TAKING SECURITY OUT OF CONTEXT

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ABSTRACT

Second generation scholars on securitisation theory claim that articulations of security are shaped and constrained by the context in which they are uttered. While acknowledging the context-dependent nature of securitisation, this thesis considers how security utterances may, in turn, also transform their social environment. The central argument made here is that a successful case of securitisation may reconfigure existing understandings of security within a given context, which may influence how future narratives of threat are constructed. Thus, when studying securitisation, it is not enough to consider the role of context, but it is also important to look at how contextual factors have been shaped by previous securitising narratives. Furthermore, such a perspective opens up a new conceptualisation of context, wherein it is seen as a fluid and contested space that both informs and is informed by securitisation. This argument is illustrated by a case study of the securitisation of George Soros by the Hungarian government from 2015 onwards. Prior to Soros, the government had engaged in the securitisation of a variety of actors and phenomena, including the European Union and immigration. This thesis argues that these previous narratives served to create a context in which Soros could successfully be portrayed as an existential threat. These arguments demonstrated by a qualitative discourse analysis of selected speeches of Hungarian Prime Minister, Viktor Orbán. The insights gained from this study serve to complexify the role of context in securitisation and highlight the reciprocal relations between contextual factors and articulations of security.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Following the end of the Cold War, the field of security studies underwent significant changes, as it saw the emergence of a wide range of new approaches that aimed to broaden how we see and study security. One of the most influential new schools of thought was the Copenhagen School of Security Studies, which was composed of various researchers and academics. Prominent among them were Barry Buzan, Ole Waever, and Jaap de Wilde, who are best known for developing the concept of securitisation. The central idea of securitisation theory is that security threats are constructed as such by the relevant securitising actors through the use of speech acts. Thus, security threats do not exist 'out there,' but are constituted through discourse.[1]

Securitisation has since become a staple in the field of Security Studies, spawning a large and diverse body of work.[2] One of the most dominant sub-fields of securitisation theory is the so-called 'second generation' scholarship, which has provided a wide array of interpretations, criticisms, and modifications to the original framework. Second generation scholars take issue with the claim that something is turned into a security issue purely through the performative force of the speech act. Rather, they argue that the process of securitisation is deeply embedded in the social sphere and thus influenced by a variety of factors. In particular, they highlight the role of social, political, and historical context, claiming that the meaning of security is shaped and constrained by the context in which it is uttered.[3] At the same time, several authors have acknowledged that security articulations may also have the power to transform context, reconfiguring existing structures and discourses. However, as of

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[1] Buzan, Barry, Waever, Ole, and de Wilde, Jaap. *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1998.

[2] See: Williams, Michael C. "Words, Images, Enemies: Securitization and International Politics." *International Studies Quarterly* 47, no. 4 (2003): 511–31, and: Hansen, Lene. "The Little Mermaids Silent Security Dilemma and the Absence of Gender in the Copenhagen School." *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 29, no. 2 (2000): 285–306.

[3] See: Balzacq, Thierry, Sarah Léonard and Jan Ruzika. "'Securitization' revisited: theory and cases." *International Relations* 30, no. 4 (2016): 494–531.

yet, they have given little attention to how exactly security utterances may affect context, and what this means for the role of contextual factors in securitisation. Rather, they continue to highlight the influence context may have over speaking security.[4]

Within the framework of this thesis, I will attempt to fill this gap by taking a look at how securitisation may influence context. I argue that a successful case of securitisation may serve to change how security, as a broader concept, is understood within a given context. This, in turn, may shape how future articulations of security are constructed. Thus, when analysing a case of securitisation, it is important to trace how previous securitising narratives have informed the environment in which it is spoken. It is important to note that I do not claim that contextual factors have no role in shaping securitisation, merely that security articulations also influence context. In this conceptualisation, context becomes a dynamically evolving and contested space, which is influenced by and influences discourses of security. This stands in marked contrast to the view of second generation scholars, who tend to conceive context as a fixed frame of reference through which security utterances are understood.[5]

These arguments are demonstrated empirically through an illustrative case study on the securitisation of George Soros by the Hungarian government from 2015 to present day. Prior to Soros, the government had engaged in the securitisation of a variety of actors and phenomena, including the European Union and immigration. Drawing on a qualitative discourse analysis of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's various speeches from 2010 to 2022, I show how these previous securitising moves shaped how security was perceived within Hungarian society. This created the conditions which made it possible for Soros to

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[4] See: Balzacq, Thierry. "The Three Faces of Securitization: Political Agency, Audience and Context." *European Journal of International Relations* 11, no. 2 (2005): 171–201, and: Stritzel, Holger. "Towards a Theory of Securitization: Copenhagen and Beyond." *European Journal of International Relations* 13, no. 3 (2007): 357–83.

[5] See: Balzacq, "The Three Faces of Securitization," 171–201, and: Balzacq, Thierry. "A Theory of Securitization: Origins, Core Assumptions, and Variants." In *Securitization Theory: How Security Problems Emerge and Dissolve,* edited by Thierry Balzacq, 1–30. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2011.

successfully be portrayed as an existential threat. Indeed, Soros was accused, among other things, of using his agents to infiltrate and control the EU, and of planning to flood Europe with immigrants. Thus, the threat that he posed was explicitly constructed with reference to previous articulations of security. As such, it may be argued that these different narratives have become interlinked, shaping and reinforcing one another. This case serves to highlight the performative force of speech, showing how discourse can inform and reconfigure existing conceptions of threat.

This paper proceeds in four parts. First, I provide an overview of the general critiques that second generation securitisation scholars have levelled against to the original framework. I then consider what they have to say about the role of context, in particular, highlighting the weaknesses and contradictions of their arguments. Next, I outline my own conception of the dynamics between contextual factors and security utterances. Finally, these dynamics are illustrated by the case study on the securitisation of George Soros.

2. THE MANY FACES OF SECURITISATION THEORY

The central idea of securitisation theory, as originally put forth by Buzan et al, is that security threats cannot be objectively determined, but are discursively constructed by securitising actors. Securitisation refers to the process through which a given issue or phenomenon is turned into a security threat.[6] Rooted in James L. Austin's speech act theory,[7] securitisation has become a staple in the field of Security Studies. Since its initial inception, scholars have offered a wide range of critiques and modifications to the original framework, both with regards to the theory itself and its empirical application.[8] One of the most dominant critiques has been put forth by the so-called second-generation scholars on securitisation, who take issue with the Copenhagen School's claim that something is turned into a security issue purely through the performative force of the speech act. Rather, they contend that securitisation is deeply embedded in the social sphere and thus informed by a variety of external factors.[9] Within this section of my paper, I will provide a brief overview on second generation securitisation literature, highlighting the critiques of the original theory.

Many prominent second-generation scholars, such as Balzacq or Stritzel, begin their critique of the original securitisation framework by taking a closer look at Austin's speech act theory and how it is utilised by the Copenhagen School.[10] Thus, in order to properly showcase their arguments, I will follow in their footsteps and start by examining the fundamental building blocks of Austin's theory. According to Austin, there are three are three types of acts

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[6] Buzan, Waever, and de Wilde, *Security.*

[7] See: Austin, J. L. *How to Do Things with Words*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962.

[8] Balzacq, Léonard, and Ruzika. "'Securitization' revisited," 494–531.

[9] See: Balzacq, "Three Faces of Securitization*,*" 171–201, and: Balzacq, Léonard, and Ruzika. "'Securitization revisited'," 494–531, and: Côté, Adam. "Agents without Agency: Assessing the Role of the Audience in Securitization Theory." *Security Dialogue* 47, no. 6 (December 2016): 541–58, and: McDonald, Matt. "Securitization and the Construction of Security." *European Journal of International Relations* 14, no. 4 (2008): 563–87, and: Salter, Mark B. "Securitization and desecuritization: a dramaturgical analysis of the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority." *Journal of International Relations and Development* 11, (2008): 321–349, and: Stritzel, "Copenhagen and Beyond," 357–83, and: Stritzel, Holger. *Security in Translation: Securitization Theory and the Localization of Threat*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.

[10] See: Balzacq, "Three Faces of Securitization*,*" 171–201, and: Stritzel, *Security in Translation*.

– locution, illocution, and perlocution – the combination of which together form the total speech act situation.[11] A locution is conceptualised an utterance *"with a certain sense and reference, which (...) is roughly equivalent to 'meaning' in the traditional sense."*[12] That is, locution is simply the act of saying something, which may be seen as true or false.*"*[13] For instance: 'Your hair is red.' Or: 'The sky is blue.'

Illocution refers to cases where *"in saying something we are doing something."*[14] That is, by uttering an illocution, the speaker is not merely describing reality, but performing an act.[15] Examples may include the naming of a ship or a pronouncement of marriage. According to Austin, for an illocution to be successful, certain felicity conditions must be met. These include: the existence of an accepted conventional procedure, with a certain conventional affect; this procedure must be invoked by appropriate persons in appropriate circumstances; the procedure must be executed correctly and completely; the participants must be sincere in their intentions and conduct themselves accordingly.[16] Therefore, as Philipsen notes, illocutionary acts are both highly conventional and heavily institutionalised.[17]

The third and final dimension of the speech act highlighted by Austin is perlocution, which refers to *"what we bring about or achieve by saying something, such as convincing, persuading, deterring."*[18] That is, perlocution refers to the effects the utterance will have on the audience; what is done by articulating something.[19] Examples may include persuading, discouraging, frightening etc. It is important to note that an utterance may have different effects on different audiences in different contexts. Furthermore, this statement may produce

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[11] Austin, *How to do Things with Words*.
[12] Ibid.: 108.
[13] Stritzel, *Security in Translation*: 20.
[14] Austin, *How to do Things with Words*: 12.
[15] Stritzel, *Security in Translation*: 20.
[16] Austin, *How to do Things with Words*: 14-15.
[17] Philipsen, Lise. "Performative Securitization: From Conditions of Success to Conditions of Possibility." *Journal of International Relations and Development* 23, no. 1 (2018): 142.
[18] Austin, *How to do Things with Words*: 108.
[19] Stritzel, *Security in Translation*: 20.

consequences that were unintended by the speaker. Thus, perlocution is always specific to the circumstances of utterance.[20]

As Balzacq notes, there are certain inconsistencies as to how the Copenhagen School applies Austin's speech act theory to securitisation. He argues that it initially seems to appear as though Buzan et al. conceptualise securitisation as an illocutionary speech act, wherein a given utterance constitutes something as a security issue.[21] Indeed, in *'Security: A New Framework for Analysis,'* Buzan et al. proclaim that security is *"a self-referential practise,"*[22] and that *"it is the utterance itself that is the act. By saying the words, something is done."*[23] This view is also reflected in Waevar's earlier, single-authored work:

> *What then is security? With the help of language theory, we can regard 'security' as speech act. In this usage, security is not of interest as a sign that refers to something more real; the utterance itself is the act. [...] By uttering 'security', a state-representative [sic] moves a particular development into a specific area, and thereby claims a special right to use whatever means are necessary to block it.*[24]

In this conceptualisation, when speaking security, an actor is not describing reality, but transforming it: in dubbing a given issue an existential threat, the speaker is declaring a state of emergency. As Vuori puts it *"acts of securitisation can constitute something that was not there before."*[25]   Thus, it would appear that the Copenhagen School conceives of securitisation as an illocutionary act, where in saying something, the speaker is performing an act. As Stritzel notes, this point of view is strengthened by Buzan et al.'s notion of facilitating conditions, which mirrors Austin's concept of felicity conditions.[26] Just as the success of an illocutionary act is contingent on the fulfilment of certain felicity conditions, securitisation requires facilitating conditions to work.

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[20] Austin, *How to do Things with Words*.
[21] Balzacq, "Three Faces of Securitization," 171–201.
[22] Buzan, Waever, and de Wilde, *Security*: 26.
[23] Ibid: 24.
[24] Waevar, Ole. "Securitization and Desecuritization." In *On Security*, edited by Ronnie D. Lipschutz, 55. New York: Columbia University Press, 1995: 55.
[25] Vuori, Juha A. *How to Do Security with Words: A Grammar of Securitisation in the People's Republic of China*. Turku: University of Turku, 2011: 154.
[26] Stritzel, *Security in Translation*.

However, several scholars have pointed out that in spite of the fact that Buzan et al. initially frame securitisation as an illocutionary speech act, there are certain elements in 'Security: A New Framework for Analysis' that point to a different understanding of the theory.[27] As both Balzacq and Stritzel note, while Buzan et al. dub securitisation as a self-referential practise, they later also claim that it is an intersubjective process, where the assent of the audience is needed for an issue to be dubbed an existential threat.[28] McDonald asserts that this implies that it is not the speech act itself that constitutes something as a security issue, but rather, it is collectively established by the audience and the speaker.[29] Côté concurs, noting that in this reading, the emphasis is placed on how the securitising actor persuades an audience that a given phenomenon is security issue.[30] However, as Balzacq points out, adding an intersubjective element to the framework undermines the view of securitisation as illocution. By highlighting the role of the audience, securitisation becomes a perlocutionary act, wherein the focus is on the effect a given utterance has on the listeners.[31] Thus, in this conception, securitisation is no longer about what is done in saying something, but what the speaker attempts to achieve by saying something (convincing the audience that a given issue a threat).[32] This, however, has certain theoretical implications.

As Balzacq notes, conceiving of securitisation as a perlocutionary act problematizes the notion that the success of a securitising move is dependent on the presence of facilitating conditions.[33] Illocutionary acts are fundamentally conventional practises that are performed according to universal rules.[34] In contrast, as has already been mentioned above, perlocutions

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[27] Balzacq, "Three Faces of Securitization," 171–201, and: Côté, "Agents without Agency," 541–58, and: McDonald, "Securitization," 563–87, and: Stritzel, "Copenhagen and Beyond," 357–83.

[28] Balzacq, "Three Faces of Securitization," 171–201, and: Stritzel, "Copenhagen and Beyond," 357–83.

[29] McDonald, "Securitization," 563–87.

[30] Côté, "Agents without Agency," 541–58.

[31] Balzacq, "Three Faces of Securitization," 171–201.

[32] Ibid.: 177.

[33] Balzacq, "Theory of Securitization," 1–30.

[34] Vuori, Juha A. "Illocutionary Logic and Strands of Securitization: Applying the Theory of Securitization to the Study of Non-Democratic Political Orders." *European Journal of International Relations* 14, no. 1 (2008): 65–99.

are highly unconventional acts and are specific to the circumstances of utterance. As Striztel puts it *"perlocutionary effects differ with regard to speakers, time periods and geographical locations, and cannot be generalized to any level of universality."* [35] Therefore, if securitisation is seen as perlocution, then its success cannot be contingent on certain abstract universal rules, but rather on whether or not the security utterance is convincing to the given audience in the given place and time.

Overall, as several scholars observe, there appears to be an inherent contradiction at the heart of securitisation theory, as it cannot be both self-referential and intersubjective at the same time. This confusion is compounded by the lack of clarification with regards to how, exactly, the framework relates to Austin's conception of speech acts.[36] Balzacq contends that this contradiction may be resolved if we either consider securitisation a self-referential practise (an illocutionary act) and abandon the need for audience consent, or we keep the intersubjective element of the framework (the perlocutionary effect) and abandon the notion of self-referentiality.[37] These conceptual confusions have led to the emergence of two separate interpretations of securitisation that Stritzel has labelled the 'internalist' and 'externalist' readings of securitisation[38] (also dubbed by Balzacq as the 'philosophical' and the 'sociological' approach[39]).

In the internalist reading, securitisation is seen as an illocutionary act, a self-referential practice, in which an issue becomes an existential threat through the performative force of the speech act.[40] The success of the act is predicated on the fulfilment of facilitating conditions, which enable the construction of security.[41] In such a framework, security utterances have the

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[35] Stritzel, *Security in Translation*: 23.
[36] See: Balzacq, "Three Faces of Securitization," 171–201, and: McDonald, Matt. "Securitization," 563–87, and: Philipsen, "Performative Securitization," 139–63, and: Stritzel, "Copenhagen and Beyond," 357–83.
[37] Balzacq, "Three Faces of Securitization," 171–201
[38] Stritzel, "Copenhagen and Beyond," 359.
[39] Balzacq, "Theory of Securitization," 1.
[40] Balzacq, "Three Faces of Securitization," 171–201.
[41] Buzan, Waever, and de Wilde, *Security.*

power to constitute a new reality, wherein a given issue is moved into the locus of security.[42] As Vuori puts it *"the act itself can create something new that is internal to the act."*[43] Thus, discourse shapes the social setting in which it is uttered.

When it comes to the externalist reading, securitisation is seen as perlocution, wherein the securitising actor must convince the relevant audience that a given issue is an existential threat. Thus, securitisation is not a single performative act, but an intersubjective process, through which the meaning of security is mutually constructed by the speaker and the audience.[44] Rather than the fulfilment of universal facilitating conditions as the criteria for success, the construction of security is informed and constrained by the social environment in which it takes place.[45] As Balzacq maintains, securitisation *"occurs within, and as part of, a configuration of circumstances, including the context, the psycho-cultural disposition of the audience, and the power that both speaker and listener bring to the interaction."*[46] As such, discourse is shaped by the social setting in which it is uttered.

It is important to note that these two readings are ideal-types and, as Balzacq points out, the vast literature on securitisation cannot be simply divided into these two categories. Indeed, he notes that scholars often combine insights from both readings. However, second generation scholars tend to hew closer to the externalist reading, as they take issue with the notion the security is constituted solely through the transformative power of speech acts.[47] Rather, they tend to prefer a more embedded approach, in which they examine a wide variety of external factors that shape the construction of security.[48] For instance, several scholars emphasise the role of the audience, noting that different audiences will have differing perceptions of threat

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[42] Philipsen, "Performative Securitization," 150.
[43] Vuori, *How to Do Security with Words*: 155.
[44] Balzacq, Thierry. Theory of Securitization," 1–30.
[45] McDonald, "Securitization," 563–87.
[46] Balzacq, "Three Faces of Securitization," 172.
[47] Balzacq, "Theory of Securitization," 1–30.
[48] Balzacq, Léonard, and Ruzika. "'Securitization' revisited," 494–531.

and urgency, and will respond differently to various narrative tropes. [49] Others focus on how historical, political and discursive context may inform what may or may not be constructed as a threat. [50] Certain authors consider the influence structures of power may have on securitisation, noting how certain actors may be better positioned to shape public opinion on matters of security.[51] In the following section of my paper, I will highlight the role of context and consider how it impacts securitisation.

2.1. PUTTING SECURITY IN CONTEXT

As has already been discussed above, in the original conception of securitisation, a phenomenon is turned into a security issue through discursive construction. As Buzan et al. put it speech has the potential *"to establish meaning that is not already within the context—it reworks or produces a context by the performative success of the act."*[52] To put it differently, a given security utterance has the power to effect context. In contrast, for second generation scholars, these dynamics between the speech act and the context are largely reversed.

Balzacq argues that by focusing solely on the illocutionary force of discourse, Buzan et al. ignore the role of external factors in shaping perceptions of threat. He notes the existence of brute threats, which are phenomena that *"do not depend on language mediation to be what they are: hazards for human life."*[53] In other words, there are certain threats that exist 'out there' and are objectively dangerous regardless of what is said about them. Thus, there are limits to the constitutive power of discourse. Indeed, this ties into Balzacq's larger point that

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[49] See: Balzacq, "Three Faces of Securitization," 171–201, and: Côté, Adam. "Agents without Agency," 541–58, and: Léonard, Sarah, and Christian Kaunert. "Reconceptualizing the Audience in Securitization Theory."
In *Securitization Theory: How Security Problems Emerge and Dissolve*, edited by Thierry Balzacq, 57–76.
Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2011.
[50] See: Balzacq, "Three Faces of Securitization," 171–201, and: McDonald, "Securitization," 563–87, and: Salter, Mark B. "Securitization and desecuritization," 321–349, and: Stritzel, "Copenhagen and Beyond," 357–83.
[51] See: Balzacq, "Three Faces of Securitization," 171–201, and: Stritzel, "Copenhagen and Beyond," 357–83, and: Stritzel, Holger. "Securitization, Power, Intertextuality: Discourse Theory and the Translations of Organized Crime." *Security Dialogue* 43, no. 6 (2012): 549–67, and: Stritzel, *Security in Translation.*
[52] Buzan, Waever, and de Wilde, *Security:* 46.
[53] Balzacq, "Theory of Securitization," 12.

"language does not construct reality; at best, it shapes our perception of it."[54] He argues that speech cannot determine the essence of a given phenomenon, noting that *"what I say about a typhoon would not change its essence."*[55] As a result, Balzacq contends that for a securitising move to resonate with the audience, it must align with the external reality.[56] Thus, this viewpoint emphasises the power of context over securitisation, rather than the reverse.

However, it is important to note that second generation scholars – Balzacq included – do not only deal with brute facts when talking about context. Indeed, context is conceptualised in a variety of ways within the literature. Balzacq notes that security may be understood in different ways across different cultures, communities, and time periods.[57] He contends that security is a deeply social phenomenon that is defined by *"knowledge historically gained through previous interactions and situations."*[58] As such, understandings of security are embedded in a configuration of social, political, and historical forces. According to Balzacq, these forces form a frame of reference through which securitising narratives are understood.[59] McDonald concurs, noting that historical experiences may serve to legitimise or delegitimise security articulations. As a result, historical and political context determines what may or may not be constructed as a security threat.[60] Beyond historical and political factors, second generation scholars have highlighted the role of identity,[61] culture,[62] geographic location,[63] and the structure of the setting[64] in informing the meaning of security.

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[54] Balzacq, "Three Faces of Securitization," 181.
[55] Ibid.
[56] Ibid.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Ibid.: 183.
[59] Ibid.
[60] McDonald, "Securitization," 563–87.
[61] See: Bourbeau, Philippe. *The Securitization of Migration: A Study of Movement and Order.* London: Routledge, 2013, and: Wilkinson, C. "The Limits of Spoken Words: From Meta-narratives to Experiences of Security." In *Securitization Theory: How Security Problems Emerge and Dissolve,* edited by Thierry Balzacq, 1–30. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2011.
[62] See: Balzacq, "Three Faces of Securitization," 171–201, and: Balzacq, "A Theory of Securitization," 1–30.
[63] See: Bourbeau, *Securitization of Migration,* and: McDonald, "Securitization," 563–87, and: Stritzel, *Security in Translation.*
[64] See: Salter, "Securitization and desecuritization," 321–349.

Of particular note is Holger Stritzel's work, which highlights the role of discursive context. [65] He claims that speech acts are always deeply embedded in the social sphere, emphasising their *"social and linguistic relatedness and sequentiality."*[66] Stritzel does not deny the role of cultural or historical processes in shaping securitisation, but highlights how security utterances should be analysed within the context of existing *"textual fields."*[67] In his view, the construction of security utterances is shaped by prevailing discourses on meaning and power. [68] He asserts that the more a given security articulation resonates with these discourses, the easier it is for securitising actors to *"establish their preferred individual text as a dominant narrative for a larger collective."*[69]

Thus, while Stritzel takes a different approach to context, he continues to see it as a framework, which informs understandings of security. Such themes appear in the works of Philippe Borbeau, however, he allows for a more dynamic conceptualisation of context, arguing that *"contextual factors do not objectively exist out there waiting to exercise influence,"*[70] as they *"do not speak for themselves."*[71] Rather, Borbeau contends that individuals construct and give meaning to their social environment. Thus, historical, political, and cultural factors are interpreted and reinterpreted by actors, which, in turn, influences how these factors influence articulations of security.[72] To put it simply, contextual factors *"have to be interpreted as having security implications for them to have security impacts."*[73] In this conceptualisation, context becomes a more fluid space, subject to reinterpretation and reconstruction by the actors who inhabit it. However, Borbeau also maintains that the capacity of securitising actors to *"change, reproduce, and remodel the security realm is not*

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[65] See: Holger, "Copenhagen and Beyond," 357–83, and: Holger, "Securitization, Power, Intertextuality," 349–67, and: Stritzel, *Security in Translation*.
[66] Holger, "Copenhagen and Beyond," 358.
[67] Stritzel, *Security in Translation*: 46.
[68] Holger, "Copenhagen and Beyond," 357–83.
[69] Ibid.: 370.
[70] Bourbeau, *Securitization of Migration:* 98.
[71] Ibid.: 98.
[72] Bourbeau, *Securitization of Migration*.
[73] Ibid.: 98.

unbounded."[74] As such, in this framework, agents are still constrained by the social environment in which they operate. Therefore, it may be argued that even in the Borbeausian conception, context continues to have significant power over what can or cannot be constructed as a security threat.

Overall, second generation scholars on securitisation agree that *"the meaning of security (...) depends on the context of its pronouncement. In other words, security is contextually shaped."*[75] From this, it would then follow that in order to understand what makes securitisation successful, one would have to consider the social environment in which it takes place. As Stritzel puts it, one must study *"the specific speech-act usage in specific speech-act situations or discursive locales."*[76] However, it must be noted that these authors do not ignore the performative power of speech entirely. Indeed, Balzacq concedes that Buzan et al. are right in that *"the very use of the concept 'security' modifies the context."*[77] He also acknowledges this in his later work, co-authored with Léonard and Ruzika, noting how security may rework the environment in which it was uttered.[78] This view appears even more strongly in Stritzel's work, who asserts that *"the performative force of a threat text can help constitute or change existing discourse coalitions and/or change an existing discourse, thereby reconfiguring existing relations of power."*[79] Thus, it appears that while context has power over security articulations, these utterances also affect context.

It may be argued that such a stance has significant implications for the role of context in the construction of security. However, neither Balzacq nor Stritzel pay little attention to these potential implications, as they do not give much consideration to how and to what extent security utterances may shape contextual factors. Moreover, they both stridently maintain that

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[74] Ibid.: 98.
[75] Balzacq, Léonard, and Ruzika. "'Securitization' revisited," 504.
[76] Stritzel, *Security in Translation*: 23.
[77] Balzacq, "Three Faces of Securitization," 173.
[78] Balzacq, Léonard, and Ruzika. "'Securitization' revisited," 494–53.
[79] Stritzel, "Copenhagen and Beyond." 370.

the success of securitising moves is predicated on the extent to which it resonates with a given context. Indeed, in spite of acknowledging the transformative power of security utterances, they largely treat contextual forces as a fixed frame of reference through which constructions of security are understood.[80] Thus, this aspect of their argument remains underdeveloped at best, and contradictory at worst. Within the next section of my paper, I will endeavour to develop their arguments, providing a more nuanced perspective on the dynamics between context and speech.

2.2. TAKING SECURITY OUT OF CONTEXT

When critiquing the externalist view of context, it is perhaps fruitful to start with Balzacq's argument on brute facts. As mentioned above, for Balzacq, there exists an objective reality that shapes the construction of security. Vuori takes issue with this claim, noting that while certain phenomena may be rooted in brute reality, they still *"have to be provided with a layer of social reality in order to have a status function for humans."*[81] In other words, while a given brute fact may exist independently to human consciousness, it is humans who assign meaning to it.

For instance, let us take Balzacq's example of a typhoon. He claims that the existence of a typhoon is an objective fact. While this may well be true, it is possible to argue that how a typhoon is perceived within society is not necessarily so. For some communities, a typhoon may simply be a natural disaster, while in others, it may be seen as a divine symbol of some sorts. Thus, typhoons are imbued with a layer of social meaning that is constructed by individuals. While a typhoon may pose a threat to human well-being, it will not necessarily be

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[80] See: Balzacq, Thierry. "Three Faces of Securitization," 171–201, and: Balzacq, "Theory of Securitization," 12, and: Stritzel, "Copenhagen and Beyond," 357–83, and: Holger, "Securitization, Power, Intertextuality," 349–67.
[81] Vuori, *How to Do Security with Words:*162.

seen as a security issue within a given society, nor will it be dealt with as such. As Deudney has famously argued *"not all threats to life and property are threats to security."*[82]

The arguments outlined above hold certain implications as to how we may conceive context and its role in the construction of security. If the humans imbue the world around them with a layer of meaning, then human understanding of reality is, to a certain extent, socially constructed. However, if these meanings are socially constructed, then they are subject to change. Hegemonic understandings of certain phenomena may evolve, or they may be reinterpreted and contested by certain actors. To illustrate this point, let us return to the typhoon example. While, in a given community, a typhoon may initially be conceived as an act of a divine entity, with time, this society may become increasingly secularised, and come to see the typhoon as a force of nature. Thus, it's 'status function' – to use Vuori's term – within that community has changed. As such, it may be argued that contextual factors are far more fluid than allowed for by Balzacq.

Such an approach is, to a certain extent, in line with Borbeau's conceptualisation of context. As has already been outlined in the previous section, Borbeau claims that the contextual forces are interpreted by actors in a certain way and assigned meaning. But he also contends that the capacity of actors to change or reconstruct their social environment is not unlimited and continues to stress the constitutive role of context. I push beyond Borbeau's arguments, and, building on Vuori,[83] argue that context may be conceived as a fluid and dynamically evolving space, wherein understandings of certain contextual factors can be contested and reconstructed by actors and agents. These transformations may result from a variety of actions, events, processes or the emergence of new discourses. However, such an understanding of context changes its role in the construction of security.

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[82] Deudney, Daniel. "The Case Against Linking Environmental Degradation and National Security." *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 19, no. 3 (December 1990): 463.
[83] Vuori, *How to Do Security with Words.*

As has been discussed above, second generation scholars tend to see context as a fixed framework that influences security utterances. Thus, they focus on the effects context may have on the process of securitisation. In contrast, a more fluid understanding of context allows for the possibility that securitisation may also transform the social environment in which it takes place. This expands the focus to include the effects securitisation may have on context. It is important to note that I do not mean to claim that context has no role is shaping security narratives, merely that it is important to highlight how securitisation, in turn, also informs context. This, however, brings with it the question of how securitisation may reconfigure contextual structures. In order to answer this question, I build, in part, on the work of Lise Philipsen.

Philipsen follows the internalist conception of securitisation and looks at how *"new conceptualizations of security at once play on the established meaning of security and invest it with new meaning."*[84] She argues that when a given phenomenon is securitised, we are broadening our notion of security, by extending it to an issue that was previously not seen as a threat. However, bringing a new issue under the umbrella of security may, in some cases, serve to redefine the very meaning of security.[85] Philipsen points to the securitisation of climate change as an example, noting how it was not only about a push to treat climate change as an existential threat, but also involved *"a call to fundamentally alter what we understand as security."*[86] Thus, in this conception, securitisation has power over external reality, as it can imbue the conception of security with new meaning. When connecting this argument to the role of contextual factors, it is possible to contend that, by opening up a space for new understandings of security, a case of securitisation may contest and reconfigure the context in which it was initiated.

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[84] Philipsen, "Performative Securitization," 140.
[85] Ibid.
[86] Ibid.: 140.

I believe that it is possible to argue that the transformative force of securitisation has two aspects that occur at different points of the process. As has already been mentioned, in Buzan et al.'s framework, a case of securitisation is initiated when a securitising actor dubs a certain phenomenon an existential threat through the use of a speech act. If the audience accepts this securitising move, then the actor will be authorised to implement certain extraordinary measures to deal with this threat. The transformative power of securitisation may, on the one hand, only come into play once these extraordinary measures are implemented. In other words, by using these instruments and enacting concrete changes to existing social structures and institutions, actors alter what is understood as security in a given society. Thus, it is the implementation of the extraordinary measures that holds transformative force. However, it may also be argued that the securitising move, by itself, is enough to open up new meanings of security. As such, even if a securitising move fails or does not result in extraordinary measures, it may still have the power to shape the context in which it was articulated. In this case it is discourse, rather than human action that holds the potential for change. Thus, it is possible to claim that securitising moves, failed or otherwise, may serve as a reference point for future attempts at securitisation.

The latter point, in particular, has implications for the study of securitisation. If we accept that attempts at securitisation may transform context, then this, in turn, can affect future securitising moves. By opening up new meanings of security, securitising moves can create the conditions of possibility for the securitisation of other phenomena in the future. Therefore, it may be argued that successive security articulations may build off of one another, with these linkages serving to reinforce different narratives of threat. As such, when analysing a given case of securitisation, it is not enough to look at the context, but it may also be fruitful to trace how previous securitising moves have informed the environment in which it was spoken.

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2.3. CASE SELECTION AND METHODS

In order to illustrate the theoretical propositions outlined above, I will employ a case study on the securitisation of billionaire financier George Soros by the Hungarian government from 2015 to present day. The securitisation of Soros is arguably an interesting case, as, prior to 2015, he was a fairly obscure figure, with the majority of the Hungarian people not even knowing who he was. [87] As such, when the Orbán government started their anti-Soros campaign, few could have predicted the heights of its success.[88] However, as of yet, there has been little scholarly work on how the Hungarian government was able to turn a relatively unknown figure into public enemy number one.

It is argued here that the securitisation of Soros was built upon previous securitising moves, constructed around the European Union and immigration. These previous narratives constructed a context in which Soros could successfully be portrayed as an existential threat. Indeed, as I will show below, the securitisation of Soros leans so heavily on these previous securitising moves that it cannot be understood without them. Thus, this case clearly highlights how different security articulations may create a configuration of interlinked threats that serve to inform and reinforce one another. Moreover, it also serves to demonstrate the fluid nature of context and how it interacts with security utterances.

The case study is grounded in a qualitative discourse analysis of the speeches of the Hungarian Prime Minister, Viktor Orbán. As Buzan et al. note, discourse analysis is an obvious, if not exclusive method for studying for studying cases of securitisation.[89] In their conceptualisation *"the defining criterion of security is textual: a specific rhetorical structure that has to be located in discourse."*[90] Thus, they argue that discourse analysis is a useful tool

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[87] Foer, Franklin. "Viktor Orbán's War on Intellect." The Atlantic. Atlantic Media Company, May 20, 2019. https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2019/06/george-soros-viktor-orban-ceu/588070/
[88] Ibid.
[89] Buzan, Waever, and de Wilde. *Security*.
[90] Ibid.: 176.

for identifying securitising moves and highlighting the discursive tools actors use to construct issues as existential threats.[91] As such, in order to trace Hungarian narratives of security, I will employ a close reading of Orbán's speeches, from his election in 2010 to present day. The speeches selected were mainly performed before a domestic audience and at important national or political events, such as the anniversaries of the 1848 and 1956 revolutions, the Summer Open University and Student Camp at Băile Tuşnad, and State of the Nation Addresses. My assumption was that in such speeches the Prime Minister would reflect on issues pertinent to the entire nation, including national security, and thus, they would be suitable sites for securitisation.

However, as Buzan et al. note, looking at discourse alone will not necessarily reveal whether extraordinary measures where implemented following an articulation of security. Thus, I will supplement my analysis by considering the perlocutionary effects of the Orbán's securitising moves, by looking at opinion polls, legislation changes, decrees, and amendments to existing laws.

3. FROM BRUSSELS TO NEW YORK: HUNGARIAN NARRATIVES OF SECURITY

The truth is that George Soros is a speculator who operates an extensive mafia network, and who is threatening Europe's peace and future. (...) The reason he is so angry with Hungary – and with me personally – is that we stand in the way of his grand plan and grand business project.[92]

These words were spoken by Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán in June 2017, part of an extensive government smear campaign of billionaire financier George Soros. From 2015 onwards, the Orbán government has spent millions securitising Soros, turning him into an

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[91] Buzan, Waever, and de Wilde. *Security.*
[92] Viktor, Orbán. "Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's speech at the closing event for the National Consultation." Speech, Budapest, June 27, 2017. miniszterelnok.hu. https://miniszterelnok.hu/prime-minister-viktor-orbans-speech-at-the-closing-event-for-the-national-consultation/

existential threat to Hungary. He was accused, among other things, of working together with the European Union to undermine the Hungarian leadership and install his own government, and of attempting to flood the country with immigrants.[93] In the following sections of my paper, I will examine the case of Soros and show how his securitisation built off of previous securitising moves, constructed around the European Union and immigration. I will consider these security articulations in chronological order; first looking at Orbán's narratives on Brussels and then at his securitisation of the refugees following the 2015 migration crisis. Finally, I will show how these securitising moves came together to serve as the conditions of possibility for the securitisation of George Soros.

Before continuing, it must be noted that a case can be made for studying the securitisation of Soros from an externalist perspective – that is, looking at how the context in question informed these narratives of threat. As several scholars have pointed out, the Orbán government's anti-Soros campaign has consistently made use of various anti-Semitic tropes.[94] Thus, it is possible to make the argument that the government was able to successfully convince the Hungarian public that Soros was a threat by relying on well-known anti-Semitic stereotypes. However, I will show during my analysis that these tropes were specifically constructed with reference to previous narratives of threat. Soros was not merely portrayed as a *"hidden master"*[95] orchestrating a *"worldwide conspiracy,"*[96] but was specifically depicted as a puppet-master of the EU, planning to flood Hungary with refugees.[97] This is not to say that anti-Semitism did not play a role in the successful securitisation of Soros. Indeed, such a

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[93] Enyedi, Zsolt. "Democratic Backsliding and Academic Freedom in Hungary." *Perspectives on Politics* 16, no. 4 (2018): 1067–74.

[94] See: Krekó, Péter, and Zsolt Enyedi. "Explaining Eastern Europe: Orbán's Laboratory of Illiberalism." *Journal of Democracy* 29, no. 3 (July 2018): 39–51, and: Kalmar, Ivan. "Islamophobia and anti-anti-Semitism: The Case of Hungary and the 'Soros Plot.'" *Patterns of Prejudice* 54, no. 1-2 (April 2020): 182–98, and: Subotic, Jelena. "Antisemitism in the Global Populist International." *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, December 2021, 1–17.

[95] Kalmar, Ivan. "Islamophobia and anti-anti-Semitism," 189.

[96] Krekó, and Enyedi. "Explaining Eastern Europe," 47.

[97] See: Viktor, Orbán. "Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's State of the Nation Address." Speech, Budapest, February 10, 2017. Website of the Hungarian Government. https://2015-2019.kormany.hu/en/the-prime-minister/the-prime-minister-s-speeches/prime-minister-viktor-orban-s-state-of-the-nation-address-20170214

claim falls outside the scope of this paper. I am merely highlighting that securitising moves may influence how various contextual factors – in this case, anti-Semitism – are later instrumentalised to help construct future narratives of threat.

3.1. BATTLES WITH BRUSSLES

Since Viktor Orbán's election as Hungarian Prime Minister in 2010, Hungary's relationship with the European Union has been fraught with conflict. Indeed, the government has increasingly depicted the EU as an enemy, railing against *"Brussels bureaucrats"*[98] for meddling in Hungary's affairs. But when considering Orbán's earlier speeches, it is important to note that he was less hostile towards the European Union. Indeed, in his speeches from between 2011-2013, he is occasionally critical of the EU, but overall makes little mention of Brussels.[99] The turning point came in 2014, when, in his State of the Nation Address, Orbán condemned the EU, claiming that:

> *Brussels bureaucrats attacked Hungary roughly and threateningly. Just because we had the audacity to tax the banks and big corporations, because we didn't want to take money away from those who are rather more in need of being given some.*[100]

Here, the conflict between the two parties is not depicted as a mere dispute on policy; rather, the EU's criticisms were framed as an attack. Moreover, adjectives such as 'roughly' and 'threateningly' serve to cast Brussels as an aggressive and dominant power, rather than a legitimate partner to be reasoned with. Such a portrayal is further reinforced when Orbán

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[98] Viktor, Orbán. "Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's State of the Nation Speech." Speech, Budapest, February 16, 2014. Website of the Hungarian Government. https://2010-2014.kormany.hu/en/prime-minister-s-office/the-prime-ministers-speeches/prime-minister-viktor-orban-s-state-of-the-nation-address

[99] See: Viktor, Orbán. "Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's State of the Nation Speech." Speech, Budapest, February 7, 2011. Website of the Hungarian Government. https://2010-2014.kormany.hu/en/prime-minister-s-office/the-prime-ministers-speeches/viktor-orban-s-state-of-the-nation-address, and: Viktor, Orbán. "Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's State of the Nation Speech." Speech, Budapest, February 2, 2013. Website of the Hungarian Government. https://2010-2014.kormany.hu/en/prime-minister-s-office/the-prime-ministers-speeches/prime-minister-viktor-orban-s-state-of-the-nation-speech, and: Viktor, Orbán. "Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's Speech in Budapest on October 23." Speech, Budapest, October 23, 2012. Website of the Hungarian Government. https://2010-2014.kormany.hu/en/prime-minister-s-office/the-prime-ministers-speeches/prime-minister-viktor-orban-s-speech-in-budapest-on-october-23.

[100] Orbán, "State of the Nation," 2014.

continues on by saying that *"hundreds of thousands of people took to the streets in peace and dignity to send the world the message: Hungary is not a colony and will not allow itself to be made into one."*[101] By employing the term 'colony,' Orbán is implicitly suggesting the EU is an imperialistic power that aims to subjugate Hungary. This implies that the disagreement between the two parties was not merely a conflict over policy, but that Hungary's fundamental freedoms were at risk.

Orbán continued to warn against Brussels, and, when taking the oath of office after being re-elected in 2014, he stated that *"politics that wants to sacrifice a thousand-year-old Hungary on the altar of some sort of United States of Europe is, in my view, dangerous to the Hungarian people and radical."*[102] Here, increased integration within the EU is not merely portrayed as an undesirable outcome, but painted as an explicit threat to the Hungarian nation. This sense of danger is heightened as Orbán argues that such a process would 'sacrifice a thousand-year-old Hungary.' Such a framing leaves no room for a possible debate, as the issue is portrayed as a question of survival, wherein there is a clear wrong and right choice.

Indeed, this sense of danger intensified as time went on. In his 2016 State of the Nation Address, Orbán asserted that *"we must halt the advance of Brussels."*[103] The use of the term 'advance' arguably conjures up an image of an advancing army, ready to invade enemy territory. It installs a sense of urgency, wherein Hungary must act, in order to avoid getting destroyed. This sense of urgency appeared in several of Orbán's speeches throughout that year. In a speech given on the anniversary of the 1848 revolution, Orbán warned his audience that *"Brussels is stealthily devouring ever more slices of our national sovereignty."*[104]

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[101] Ibid.

[102] Viktor, Orbán. "Prime Minister's speech after taking the oath of office." Speech, Budapest, May 10, 2014. Website of the Hungarian Government. https://2010-2014.kormany.hu/en/prime-minister-s-office/the-prime-ministers-speeches/prime-minister-s-speech-after-taking-the-oath-of-office

[103] Viktor, Orbán. "Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's State of the Nation Address." Speech, Budapest, February 28, 2016. miniszterelnok.hu. https://miniszterelnok.hu/prime-minister-viktor-orbans-state-of-the-nation-address/

[104] Viktor, Orbán. "Speech by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán on 15 March." Speech, Budapest, March 15, 2016. Website of the Hungarian Government.

Furthermore, in his annual speech at Băile Tușnad, the Prime Minister declared that *"the restriction of national sovereignty in favour of European powers,"*[105] was *"one of the greatest threats in Europe today."*[106] Thus, Brussels' actions are explicitly painted as a security threat. Orbán also began increasingly employing various martial metaphors, for, in his 2017 State of the Nation Address, he asserted that:

> *In 2016, the battle lines were thrown into sharp relief. The nations rose up against the globalists and the middle classes rose up against their leaders. In our community, the European Union, this means that we, the sovereign nations, stand in opposition to the federalists, and the voters stand in opposition to the Brussels bureaucrats.*[107]

In this discursive context, Hungary's conflict with Brussels is depicted in no uncertain terms as a 'battle,' in which the various sides are strongly opposed to one another. Elsewhere in the speech, Orbán refers to EU regulations on domestic taxation and energy policies as *"major attacks,"*[108] and accuses Brussels of wanting to *"take away more and more spheres of competence from Member States."*[109] Once again, such a portrayal denies Brussels the status of a legitimate political actor with whom it is possible to reason. Instead, it is constructed as an enemy and every one of its actions that Hungary does not agree with is framed as a security threat. Thus, these disputes are portrayed in resolutely black and white terms, where Hungary can either win or lose. Such themes were reiterated in Orbán's speeches given on the anniversaries of the 1848 and 1956 revolutions, respectively.[110]

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https://2015-2019.kormany.hu/en/the-prime-minister/the-prime-minister-s-speeches/speech-by-prime-minister-viktor-orban-on-15-march

[105] Viktor, Orbán. "Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's Presentation at the 27th Bálványos Summer Open University and Student Camp." Speech, Băile Tușnad, July 23, 2016. Website of the Hungarian Government. https://2015-2019.kormany.hu/en/the-prime-minister/the-prime-minister-s-speeches/viktor-orban-s-presentation-at-the-27h-balvanyos-summer-open-university-and-student-camp

[106] Ibid.

[107] Orbán, "State of the Nation," 2017.

[108] Ibid.

[109] Ibid.

[110] See: Viktor, Orbán. "Viktor Orbán's speech on the anniversary of the 1848 Revolution." Speech, Budapest, March 15, 2017. Website of the Hungarian Government. https://2015-2019.kormany.hu/en/the-prime-minister/the-prime-minister-s-speeches/viktor-orban-s-speech-on-the-anniversary-of-the-1848-revolution, and: Viktor, Orbán. "Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's speech on the 61st anniversary of the 1956 Revolution and Freedom Fight." Speech, Budapest, October 23, 2017. Website of the Hungarian Government. https://2015-

Furthermore, from 2018 onwards, Orbán increasingly began referring to Brussels as an empire. In one speech, he reminisced how, in 2010 *"we rose up, and in Brussels and in the other centres of empire, we started to fight for the Hungarians."*[111] As has already been noted, Orbán has previously portrayed increased European integration as an inherently threatening process and has railed against Brussels for attempting to limit Hungary's authority. Here, this narrative is taken a step further, as Brussels is depicted as an empire, pitted against the rebellious Hungary. Such a portrayal serves to implicitly compare EU integration to imperial subjugation, further heightening the idea that such a process is an existential threat to the Hungarian nation. This point was repeated in Orbán's speech on the anniversary of the 1956 revolution, when he stated that *"Brussels today is ruled by those who want to replace an alliance of free nations with a European empire: a European empire led not by the elected leaders of nations, but by Brussels bureaucrats."*[112] In this discursive context, Orbán creates a sharp dichotomy between the imperial bureaucratic rule represented by Brussels and the democratic rule that exists within the nation states. Such a framing lends further credence to Hungary's defiance against the EU and heightens the need for the country to retain its freedom. These themes would continue to appear in Orbán's subsequent speeches, with references made to Hungary's 'battles' with Brussels, while the latter was consistently painted as a conquering empire.[113] Indeed, his views on Brussels were most simply encapsulated in

2019.kormany.hu/en/the-prime-minister/the-prime-minister-s-speeches/prime-minister-viktor-orban-s-speech-on-the-61st-anniversary-of-the-1956-revolution-and-freedom-fight

[111] Viktor, Orbán. "Orbán Viktor's ceremonial speech on the 170th anniversary of the Hungarian Revolution of 1848." Speech, Budapest, March 15, 2018. About Hungary. https://abouthungary.hu/speeches-and-remarks/orban-viktors-ceremonial-speech-on-the-170th-anniversary-of-the-hungarian-revolution-of-1848

[112] Viktor, Orbán. "Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's speech on the 62nd anniversary of the 1956 Revolution and Freedom Fight." Speech, Budapest, October 23, 2018. Website of the Hungarian Government. https://2015-2019.kormany.hu/en/the-prime-minister/the-prime-minister-s-speeches/prime-minister-viktor-orban-s-speech-on-the-62nd-anniversary-of-the-1956-revolution-and-freedom-fight

[113] See: Viktor, Orbán. "Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's Speech at the 30th Bálványos Summer Open University and Student Camp." Speech, Băile Tuşnad, July 27, 2019. Website of the Hungarian Government. https://2015-2019.kormany.hu/en/the-prime-minister/the-prime-minister-s-speeches/prime-minister-viktor-orban-s-speech-at-the-30th-balvanyos-summer-open-university-and-student-camp, and: Viktor, Orbán. "Orbán Viktor's ceremonial speech on the 171st anniversary of the Hungarian Revolution and Freedom Fight of 1848/49." Speech, Budapest, March 15, 2019. Website of the Hungarian Government. https://2015-2019.kormany.hu/en/the-prime-

his latest State of the Nation Address, in 2022, he reiterated that *"we have to keep watching out behind us, because we cannot feel secure with Brussels."*[114]

All in all, it may be argued that the Orbán government has initiated various securitising moves against Brussels. It is portrayed as a power-hungry, imperialistic power, determined to destroy Hungary's sovereignty and dominate it completely. Its criticisms are framed as 'attacks,' and its disputes with Budapest are portrayed as 'battles.' As such, Brussels is no longer seen as a partner or even as a legitimate political actor, but rather as a threat to Hungary's national security. However, it is important to note that this case does not fit the criteria of a successful process of securitisation for two reasons. First, it is arguable that there were no extraordinary measures implemented to deal with the threat. Second, public opinion surveys show that the Hungarian population has consistently viewed the EU in a favourable light over the years.[115] Thus, it appears that these securitising moves failed. Regardless, such narratives of threat continue to be pushed by the government and play a dominant role in Hungarian political discourse.[116]

3.2. DEFENDING THE BORDER

Parallel to the government's attacks on Brussels, a new issue emerged that increasingly occupied Orbán's attention. In 2015, Europe experienced a significant influx of refugees from the Middle East. [117] As a border-state of the EU, Hungary has always been seen as a primary gateway to the West, a role that gained increasing weight following the emergence of the

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minister/the-prime-minister-s-speeches/orban-viktor-s-ceremonial-speech-on-the-171st-anniversary-of-the-hungarian-revolution-and-freedom-fight-of-1848-49, and: Viktor, Orbán. "Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's commemoration speech on the 65th anniversary of the 1956 Revolution and Freedom Fight." Speech, Budapest, October 23, 2021. About Hungary. https://abouthungary.hu/speeches-and-remarks/prime-minister-viktor-orbans-commemoration-speech-on-the-65th-anniversary-of-the-1956-revolution-and-freedom-fight
[114] Viktor, Orbán. "Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's State of the Nation Address." Speech, Budapest, February 12, 2022. miniszterelnok.hu. https://miniszterelnok.hu/prime-minister-viktor-orbans-state-of-the-nation-address-5/
[115] Göncz, Borbála, and György Lengyel. "Europhile Public vs Eurosceptic Governing Elite in Hungary?" *Intereconomics* 56, no. 2 (2021): 86–90.
[116] Ibid.
[117] "Migrant Crisis: Migration to Europe Explained in Seven Charts." BBC News, March 4, 2016. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34131911

migration crisis.[118] The Orbán government adopted a heavily antagonistic stance against the refugees, explicitly portraying as an existential threat. [119]

In his 2015 State of the Nation Address, the Prime Minister declared that *"the southern borders of the EU – including our own state's borders – are besieged by waves of modern-day migration."*[120] Note the use of the phrase 'besieged,' which casts the refugees as an invading force, threatening the borders of both the EU and of Hungary. Such a label serves to turn these refugees into a threat, rather than civilians fleeing from a warzone. It also provokes a sense of urgency, of imminent danger that must be stopped at all costs. These martial allusions are further strengthened by Orbán's emphasis on border defense. In this conception, borders are seen as fixed lines, demarcating the homeland, which must be protected at all costs.

The migration crisis was also referenced in Orbán's annual speech at Băile Tuşnad, during which he proclaimed that *"what is at stake today is Europe and the European way of life, the survival or extinction of European values and nations – or, to be more precise, their transformation beyond all recognition."*[121] Here, it is important to note that there has been a shift in the referent object of security. While in the case of Brussels, the object to be protected was the Hungarian nation, in this speech, immigration is threatening something broader and more abstract: European values. However, this does not mean that the question of Hungarian security does not figure in Orbán's narrative. Indeed, later on in the speech, he claims that *"we can say that illegal immigration is equally a threat to Hungary and to Europe. It is a*

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[118] Ibid.

[119] "Migration Issues in Hungary." International Organization for Migration | Budapest, June 28, 2018. https://hungary.iom.int/migration-issues-hungary

[120] Viktor, Orbán. "Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's State of the Nation Address." Speech, Budapest, February 27, 2015. Website of the Hungarian Government. https://2015-2019.kormany.hu/en/the-prime-minister/the-prime-minister-s-speeches/the-next-years-will-be-about-hardworking-people

[121] Viktor, Orbán. "Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's Presentation at the 26th Bálványos Summer Open University and Student Camp." Speech, Băile Tuşnad, July 25, 2015. Website of the Hungarian Government. https://2015-2019.kormany.hu/en/the-prime-minister/the-prime-minister-s-speeches/prime-minister-viktor-orban-s-presentation-at-the-26th-balvanyos-summer-open-university-and-student-camp

threat to our common values and to our culture, and even to our diversity." [122] In this discursive context, European values and culture are constitutive elements of the Hungarian identity, and have played a definitive role in its evolution. Thus, the survival of Hungary is directly tied to the survival Europe and the European way of life.

This sentiment was reiterated in Orbán's 2015 speech before the Fidesz-Hungarian Civic Union, where he declared that *mass migration – the mass settlement in Europe of people coming from different civilisations – is a threat to our culture, our way of life, our customs and our traditions."* [123] Once again, the threat is framed in cultural terms, firmly tying Hungary's survival to the preservation of its cultural identity. Orbán draws a sharp distinction between the Hungarians and the refugees, depicting them as two opposing forces who cannot possibly coexist. The immigrants are portrayed as a racialised 'Other,' whose very presence serves to dilute Europe's Christian culture, thereby depriving it of its very essence. In such a conception, the refugee crisis is portrayed as a zero-sum game, wherein the encroachment of the 'Them' results in the destruction of the 'Us.' Much like with Orbán's rhetoric on Brussels, such a narrative leaves no room for debate on the issue. Keeping the refugees out is a question of survival, and thus, there is only one possible choice to be made.

Such themes were emphasised in Orbán's 2016 speeches on the anniversary of the 1848 revolution, and also at Băile Tuşnad.[124] Indeed, in the latter, in particular, Orbán reiterated that "*mass migration destroys national culture,"* [125] and then later went on to say that

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[122] Ibid.

[123] Viktor, Orbán. *"Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's speech at the 26th Congress of the Fidesz – Hungarian Civic Union."* Speech, Budapest, December 13, 2015. Website of the Hungarian Government. https://2015-2019.kormany.hu/en/the-prime-minister/the-prime-minister-s-speeches/prime-minister-viktor-orban-s-speech-at-the-26th-congress-of-the-fidesz-hungarian-civic-union

[124] See: Viktor, Orbán. "Speech by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán on 15 March." Speech, Budapest, March 15, 2016. Website of the Hungarian Government. https://2015-2019.kormany.hu/en/the-prime-minister/the-prime-minister-s-speeches/speech-by-prime-minister-viktor-orban-on-15-march, and: Viktor, Orbán. "Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's Presentation at the 27th Bálványos Summer Open University and Student Camp." Speech, Băile Tuşnad, July 23, 2016. Website of the Hungarian Government. https://2015-2019.kormany.hu/en/the-prime-minister/the-prime-minister-s-speeches/viktor-orban-s-presentation-at-the-27h-balvanyos-summer-open-university-and-student-camp

[125] Orbán, "Bálványos," 2016.

"migration will destroy us. And migration is embodied in migrants."[126] Once again, Orbán ties the survival of both Hungary and Europe to the preservation of their culture. We cannot be 'us' unless our cultural values are upheld, and our cultural values cannot survive unless they are protected from any foreign influence. However, at a later point in his speech, with regards to the refugees, Orbán notes that *"much as we sympathise with them, and much as we see them as victims, we must stop them at our border.*[127] Thus, the refugees are allowed a brief moment of humanisation that stands in stark contrast to their depiction of invading forces in Orbán's earlier speeches. This moment is fleeting, as Orbán then underscores the importance of keeping them out from Hungary.

It should be noted, that based on the speeches analysed so far, it appears that, for Orbán, migration poses both a material and ideational threat. On the one hand, the refugees are portrayed as an invading force, threatening Hungary's borders, but on the other, they are also a danger to its cultural identity. These threats operate on very different levels, but both equally pose a hazard to Hungary's continued existence. While in Orbán's anti-Brussels narrative, he emphasised the importance of Hungary's political independence, these securitising moves highlight the importance of cultural and territorial independence as the condition for survival. This is emphasised in Orbán's 2017 speech at Băile Tuşnad, in which he reiterated that *"it's obvious that the culture of migrants contrasts dramatically with European culture. Opposing ideologies and values cannot be simultaneously upheld, as they are mutually exclusive."*[128] However, he then went on to highlight the importance of border

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[126] Ibid.
[127] Ibid.
[128] Viktor, Orbán. "Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's Speech at the 28th Bálványos Summer Open University and Student Camp." Speech, Băile Tuşnad, July 22, 2017. Website of the Hungarian Government. https://2015-2019.kormany.hu/en/the-prime-minister/the-prime-minister-s-speeches/viktor-orban-s-speech-at-the-28th-balvanyos-summer-open-university-and-student-camp

defense, noting that *"we shouldn't forget that Hungary (...) was the country which stopped the migrant invasion flooding into Europe."*[129]

It is also interesting to observe how, as can be inferred from the previous quote, Orbán is increasingly taking credit for defending not just Hungary, but Europe as well. This highlighted in his 2017 State of the Nation Address, in which Orbán declared that *"we resisted, we drew a line, built a fence, recruited border hunters and stopped them. We defended Hungary – and with it, incidentally, Europe."*[130] The militarised language helps to paint the refugees as a belligerent force, poised to invade the continent. Orbán frames his country's as heroic, a victory not only for Hungary, but for Europe as a whole. This serves to further intensify the sense of urgency, as the stakes are presented in an increasingly heightened manner. It is also important to note the martial tools the government has used to deal with the issue – building a fence and recruiting border-hunters – are depicted as courageous exploits done for the greater good.

Orbán's casting of Hungary as a defender of Europe and the refugees as both a cultural and military threat continued throughout 2017. In one speech, he claimed that *"our hearts have been welded together by the battle in which we beat back the mass population movement which is besieging Europe."*[131] In another, he declared that *"Central Europe is the last migrant-free region in Europe. This is why the struggle for the future of Europe is being concentrated here."*[132] In this narrative, Hungary become a lone hero, the last defender of Europe and European way of life. As has been detailed above, Europe's survival is intrinsically tied to preserving the Hungarian nation, thus, if Europe were to fall, so too would Hungary. Such rhetoric serves to valorise Hungary, while also highlighting the threat of mass migration.

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[129] Ibid.
[130] Orbán, "State of the Nation," 2017.
[131] Orbán, "Anniversary of the 1848 Revolution," 2017.
[132] Orbán, "Anniversary of the 1956 Revolution," 2017.

Furthermore, Orbán also became increasingly critical of Western Europe, accusing them in his 2018 State of the Nation Address of wanting Hungary to *"adopt their policies: the policies that made them immigrant countries and that opened the way for the decline of Christian culture and the expansion of Islam."*[133] In previous speeches, Orbán has allowed for some sympathy for the refugees. However, within this discursive context, they are utterly dehumanised; they are no longer individuals, but a homogenous conquering force – 'Islam.' Moreover, this further serves to highlight the zero-sum nature of this perceived conflict in that Islam and Christianity cannot coexist. Similar securitising moves appear in many of Orbán's later speeches, from 2019 to present. References to a migrant invasion and warnings of potential cultural decline abound, while the importance of border defense is consistently maintained.[134] As such, the two cannot coexist with one another. This 'battle' between Hungary and the refugees was also referenced in Orbán's 2022 speech, where he lamented that Hungary was *"the border fortress for the interior of Europe."*[135]

All in all, it appears that the refugees were consistently portrayed as an existential threat to the Hungarian nation, on both a territorial and on a cultural level. Studies show that anti-refugee sentiment was high among the Hungarian public, with many seeing the refugees as threats.[136] As such, it may be argued that the audience accepted the Orbán's construction of

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[133] Orbán, "State of the Nation," 2018.

[134] See: Viktor, Orbán. "Orbán Viktor's ceremonial speech on the 171st anniversary of the Hungarian Revolution and Freedom Fight of 1848/49." Speech, Budapest, March 15, 2019. Website of the Hungarian Government. https://2015-2019.kormany.hu/en/the-prime-minister/the-prime-minister-s-speeches/orban-viktor-s-ceremonial-speech-on-the-171st-anniversary-of-the-hungarian-revolution-and-freedom-fight-of-1848-49, and: Viktor, Orbán. "Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's commemoration speech on the 65th anniversary of the 1956 Revolution and Freedom Fight." Speech, Budapest, March 15, 2021. About Hungary. https://abouthungary.hu/speeches-and-remarks/prime-minister-viktor-orbans-commemoration-speech-on-the-65th-anniversary-of-the-1956-revolution-and-freedom-fight, and: Viktor, Orbán. "Address by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán at the 29th congress of the Fidesz – Hungarian Civic Alliance." Speech, Budapest, November 14, 2021. miniszterelnok.hu. https://miniszterelnok.hu/address-by-prime-minister-viktor-orban-at-the-29th-congress-of-the-fidesz-hungarian-civic-alliance/

[135] Orbán, "State of the Nation," 2022.

[136] See: Simonovits, Bori. "The Public Perception of the Migration Crisis from the Hungarian Point of View: Evidence from the Field." Essay. In *Geographies of Asylum in Europe and the Role of European Localities.* edited by Birgit Glorius and Jeroen Doomernik, 155–76. Cham: Springer, 2020, and: Bíró-Nagy, András. "Orbán's Political Jackpot: Migration and the Hungarian Electorate." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 48, no. 2 (February 2021): 405–24.

the refugees as an existential threat and thus, this case of securitisation was successful. Moreover, in the fall of 2015, the government built of a series of fences along the country's southern borders, in order to better protect them from it refugees.[137] Anyone attempting to climb the fence, or damage it in any way could be charged with criminal offense.[138] The government also mobilised the Hungarian armed forces in order to help enforce its immigration policies. As Koranyi notes, the troops were put in charge of the construction of the border fence. Furthermore, the government also adopted legislation that greatly expanded the military's powers, better allowing them to deter the influx of immigrants. Under this new law, the troops were given the right to participate in border control, restrict civil liberties, and use physical violence against civilians if necessary.[139] These actions can arguably be conceived as the extraordinary measures, necessary to combat the rising security threat of immigration.

3.3. THE PUPPET-MASTER OF THE WEST

Soros's name first started appearing in government propaganda in 2015, during the migration crisis. As has already been noted, prior to this point, he was a little-known figure in Hungary, taking no active role in public life. However, as Krekó and Enyedi observe, from 2015 onwards, the Hungarian government began structuring much of their propaganda around Soros and he was turned into the country's prime bogeyman.[140] In the speeches examined in this research, there were few mentions of Soros in 2015 and 2016. However, from 2017 onwards, Orbán increasingly referenced Soros as a threat, often in connection with Brussels and immigration. Thus, the securitisation of Soros was constructed with reference to the

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[137] "Migration Issues in Hungary." International Organization for Migration | Budapest.
[138] Ibid.
[139] Koranyi, Balazs. "Orban Mobilizes Hungary's Troops, Prisoners, Jobless to Fence out Migrants." Reuters, September 23, 2015. https://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-hungary-fence-insight-idUSKCN0RN0FW20150923
[140] Krekó, and Enyedi. "Explaining Eastern Europe," 39–51.

previous narratives of threat built up around Brussels and immigration. Indeed, it may be argued that the conceptualisation of Soros as a threat can only be understood through the framework of these previous securitising moves.

In Orbán's 2017 speech at Băile Tuşnad, he announced that Soros has *"formed an alliance with Brussels,"*[141] and then warned his audience that *"we'll have to stand our ground against Soros's mafia network and the Brussels bureaucrats."*[142] Thus, in this narrative, the threat posed by Soros is firmly linked to the threat posed by Brussels. Orbán also declared that *"the European Union must regain its sovereignty from the Soros Empire."* [143] Interestingly, the EU is portrayed as subordinate to Soros and controlled by him. Thus, while Brussels is conceived of as a danger to Hungary, with the emergence of Soros, it has been transformed into a victim as well. The EU's subordinate status was also highlighted in Orbán's 2018 State of the Nation Address, where he accused the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe of being *"one of the Soros network's chief ideologues."*[144] He then asserted that the Commissioner *"let slip that some years ago they secretly launched a programme to breed a Soros-like human race, or, as they modestly put it (...) Homo sorosensus. This means "Soros man"."*[145] Once again, Orbán does not merely connect Soros with a top-level EU official, but explicitly frames that official as working for him. Moreover, he warns his audience of how this enemy force is expanding its numbers by alluding to a conspiracy to create 'Soros men.' This serves to amplify the threat posed by Soros and instil a sense of danger in the audience.

It is also important to note that in the quotes highlighted above, the aforementioned anti-Semitic tropes come into play. Soros is portrayed as a puppet-master, controlling Hungary's enemies from the shadows. However, this depiction is not used in a vacuum, but explicitly

[141] Orbán, "Bálványos," 2017.
[142] Ibid.
[143] Ibid.
[144] Orbán, "State of the Nation," 2018.
[145] Ibid.

linked to Orbán's securitising narratives surrounding Brussels. In this context, Soros is not merely dangerous due to this puppet-master-like depiction, but because he is controlling an actor that has already been established as a threat to Hungary. Thus, it is possible to argue that while these anti-Semitic stereotypes may have served to facilitate the securitisation of Soros, they needed to be embedded in previous security articulations to do so.

In his 2019 State of the Nation Address, Orbán attacked the Hungarian opposition and claimed that it was *"an assemblage of pro-immigration politicians which George Soros and the European bureaucrats are keeping on life support."*[146] Thus, Soros and the EU were connected once again. This connection appeared even more strongly in Orbán's 2022 State of the Nation Address, wherein he claimed that:

> *We cannot feel secure with Brussels. Gathering there are the agents of George Soros, the Judases who would do anything for their thirty pieces of silver, the horde of pen pushers, experts and advisors who see nation states as the enemy – or at least as a historical remnant to be discarded.*[147]

Once again, this passage is laden with anti-Semitic imagery. However, much like in previous speeches, these stereotypes are constructed with reference to Orbán's attempt at securitising Brussels. Brussels is portrayed as a base for the mobilisation of Soros's agents, who are seeking to destroy nation-states, and as such, Hungary as well. It is important to note that connecting Soros to the EU helps to establish Soros as a dangerous entity, but also serves to transform the nature of the threat posed by Brussels. While in previous speeches, it was portrayed as an imperialistic power, looking to dominate Hungary, it is now seen as subordinate to the influence of George Soros. Rather than an active player in the game, it has become an instrument of a greater threat.

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[146] Viktor, Orbán. "Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's State of the Nation Address." Speech, Budapest, February 10, 2019. Website of the Hungarian Government. https://2015-2019.kormany.hu/en/the-prime-minister/the-prime-minister-s-speeches/prime-minister-viktor-orban-s-state-of-the-nation-address-2019

[147] Orbán, "State of the Nation," 2022.

As has already been noted, the securitising moves instigated against Brussels did not find much success with the audience, nor did they result in the implementation of any extraordinary measures. However, as the passages above demonstrate, this narrative was still used as a reference point for the securitisation of Soros. Indeed, the construction of the anti-Soros narrative was deeply embedded in and reinforced by Orbán's rhetoric on Brussels. Thus, the analysis above illustrates how even a failed securitising move can open up new understandings of security and serve as a framework through which future articulations of security are understood.

Beyond the EU, the threat posed by Soros was also tied to the issue of immigration. He was accused of having formulated the so-called Soros Plan, which aimed to smuggle hundreds of thousands of refugees into Europe.[148] In a 2017 speech, Orbán declared that *"the plan says that every year hundreds of thousands of migrants (…) should be brought into the territory of the European Union from the Muslim world."* [149] Here, the threat posed by Soros is understood with reference to the government's securitisation of immigration, with this new security articulation building on the previous narrative. Furthermore, this passage also serves to reconfigure the nature of the migrant threat. Immigration is not seen as an effect of conflicts in other regions, but as a deliberate attack against the European Union. Indeed, this was reiterated in Orbán's 2017 speech before the Congress of Fidesz and the Hungarian Civic Union, as he asserted that *"we shall defend our borders, we shall prevent implementation of the Soros Plan, and eventually we shall win this battle."*[150] References to border defence and battle further serve to underline how Soros is an existential threat to the survival of Hungary.

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[148] See: Orbán. "State of the Nation," 2019, and: Viktor, Orbán. "Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's State of the Nation Address." Speech, Budapest, February 16, 2020. About Hungary. https://abouthungary.hu/speeches-and-remarks/prime-minister-viktor-orbans-state-of-the-nation-address-2

[149] Viktor, Orbán. "Bálványos," 2017.

[150] Viktor, Orbán. "Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's speech at the 27th Congress of Fidesz – Hungarian Civic Union." Speech, Budapest, November 12, 2017. miniszterelnok.hu. https://miniszterelnok.hu/prime-minister-viktor-orbans-speech-at-the-27th-congress-of-fidesz-hungarian-civic-union/

The 'Soros Plan' frequently appeared in Orbán's speeches, as, in his 2019 State of the Nation Address he asserted that *"George Soros has openly announced that his goal is to protect migrants, and national borders are an obstacle to this plan."* [151] Here, Orbán does not need to expound on why Soros is dangerous. Migration had already been successfully securitised and thus, connecting Soros with the refugees is enough to immediately cast him as a threat. In other words, previous security utterances have created a context in which any actor connected to immigration is automatically viewed with suspicion. Furthermore, it may be argued that the 'Soros Plan' resonates with the anti-Semitic trope of a world-wide Jewish conspiracy. However, once again, this type of prejudiced rhetoric is arguably embedded in previous narratives of threat – in this case, that of immigration. The anti-Semitism that appears in passages such as the ones above builds on and is reinforced by anti-refugee sentiment.

These dynamics may also be observed in Orbán's 2020 State of the Nation Address, in which he declared that *"the Soros Plan, the planned settlement of foreign population groups, is still on the agenda: the operation is in progress and we must man the defences, stoutly and unwaveringly."* [152] Once again, the nature of the threat posed by Soros is understood with reference to the securitisation of immigration. Moreover, Orbán emphasises how the Plan is currently in progress, bringing with it a sense of urgency. Such a framing signals to the audience that they must act immediately, or else they risk being destroyed. It is also important to note the militarised imagery, as Orbán calls on his audience to 'man the defences,' as if they were facing an invading force. Such imagery was also employed in a 2021 speech, in which Orbán accused Soros of transporting refugees to Europe and declared that *"Europe – and within it Hungary – is under siege, and we must defend ourselves."* [153]

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[151] Orbán, "State of the Nation," 2019.
[152] Orbán. "State of the Nation," 2020.
[153] Viktor, Orbán. "Fidesz – Hungarian Civic Alliance," 2021.

It is perhaps prudent to stop here and note the type of threat that Soros is portrayed to pose in these speeches. When connecting Soros to Brussels, Orbán paints the financier as a political threat, seeking to undermine Hungary's sovereignty and absorb it into the 'Soros empire.' However, when linked to immigration, he also becomes a territorial threat. As detailed above, frequent references are made to border defense, to Hungary and Europe being under invasion, and calls for Hungary to fight to the very end. Thus, it may be argued that the nature of the threat that Soros poses depends on which previous securitising move he is linked to.

The connection between Soros and immigration has also been noted in Orbán's most recent State of the Nation Address, when he claimed that *"we have stopped George Soros's troops at our southern borders."*[154] Within this narrative, refugees are no longer named, they are defined in relation to Soros. While previously, the threat of Soros was understood in reference to the threat of immigration, here, the danger posed by the refugees is understood in relation to Soros. This is similar to how the EU is portrayed as a subordinate to Soros, performing to his whims. Thus, it appears that while these two securitising narratives originally served as the conditions of possibility for the securitisation of Soros, they have now become subsumed by the discourse on the financier.

It appears that the Hungarian public was receptive to the anti-Soros narratives, as a poll conducted in late 2016 showed that 61% of the country had a negative opinion on Soros, while only 14% saw him as a positive figure.[155] According to another survey, conducted in the spring of 2017, 53% of the population saw Soros funded institutions as damaging, while

[154] Orbán. "State of the Nation," 2022.
[155] "A Soros-Jelenség a Közvéleményben" (The Soros Phenomenon in Public Opinion). Századvég, January 2017. https://szazadveg.hu/hu/kutatasok/az-alapitvany-kutatasai/piackutatas-kozvelemeny-kutatas/a-soros-jelenseg-a-kozvelemenyben

only 29% saw them as beneficial to the country.[156] As such, the government was able to begin taking steps to deal with the threat posed by Soros. In the spring of 2017, the government issued a bill that introduced a new set of criteria that foreign universities had to meet in order to function in Hungary. As Enyedi points out, this new bill only affected the Soros-funded Central European University. He goes on to note that the bill faced widespread international criticism, with many dubbing it unlawful, and an attack against academic freedom.[157] Furthermore, in 2018, the government implemented a series of bills that constrained civil society groups, which were collectively dubbed the 'stop Soros' package. As a result of these new laws, the Soros-supported Open Society Foundations moved its regional headquarters from Budapest to Berlin.[158] Moreover, Central European University was forced to leave Hungary.[159]

Overall, the analysis above shows that the securitisation of Soros was deeply embedded in previous securitising moves taken with regards to Brussels and immigration. Indeed, he was explicitly cast as a threat because of his perceived connections with the EU and his 'plan' to flood Europe with refugees. Thus, Soros is not seen as a threat due to his own sake, but largely because of his link to previous securitised issues. As such, it is possible to argue that the construction of Soros as a threat can only be understood if we consider these previous narratives of security. While certain contextual factors – such as anti-Semitism – may have influenced the successful securitisation of Soros, these factors were instrumentalised with explicit reference to previous security utterances.

Furthermore, as time when on, Soros became an increasingly dominant security narrative in government discourse, subsuming the previous discourse on migration and the

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[156] "A Többség Kritikus Soros György Szervezeteivel Szemben," (The Majority is Critical of George Soros's Organisations). Századvég, April 2017. https://szazadveg.hu/hu/kutatasok/az-alapitvany-kutatasai/piackutatas-kozvelemeny-kutatas/a-tobbseg-kritikus-soros-gyorgy-szervezeteivel-szemben

[157] Enyedi, "Democratic Backsliding," 1067–74.

[158] Krekó, and Enyedi. "Explaining Eastern Europe," 39–51.

[159] Walker, Shaun. "'Dark Day for Freedom': Soros-Affiliated University Quits Hungary." The Guardian, December 3, 2018. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/dec/03/dark-day-freedom-george-soros-affiliated-central-european-university-quits-hungary

EU. The danger posed by these two phenomena was increasingly related to Soros, rather than the other way around. This serves to demonstrate that the performative force of various articulations may to contest and reconfigure constellations of threat, imbuing them with new meaning. Moreover, it shows how these narratives can become deeply enmeshed, serving to reinforce and shape one another. Thus, a given security articulation can no longer be understood without considering how it builds off of and informs previous securitising moves. The analysis above also highlights how context is not a fixed, rigid framework as is seen by second generation scholars, but a fluid and malleable space that is contested and shaped by articulations of security. As a result, when attempting to analyse cases of securitisation, it is not enough to look at the context in which they are initiated, but how they are informed by previous articulations of security.

4. CONCLUSION

Second generation scholars tend to downplay the performative force of securitisation and focus instead on how contextual factors shape and constrain the construction of security. In contrast, internalist scholars, such as Philipsen, highlight the transformative power of security articulations, showing how securitisation can broaden our existing understanding of security and invest it with new meaning. Drawing on the works of the latter, I have provided a more nuanced view of the dynamics between securitisation and contextual forces. I have argued that, by opening up a space for new understandings of security, a securitising move may challenge and reconfigure the context in which it was initiated. This, in turn, may influence how future securitising moves are constructed. Thus, when studying securitisation, it is not enough to consider the role of context, but it is also important to look at how contextual factors have been shaped by previous securitising narratives.

These arguments were illustrated through the case of the securitisation of George Soros by the Hungarian government. I highlighted how the security narrative constructed around Soros builds upon previous securitising moves with regards to the European Union and immigration. Indeed, securitisation of Soros leans so heavily on these previous security articulations that it cannot be understood without them. This case draws attention how speech acts can imbue the concept of security with new meaning, serving as the conditions of possibility for future narratives of threat. Moreover, it demonstrates how different securitising narratives can become increasingly enmeshed, generating new constellations of threat.

It is important to note that such an approach has certain implications for how security as a concept is understood. For second generation scholars, it is a fixed construction, wherein meaning is defined by contextual factors. In contrast, the analysis above opens up an alternate understanding, in which security becomes a more fluid concept whose meaning is contested

and reinvented upon its articulation. Such an interpretation also serves to complexify the relations between securitisation and context, opening up questions about the role external factors play in shaping security discourses. Future research might further study the transformative potential of security utterances and how these interact with their external environment. Furthermore, the scope of this thesis has only allowed for a limited case study that it illustrative in nature. The inclusion of more cases, playing out in different social and political contexts might allow us to draw further inferences regarding the performative role of speech acts in the construction of security.

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