI, 2003/03/28); five years later, Americans' perception of Islam is increasingly negative (*WP*, 2006/03/09: A1).

As noted already, the panic towards "Islam" is not new. What is innovative, though, is the belief that Islamic civilisation is a threat for the rest of civilisations (Huntington, 1996: 177). This notion might find solid grounds in the fact that in many countries, including Islamic countries, Muslims are engaged in armed conflicts resorting to terrorism frequently. Since "in the age of terror, there is less room for error" (Ikenberry, 2002b: 50), there is a global consensus among politicians that "terrorism affects us all" (*Independent*, 2004/09/04: 5).[16] As it has been constructed as the alter ego of terrorism, "Islam" could then easily be considered the world's de facto Other —even so for Muslim countries (the most affected by Islamist terrorism).[17] Correcting Huntington, then, instead of "the West and the rest" (1996: 183) it should have been "Islam and the rest".

All things considered, the indirect securitisation of Others is the ideal method to control a given minority, an adversary, without even mentioning it. The connection between *implied subject* (who) and *explicit object* (what) is made by the audiences, whose members, according to their own experience, the information to which they have been exposed and the shared knowledge, process the given data to subjectively, even unconsciously, accept the proposed securitisation.

[16] This phrase was said by then British Foreign minister Jack Straw after the siege of a school in Beslan, Russia, by Chechen rebels in 2004. The anti-terror global consensus after 9/11 can be understood also through the wisdom that "terrorism affects us all" (see AFP, 2001/09/21).

[17] For Islamists such as al-Qaeda, the "apostates" —that is, Muslims who reject the "true belief" or collaborate with "the West"— are worse than "idolaters" —those who have never embraced Islam—; consequently, no mercy should be applied upon them (Doran, 2002: 280-1). Hence, it is no surprise that Islamists frequently castigate Islamic nations with terrorism (see, for example, Bilgrami, 2003; Breger, 2003; *Economist*, 1993/03/13: 21; Tal, 1998; Wiktorowicz, 2000; *Economist*, 2004/04/24: 58; Nasr, 2000; NBC News, 2004/09/02).

IV.- Conclusion

The securitisation of Others is not a new feature of political and social life. One could even argue that it is as old as nations. Yet, in our times, when the misleading idea of a clash between civilisations is recurrently utilised to interpret local and global events, it is necessary to identify the securitisation of Others for what it is: a discursive tool aimed at gaining more powers with the purpose of furthering someone's interests with the excuse of protecting an identity. Consequently, this process will always entail the diminishing of the Other and the exaltation of the Self. Lacking the appropriate referent, the media usually employ racial or ethnic glasses to describe any kind of harassment against a minority. Indeed, there is actually a very thin line between securitisation of Others and racism/discrimination. The issue becomes even more complicated because racism/discrimination can often be part of the securitisation of Others. However, the difference is to be found on whether there is a security speech act and an audience accepting it (securitisation) or not, being then simple prejudice towards Others (racism).

In any event, there is no doubt that more research is needed on this topic. One of the recurrent questions that comes to mind, for instance, is whether indirect *securitisations* of Others —presumably the most common in modern politics— are really securitisations, as defined by the Copenhagen School. Since they contravene the essential premise set out by the CS —namely, the existence of a speech act—, it may be easy to disregard the entire idea of a *silent* securitisation of Others. Yet, as the evidence above shows, there may be a clear connection between a *what* (the *explicit object*) and a *who* (the *implicit subject*) that holds due to the shared knowledge of a community. In this sense, the securitisation of Others is itself a social construction that relies on many other social constructions. Through the framework outlined in this paper, it may be possible to analyse how these social constructions were built and, first and foremost, with what intention. Whether it is called a securitisation or not, we are in front of a very dangerous process that needs thorough understanding.

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