

THE REFLECTION OF MIGRATION POLICY IN THE SECURITY STRATEGIC DOCUMENTS OF THE USA AND THE EU: A Political Science Perspective

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ABSTRACT

The article provides a comparative analysis of the perception of migration policy in the strategic documents of the United States and the European Union from a political science perspective. The aim of the study is to examine how migration is both securitized and institutionalized within different political systems, as well as to assess the impact of these processes on policy formulation and implementation. The theoretical framework is based on securitization theory, which allows for an analysis of how migration is constructed as a security issue and what political consequences arise from this discourse. The study employs a comparative and qualitative methodology, based on the content analysis of strategic policy documents. The findings show that in the U.S. National Security Strategy, migration is primarily framed within a security-centered logic, where priority is given to border control, risk management, and selective immigration policies. At the same time, it also incorporates economic and integration dimensions, forming a hybrid governance model. In contrast, the European Union's strategic approach is characterized by a multi-level and normatively oriented human-centered discourse, in which migration is viewed not only as a security challenge but also as an issue of human rights, social stability, and regional cooperation. However, at the level of practical implementation, there is a growing emphasis on externalization and control mechanisms, indicating internal contradictions within the EU framework. The article concludes that both the United States and the European Union develop hybrid models of migration governance, where securitization and management approaches are combined in different proportions. These differences are shaped by institutional structures and value priorities, which play a decisive role in the formation of migration policies.

Key words: *migration policy, securitization, national security, strategic documents, social integration, border control, international migration, security discourse.*

INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century, migration has evolved from a socio-economic phenomenon into a pivotal issue of national and regional security. In the strategic documents of both the U.S. and the EU, it reflects an often contradictory combination of border control, risk management, and the protection of human rights. The goal of the article is to analyze the processes of migration securitization and institutionalization in U.S. and EU strategies. The research question is directed at identifying the models through which these entities combine security, economic interests, and humanitarian values. The work is structured based on the presentation of U.S. and EU experiences and their subsequent comparative analysis.

The scientific novelty lies in the observation of migration as a comprehensive political-security discourse. Unlike existing studies, this research utilizes securitization theory as a unified framework to conduct a comparative analysis of the U.S. and the EU. The novelty also includes the revelation of the hybrid nature of migration perception, where securitization and governance are combined according to the structure of political systems. The study emphasizes the characteristics of the security-centric and selective model in the U.S., and the normative-human-centric and multi-level governance in the EU.

METHODOLOGY

The article is based on a qualitative research approach and employs a comparative analysis methodology, the aim of which is to identify the differences and commonalities in the perception of migration policy within the strategic documents of the United States and the European Union.

The theoretical foundation of the research is formed by securitization theory, within the framework of which it is analyzed how migration is presented as a security issue and what political tools are legitimized through that discourse. This approach enables the study of not only political decisions but also the ideological and discursive structures underlying them. The empirical base includes a content analysis of US and EU strategic and political documents, specifically national security strategies, the EU Global Strategy, migration policy program documents, and related institutional reports. A combined method of content and discursive analysis is applied, allowing for the identification of both political priorities and their linguistic formulations. Within the scope of the research, a comparative analysis is also conducted, through which structural and value-based differences between the two political systems are distinguished. The comparison is carried out based on three main criteria: the degree of securitization, institutional management mechanisms, and normative approaches.

At the same time, it is necessary to note the limitations of the research. The analysis is primarily based on official documents, which allows for the study of the discursive level of

policy but does not fully reflect its practical implementation. Additionally, the research is focused on the US and the EU, without including the comparative experience of other regions. Nevertheless, the applied methodology allows for a systematic analysis of political-security perceptions of migration and the revelation of the key patterns of their formation.

DISCUSSION

1. Perception of Migration Issues in the U.S. National Security Strategy

In the United States' national security strategic thinking, migration is a multilayered and dynamic structural phenomenon, the perception of which is formed within the context of political, institutional, and security interactions. As a state founded on immigration, the U.S. has constantly attempted to combine the liberal tradition of open borders with the strategic principles of maintaining state security.

In U.S. strategic documents, migration is constructed around three interconnected dimensions: **1. Border and territorial security**, **2. Prevention of terrorism and international crime**, **3. The domestic political agenda of immigrant management and integration**.

Together, these dimensions form the complex structure of the U.S. security policy toward migration, where each component complements the others.

1.1. Border Control as a Primary Component of National Security

The challenges of mass migration in various countries of the world have had a multifaceted impact on internal resources, as they have exhausted state and community capacities, increased levels of violence and other crimes, weakened social cohesion, distorted labor markets, and undermined the strength of national security. In U.S. strategic documents, these processes are perceived not merely as social or economic issues, but as a pivotal threat to the country's security, requiring coordinated and multilayered measures. The strategy emphasizes that the era of mass migration must end, and the country's borders must remain controllable, protected, and purposeful (NSS, 2025). This approach is based on three important principles: **First**, the protection of the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity; **Second**, the prevention of security threats; **Third**, the management of the social and economic consequences of controlling migration flows.

In U.S. strategy, border security is a fundamental pillar of national security, aimed at preventing illegal migration, terrorism, and trafficking. Agencies such as CBP, INS, and other law enforcement bodies ensure controlled migration through technological and intelligence means (DHS, 2023). The border is viewed as a vital environment for internal stability and economic growth.

Theoretically, this reflects the logic of "securitization" as formulated by B. Buzan and O. Wæver, where migration is presented as an existential threat, thereby legitimizing the use of

extraordinary political tools (Buzan et al., 1998). Border control is transformed into a politicized practice that defines the division between "internal" and "external" spaces.

While this discourse justifies the tightening of borders and the use of militarized tools, it faces criticism for restricting human rights and deepening social polarization. The U.S. strategy attempts to resolve the tension between state and human security by combining strict enforcement with immigrant integration policies.

Thus, a comprehensive model is formed based on three pillars: strengthening sovereignty, preventing security threats, and managing the socio-economic consequences of migration flows. Border control in the U.S. serves as a central tool for the reproduction of statehood, defining both territorial boundaries and the legitimacy of the political order.

1.2. Migration and Terrorism Prevention

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, not only reshaped the concept of U.S. national security but also radically changed the perception of migration. Migration began to be viewed not exclusively as a socio-economic phenomenon, but as a platform carrying potential risks. This transformation manifested in several interconnected directions. First, visa and entry permit processes were tightened. Second, international data exchange was significantly expanded, resulting in the U.S. forming a more integrated cooperation with its allies. Third, aviation security mechanisms were strengthened, including multilayered passenger screening and the institutional reinforcement of airport surveillance. However, it is important to emphasize that these measures do not imply a complete "securitization" of migration. Instead, it is integrated into a broader risk management system as a sub-category rather than an independent central threat. U.S. strategic documents show that migration flows are viewed as a "conditional risk factor," which is activated only when there are specific links between it and terrorism (NSS, 2025). At a theoretical level, this approach can be explained within the framework of securitization theory; according to Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde, a phenomenon becomes a security issue when it is presented as an existential threat and justifies the use of extraordinary measures. Thus, a hybrid approach is formed, where migration is simultaneously maintained as a socio-economic process and controlled as a security factor. This allows the government to allocate resources rationally, avoid over-securitization, and maintain the targeted focus of the policy while ensuring the effectiveness of terrorism prevention (NSS, 2025). It can be concluded that in the context of preventing terrorism, U.S. migration policy forms a rational model of risk management, where security objectives are combined with the limited maintenance of systemic openness.

1.3. Migration Policy and Immigrant Integration

Despite the securitization trends established in the post-September 11 period, U.S. migration policy continues to be based on the institutional recognition of the economic and demographic value of migration. In this context, the "Migration-Development Nexus System" is formed, within which immigration is viewed as a catalyst for economic growth, innovation, and labor market stability. First, attracting highly qualified immigrants constitutes a key component of U.S. competitiveness. Second, migration is an important tool for mitigating structural imbalances in the labor market. The involvement of low- and medium-skilled labor fills sectors where there is a shortage of domestic supply. Third, integration policy in the U.S. is characterized by a dual logic: on one hand, educational, linguistic, and socio-economic inclusion programs are implemented, aimed at the long-term adaptation of immigrants; on the other hand, legal and administrative mechanisms aimed at restricting illegal migration are strengthened. These contradictory trends can be explained within the theoretical framework of integration models. The U.S. is traditionally viewed as an example of the "liberal-pluralist" model, where the cultural identity of immigrants is partially preserved while being combined with economic integration. However, the strengthening of the security agenda leads to an increase in elements of "disciplinary integration." The fundamental paradox of U.S. migration policy lies in the fact that it simultaneously seeks to maximize the economic benefits of human capital inflow and minimize the security and social risks associated with it. Thus, a model of selective inclusion is formed, where the state differentiates migrants according to their economic utility and risk profile.

1.4. Domestic Political Discussions and Security Discourse

Migration policy in the U.S. is actively discussed in both the public and political spheres, and it often serves as a crucial factor in shaping political and security agendas.

- **Political Positions:** Parties approach migration in different ways. Left-wing forces, such as the Democratic Party, typically support humanitarian and integration policies, such as the DACA program (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals), which provides temporary protection and access to education for undocumented young immigrants. Right-wing forces, such as the Republican Party, prioritize the strengthening of borders and the legal regulation of immigration, such as the "Secure the Border" 2023 initiative.

- **Public Perceptions:** Public attitudes toward migration significantly depend on economic and social conditions. For example, during times of high unemployment, public concern regarding immigration increases, while during periods of rapid economic growth, it declines.

- **Securitization Discourse:** Certain social and political actors present migration as a security threat. Such approaches have been manifested in presidential and Congressional

election campaigns, where border control and illegal immigration were described as domestic security issues.

As a result, migration in the U.S. becomes a pivotal theme of political struggle, around which not only political but also security agendas are formed. Migration is aligned with social, economic, and security objectives, and this multifaceted impact is the reason why it is constantly emphasized in political discourse and public agendas. The perception of migration in the U.S. National Security Strategy is characterized as a **hybrid model** that combines elements of securitization theory with institutional management mechanisms. This system seeks to simultaneously ensure border security, prevent global threats, and utilize the socio-economic potential of migration while maintaining a balance between democratic values and human rights. Within this multi-level policy, securitization discourse, border control, terrorism prevention, and integration programs form an interconnected complex. Through this framework, the state aims to protect its sovereignty, mitigate risks, and maintain economic efficiency. Consequently, U.S. migration policy functions as a **rationalized balancing model**, where the relationships between security, the economy, and social stability are regulated through selective and situational political decisions.

2. The Perception of Migration in EU Strategic Documents within the Context of Human Security, Social Stability, and Regional Cooperation

The issue of migration within the strategic thinking of the European Union has evolved as a multilayered political-security category, the understanding of which cannot be limited solely to the classical logic of border control or labor mobility. The EU approach has developed simultaneously across three interconnected dimensions: human-centered security, internal social stability, and externalized migration management, between which there exists not a clear separation, but rather a dynamic tension.

2.1. Human Security: The Normative Agenda and its Limitations

One of the key features of the perception of migration in EU strategic documents is its placement within the "human security" paradigm. This approach, which has its theoretical foundations in the 1994 UNDP report (UNDP, 1994), implies that security should shift from the state toward the individual. This logic is reflected in the EU Global Strategy (European Union, 2016), which emphasizes the "protection of human dignity and rights" as a core principle of both foreign and domestic policy. This normative positioning became particularly evident during the 2015 migration crisis, when more than one million refugees and migrants entered EU territory. In the initial phase, Germany's policy, specifically within the framework of the "welcoming culture" (*Willkommenskultur*), was presented as an example of a human-centric approach. Germany alone received around one million asylum seekers in 2015–2016. However, subsequent

developments demonstrated the limitations of this approach. Specifically, the disproportionate distribution of the burden among member states and internal political resistance led the humanitarian discourse to gradually give way to control-oriented policies. This indicates that human-centric security in the EU exists not as an absolute principle, but as a normative ideal that constantly clashes with political reality. This contradiction is expressed at the institutional level in the practical application of the Common European Asylum System. Despite the existence of unified standards, the conditions for receiving asylum seekers and the speed of decision-making vary significantly among member states, which undermines the integrity of the system.

2.2. Social Stability: Integration as Preventive Security

The second key component of EU strategic thinking is the link between migration and social stability. Here, migration is viewed as a factor with a dual impact, which can both strengthen and undermine social cohesion. From an economic perspective, migration is a vital resource. For example, in Italy and Spain, the agricultural and service sectors are heavily dependent on migrant labor, while in Germany, highly skilled immigrants fill shortages in the engineering and technological sectors. In this context, migration is viewed as a tool for mitigating demographic aging (EU, 2016). However, from the perspective of social stability, the key issue is not the volume of migration, but the quality of its management. Examples of failed integration can be observed in the French suburbs (*banlieues*), where the socio-economic marginalization of immigrants and their descendants has led to periodic unrest. In this context, EU policy transforms integration into a security tool. The Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion (2021–2027) provides specific mechanisms: language education, labor market access, educational inclusiveness, and engagement in local communities (European Commission, 2020). These measures are aimed not only at ensuring social equality but also at preventing radicalization and social isolation. Here, one can speak of "preventive securitization," where social policy becomes a means of ensuring security.

2.3. Regional Cooperation and Externalization: The "External Borders" of Migration

One of the most discussed and controversial components of EU migration policy is its externalized nature. This approach implies that the management of migration flows should be carried out not only within the EU but also beyond its borders. One of the most famous examples of this policy is the 2016 EU-Turkey Agreement (European Council, 2016), under which Turkey committed to restricting the flow of migrants to Europe in exchange for financial support and political concessions. As a result, migration flows across the Aegean Sea decreased sharply, demonstrating the practical effectiveness of the externalization policy. Similar mechanisms are also applied in cooperation with North African countries, particularly in controlling migration

flows through Libya. However, this approach faces serious criticism, as it is often accompanied by the risk of human rights violations related to the detention conditions and treatment of migrants. In EU strategic documents, migration appears as a "hybrid" political sphere, where different, often contradictory logics are combined. This characterization is due to the fact that migration simultaneously pertains to fundamental human rights and issues of state sovereignty and security. On one hand, the EU positions itself as a value-based entity that prioritizes human-centric security, refugee protection, and adherence to international legal norms (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2018). This approach is reflected in ensuring the right to asylum, protecting vulnerable groups, and developing integration policies. On the other hand, EU migration policy includes tightened border controls, prevention of illegal migration, and risk management mechanisms (Frontex, 2019), which often take priority in crisis situations. This duality can be systematically presented at three main levels: **Normative level:** based on human rights, humanism, and international obligations; **Functional level:** related to labor market requirements, economic development, and demographic challenges; **Security level:** aimed at border control, threat prevention, and ensuring internal stability.

The interaction of these three levels shapes the complex and multilayered nature of EU migration policy. The EU experience shows that migration policy cannot be effective if it is built on only one logic. Focusing solely on security can lead to the limitation of human rights, while an exclusively humanitarian approach can lead to a decrease in management effectiveness. Therefore, a multifaceted, integrated approach is necessary to combine different goals and tools. It is precisely this multilayeredness that makes migration policy both effective and controversial, as it requires a constant balance between values, interests, and risks, which in turn determines the complexity and sometimes contradictory nature of political decisions.

It can be noted that the migration policy of the European Union is formed as a multilevel and normative-functional hybrid system, where the principles of human-centric security, socio-economic necessities, and security principles are combined. Unlike the U.S. as a unified state entity, the formation of migration policy in the EU is conditioned by a multi-level governance structure, where the interaction between national and supranational levels often leads to internal policy contradictions. The normative agenda of human security, although remaining a key component of EU identity, is in practice limited by political realism and the conflict of interests among member states. At the same time, integration policies are being transformed into a vital tool for ensuring social stability, forming preventive security mechanisms aimed at reducing social polarization and radicalization. The externalization policy shows that the EU seeks to redefine the spatial boundaries of security by moving the management of migration flows beyond its geographical borders. However, this approach raises

serious questions regarding legitimacy and the protection of human rights. Thus, it can be concluded that EU migration policy represents a process of constant balancing, where values, interests, and security priorities are in dynamic interaction. This system, on one hand, provides flexibility and adaptability, and on the other hand, maintains structural contradictions that continue to determine the further directions of the development of EU migration policy.

CONCLUSION

This research demonstrates that the perception of migration in the strategic documents of the United States and the European Union is formed as a multilayered and hybrid political phenomenon, based on the interactions of security, economic, and normative factors. In both cases, migration moves beyond the scope of a purely demographic or socio-economic phenomenon and is integrated into the national and regional security discourse, becoming a crucial component of strategic planning. At the same time, comparative analysis reveals significant differences between these two systems.

In the United States, migration policy is formed as a centralized and institutionally consistent system dominated by the logic of securitization and risk management. Here, migration is viewed primarily as a process subject to control, yet recognition of its economic and innovative significance is simultaneously maintained, leading to the formation of a selective inclusion model. In contrast, migration policy in the European Union is characterized by a hybrid structure formed under conditions of multi-level governance and normative polycentrism. In the EU, migration is perceived simultaneously as an issue of human rights protection, ensuring social stability, and security control, which creates constant tension between the value-based and practical levels. In this context, EU policy more explicitly includes elements of human-centered security, but their implementation is often limited by the interests of member states and political realism. The comparison of the two models shows that the US is more inclined toward securitization and institutional efficiency, while the EU favors an approach based on normative multilateralism and political compromise. However, in both cases, there is a common trend toward the politicization of migration and its integration into the security discourse. Consequently, it can be concluded that in the modern international system, migration policy is transforming into a strategic sphere where states and regional entities are forced to constantly balance security, economic interests, and human rights obligations. It is these different models of balancing that shape the specific characteristics of US and EU migration policies and their future directions of development.

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Քաղաքագիտական տեսանկյուն

Տիգրան Ղազարյան

Հոդվածը նվիրված է միգրացիոն քաղաքականության ընկալման համեմատական վերլուծությանը՝ ԱՄՆ և Եվրոպական միության ռազմավարական փաստաթղթերում՝ քաղաքագիտական տեսանկյունից: Հետազոտության նպատակն է բացահայտել, թե ինչպես է միգրացիան անվտանգայնացվում և միաժամանակ ինստիտուցիոնալացվում տարբեր քաղաքական համակարգերում, ինչպես նաև գնահատել այդ գործընթացների ազդեցությունը քաղաքականության ձևավորման և իրականացման վրա: Տեսական հիմքը անվտանգայնացման տեսությունն է, որը հնարավորություն է տալիս վերլուծել, թե ինչպես է միգրացիան ներկայացվում որպես անվտանգության խնդիր և ինչպիսի քաղաքական հետևանքներ է առաջացնում այդ դիսկուրսը: Հոդվածում կիրառվում է համեմատական և որակական վերլուծության մեթոդաբանություն՝ հիմնված ռազմավարական փաստաթղթերի բովանդակային ուսումնասիրության վրա: Վերլուծությունը ցույց է տալիս, որ ԱՄՆ ազգային անվտանգության ռազմավարությունում միգրացիան առավելապես ընկալվում է անվտանգակենտրոն տրամաբանության շրջանակում, որտեղ առաջնահերթություն է տրվում սահմանային վերահսկողությանը, ռիսկերի կառավարմանը և ընտրողական ներգաղթի քաղաքականությանը: Միաժամանակ, այն ներառում է նաև տնտեսական և ինտեգրացիոն բաղադրիչներ՝ ձևավորելով հիբրիդային կառավարման մոդել: Ի տարբերություն դրա՝ Եվրոպական միության ռազմավարական մոտեցումը բնութագրվում է բազմամակարդակ և նորմատիվ-մարդակենտրոն դիսկուրսով, որտեղ միգրացիան դիտարկվում է ոչ միայն որպես անվտանգային մարտահրավեր, այլ նաև որպես մարդու իրավունքների, սոցիալական կայունության և տարածաշրջանային համագործակցության խնդիր: Միևնույն ժամանակ, գործնական քաղաքականության մակարդակում նկատվում է արտաքինացման և վերահսկողության մեխանիզմների ուժեղացում, ինչը վկայում է ներքին հակասությունների մասին: Հոդվածում եզրակացվում է, որ ինչպես ԱՄՆ-ում, այնպես էլ ԵՄ-ում ձևավորվում է միգրացիոն քաղաքականության հիբրիդային մոդել, որտեղ անվտանգայնացման և կառավարման

մոտեցումները համադրվում են տարբեր համամասնություններով: Այս տարբերությունները պայմանավորված են քաղաքական համակարգերի ինստիտուցիոնալ կառուցվածքով և արժեքային առաջնահերթություններով, ինչը որոշիչ ազդեցություն ունի միգրացիոն քաղաքականության ձևավորման վրա:

Բանալի բառեր՝ միգրացիոն քաղաքականություն, անվտանգայնացում, ազգային անվտանգություն, ռազմավարական փաստաթղթեր, սոցիալական ինտեգրում, սահմանային վերահսկողություն, միջազգային միգրացիա, անվտանգության դիսկուրս:

РЕЗЮМЕ

ОТРАЖЕНИЕ МИГРАЦИОННОЙ ПОЛИТИКИ В СТРАТЕГИЧЕСКИХ ДОКУМЕНТАХ БЕЗОПАСНОСТИ США И ЕС: Политологический анализ

Тигран Казарян

Статья посвящена сравнительному анализу восприятия миграционной политики в стратегических документах Соединённых Штатов Америки и Европейского союза с точки зрения политической науки. Цель исследования заключается в выявлении того, как миграция секьюритизируется и одновременно институционализируется в различных политических системах, а также в оценке влияния этих процессов на формирование и реализацию политики. Теоретическую основу исследования составляет теория секьюритизации, которая позволяет проанализировать, каким образом миграция конструируется как проблема безопасности и какие политические последствия порождает данный дискурс. В статье применяется сравнительная и качественная методология анализа, основанная на содержательном изучении стратегических документов. Проведённый анализ показывает, что в стратегии национальной безопасности США миграция преимущественно рассматривается в рамках безопасно-ориентированной логики, где приоритет отводится пограничному контролю, управлению рисками и селективной иммиграционной политике. Одновременно она включает также экономические и интеграционные компоненты, формируя гибридную модель управления. В отличие от этого, стратегический подход Европейского союза характеризуется многоуровневым и нормативно-ориентированным человекоцентричным дискурсом, в рамках которого миграция рассматривается не только как вызов безопасности, но и как вопрос прав человека, социальной стабильности и регионального сотрудничества. Вместе с тем на уровне практической политики наблюдается усиление механизмов внешнего управления и контроля, что свидетельствует о наличии внутренних противоречий. В статье делается вывод о том, что как в США, так и в ЕС формируется гибридная модель миграционной политики, в которой подходы секьюритизации и

управления сочетаются в различных пропорциях. Эти различия обусловлены институциональной структурой политических систем и ценностными приоритетами, что оказывает определяющее влияние на формирование миграционной политики.

Ключевые слова: миграционная политика, секьюритизация, национальная безопасность, стратегические документы, социальная интеграция, пограничный контроль, международная миграция, дискурс безопасности.

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